The Practice of Politics and Revolution

Egypt's Revolutionary Youth Social Movement

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Title and subtitle: The Practice of Politics and Revolution: Egypt's Revolutionary Youth Social Movement

Abstract: The dissertation analyzes a recognized collective political actor in Egypt, the *shabāb al-thawra* – the revolutionary youth. The thesis posits that in order to understand the *shabāb al-thawra* political actor, it is necessary problematize "revolutionary youth" beyond its nominative sense. Instead, the concepts of "youth" and "revolutionary" are conceived as communities of practice, whereby "youth" represents a generational practice of activism and contestation, while "revolutionary" represents a prefigurative practice of the actor's conception of revolution. Proposing a theoretical framework that lies at the nexus of practice theory and social movement theory, the dissertation assesses the role of practices of "youth" and "revolutionary" in the construction of the *shabāb al-thawra* through culturalist analysis of the social movement. The analytical framework operationalizes social movement construction processes in order to understand how these are informed by practices of generational activism and prefiguration, using six key concepts directly derived from social movement theory: grievances, emotions, resources, collective identity, political opportunity, and strategy. Through narrative analysis of empirical materials gathered from fieldwork and qualitative techniques, the dissertation assesses three distinct chronological periods of the revolutionary youth movement's development: the period of 2005-2010, during which the movement's earliest organizations emerged; the 18 days of the 2011 uprising; and the period of 2011-2014, in which the social movement became a dominant actor in Egypt's political scene. By introducing practice theory into culturalist social movement analysis, the dissertation puts forth new conceptual and analytical tools that contribute both to the empirical study at hand as well as the literature on social movements in general, on youth movements more particularly, and the state of the art on the *shabāb al-thawra*.

Key words: Social movement, Communities of practice, Youth, Political generation, Revolution, Prefiguration, Egypt

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Acknowledgements

Although I formally began working on this dissertation in December 2010, the origins of the work date much further back; for this reason, any attempt to acknowledge the many people who have contributed to this thesis will necessarily be rather long-winded. While attempting to be brief, I nonetheless permit myself this small indulgence in order to give thanks where it is due.

My interest in the Middle East, and in Egypt in particular, can be traced back to the summer of 1996 and the month-long trip to Cairo that I took with the Kamel family. Only a handful of events can truly be considered life-changing; this experience was one of them, sparking in me an intellectual passion that has informed every educational and professional decision I have made. My interest in and engagement with the region remains a bottomless well from which I draw inspiration and motivation, and for this I owe the Kamels, and in particular Heba and Lamya, an enormous debt of gratitude.

While that first encounter with Egypt provided the initial impetus, it was during my undergraduate education at the University of Texas at Austin where I was able to delve fully into my interests and pursue my study of the region at the outstanding Center for Middle Eastern Studies. In particular, I must thank Abraham Marcus for his survey course on the contemporary Middle East, which solidified my particular fascination with the region's politics, as well as my Arabic professors, Aman Attieh and Peter Abboud, for imparting on me a love for the complexity and poetic beauty of the Arabic language. I must also thank my undergraduate thesis advisors, Samer Ali and especially Mia Carter, for always encouraging me to be ambitious in my aims. Their mentoring greatly helped me to understand the profoundly political dimension in the stories we tell, and the thematic and analytical overtones of that thesis – which explored the interstices of public context and private identity of Muslim women through analysis of narratives – are clearly present in this dissertation.

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Musulman and Gilles Kepel, for honing my social science skills and affording me the opportunity to carry out one month of fieldwork as part of my Master's thesis. While I did not realize it at the time, that research, which examined authoritarian cooptation strategies of the Amazigh cultural movement in Morocco, was exploring a social movement and the structure of political opportunities. There is a striking continuity between that work and this dissertation, and I recognize the important impact that conducting empirically meaningful research at the Master level had on this project.

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Note on Transliteration

The transliteration of Arabic words utilizes the system of the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES), which is detailed on the IJMES website. My own exceptions are as follows:

1) Words commencing with the Arabic "ح" in which capitalization is required utilize "H."

2) Proper names of historical figures, political parties, geographic locations, activist groups, and slogans utilize the IJMES system but make exceptions for specific Egyptian colloquial Arabic pronunciation. For example, Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir is here Gamal ʿAbd al-Nasir. This applies everywhere except for the transliteration of *shabāb al-thawra*, where I have utilized the "th" instead of "s" as per Egyptian pronunciation.

3) Cases where official English transliterations are provided by the sources themselves (i.e. authors or websites with preferred transliterations of their names) have been maintained here. For example, I utilize the spelling "Morsy" as opposed to the more common "Morsi," as this is preferred by the person himself.

4) The transliteration *feloul* conforms to what is standardly used.

Except for proper names (persons, organizations), transliterated words and expressions are italicized.

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Glossary

ʿaīsh, ḥuriyya, al-ʿadāla al-igtimāʿiyya	bread, freedom, social justice
al-karāma, al-karāma al-insāniyya	dignity, human dignity
al-Islām huwa al-ḥal	Islam is the solution (Muslim Brotherhood slogan)
al-itilāf shabāb al-thawra	Revolutionary Youth Coalition
al-naqāʾ al-thawrī	revolutionary pureness
al-shʿab yurīd isqāt al-niẓām	the people want the downfall of the regime
balṭagiyya	hired thugs
feloul	remnants (Mubarak-regime insiders)
fuṣha	Modern Standard Arabic
hijāb	head scarf
ḥizb al-kanaba	"sofa party" (non-participants in politics)
ḥukm al-murshid	rule of the Supreme Guide (Muslim Brotherhood)
Ikhwān	Brotherhood (Muslim Brotherhood)
infitāḥ	"Open Door" economic policy
irḥal	leave, get out
iṣlāḥ, islāḥiyya, iṣlāḥīn	reform, reformist, reformers
lā-l-al-tamdīd, lā-l-al-tawrīth	no to extension, no to inheritance
milyuniyya	mobilization of millions
niẓām	system, order, regime (Egyptian dialect)
shabāb al-thawra	revolutionary youth
shahīd	martyr
silmiyya	peaceful
wāsṭa	nepotism

yasquṭ ḥukm al-ʿaskar   down with military rule
zakat   Islamic charity tax

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Undoubtedly one of the most remarkable events that has transpired in Egypt in recent history is the 2011 uprising that successfully ousted Hosni Mubarak from power after three decades of authoritarian rule. Consisting of mass mobilization uniting vastly different social sectors and political factions, the 2011 Egyptian uprising was perhaps the hallmark of the erstwhile Arab Spring, sparking hopes of a democratic wave across the region that have since been painfully dashed. Amongst the many distinctive features of this event was the emergence of Egypt's youth as key player. In the popular account of the uprising, it was a democratically-minded Egyptian youth, armed with new media tools and disheartened by their lack of socio-economic opportunities or possibilities for political participation, who led the country's 18 days of revolt. Indeed, youth activists were the stars of both the local and international press during these several weeks of popular protest. In the aftermath of the uprising, these so-called "Facebook youth" translated into a recognized new collective political actor, the *shabāb al-thawra* – the revolutionary youth. Responsible for myriad protests and the continuous chanting of the uprising's slogans in the years since Mubarak's ouster, the revolutionary youth are a readily recognized set of activists who have become a highly visible fixture on the country's national political scene since the 2011 uprising and an outspoken voice of opposition.

Yet despite their high visibility, the revolutionary youth remain a somewhat opaque actor. Who exactly is included under this vague umbrella term is difficult to ascertain: does the term refer to all Egyptians under a certain age who participated in the uprising or who proclaim themselves "revolutionaries," or does the term imply a more unified and formal actor? Those claiming the title include organizations pre-existing the 2011 uprising as well as an uncountable number of new associations, coalitions, and campaigns that coalesce and disband rapidly; yet at the same time these various groups are quick to denounce one another as not true members of the *shabāb al-thawra*. In this sense, the sociological make-up of the

revolutionary youth, as well as the organizational dimensions and boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, are not immediately obvious. Moreover, the revolutionary youth behave in ways that contradict expectations and defy easy explanations. Since the ouster of Mubarak, they have become increasingly wary of formal political institutions and electoral processes. In the aftermath of Hosni Mubarak's departure and the veritable opening of the political system (see for example Tavana, 2011), they have, with little exception, deliberately not sought power or even put forth concrete political programs for the achievement of demands. They have instead focused their energy on the continuation of street action largely based on the rejection of the political process and authority writ large. Perhaps even more confounding, they seem to shift alliances and change their assessments of political allies/enemies in ways that appear contradictory to their purpose. The revolutionary youth supported, albeit reluctantly, the election of the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsy to the presidency in June 2012 only vehemently to protest for his departure six months later. Even more strikingly, they heartedly backed the military coup of July 2013 that removed him from office, contradicting their earlier position of extreme animosity vis-à-vis the junta as well as their demands for civilian rule. In this vein, the strategic moves of the revolutionary youth – their actions in the political sphere and their interactions with other political players – do not correspond with our preconceptions of liberalism and the democratic transition.

Added to these puzzles is the dual insistence of the revolutionary youth on their role as revolutionary vanguard and their quality of youth. The *shabāb al-thawra* claim themselves the guardians of the true revolution, yet do not translate these ideals into forward-looking proposals or concrete political programs and, on the contrary, eschew power and politics. This begs the question of what is meant by revolution and the meaning they attribute to the term "revolutionary." In addition, they attach utmost importance to their quality of youth and indeed proclaim themselves a distinct actor precisely because of their youth status, yet demonstrate that the term is detached from age category: the most prominent leaders of the revolutionary youth are almost all in their thirties or early forties, while not all activists under a certain age are considered *shabāb al-thawra*. What is troubling about this collective actor, thus, is twofold: how do they understand themselves as "revolutionaries" given that this appellation is detached from politics and the assuming of power; and how do they understand themselves as "youth" in a sense not pertaining to age? It is the organizational, ideational, and strategic

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dimensions of the *shabāb al-thawra*, and how they are intimately intertwined with the actor's self-understanding of "revolutionary youth," that represent the core research problem assessed in this dissertation.

The overarching aim of this dissertation is to answer the following question: what is the role of practices of "youth" and "revolutionary" in the construction of the *shabāb al-thawra* social movement?

1.1 Research Aims

I posit that in order to understand the *shabāb al-thawra* political actor, we must problematize "revolutionary youth" beyond its nominative sense. I argue that the terms "youth" and "revolutionary" represent distinct practices of the political actor, by which I mean socially meaningful patterns of action that express shared knowledge and collective understandings. These practices are derived from the historical-social setting and processes of interaction, learning, and interpretation that form the assumptive schemes of the actor. In this way, I argue that "youth" represents a generational practice of activism and contestation, while "revolutionary" represents a prefigurative practice of the actor's conception of revolution. It is in grasping these foundational practices of the *shabāb al-thawra* that we can apprehend the various organizational, ideational, and strategic dimensions that constitute the political actor.

In addition, I also argue that the revolutionary youth encompass a distinct social movement in the Egyptian political sphere, defined by the non-institutionalized nature of the activists' joint action, the existence of collective identity amongst them, and their assembly around shared change-oriented goals and claims. As a social movement, the *shabāb al-thawra* is not a singular organization, group, or institutional outfit; rather, it is an ever-evolving body of committed as well as occasional activists, organized in different associations and/or networks of varying degrees of formality that are in constant fluctuation. Nonetheless, I posit that the revolutionary youth possess a common identity inherently founded in their shared understanding of politics and the political (in the abstract) and the revolution (specifically the meaning of the 2011 uprising), as well as a relatively codified set of practices related to their activism and their perception of political generation.

It is this combination of background understandings and attributions of meaning, along with their manifestation into a precise way of conducting activism and contestation, that the revolutionary youth employ to reflexively define themselves but also that guide the actions and interactions of the collective political actor.

Given these points of departure, this dissertation has four specific research aims, each at a different level of abstraction. At the most empirical level, the research first aims to increase the overall knowledge of Egypt's revolutionary youth. Who is included in the *shabāb al-thawra* social movement and what criteria or characteristics determine this inclusion? More deeply, what precisely is meant by the term "revolutionary youth," and how does this pertain to the motivations, goals, and actions of the social movement? The first research aim essentially seeks to understand the organizational, ideational, and strategic contours of the movement for the purpose of elucidating our collective understanding of this political actor. Second, this dissertation aims to develop a new analytical concept of youth. Given my supposition that the term as utilized by the *shabāb al-thawra* does not relate to age category, how can we problematize youth in an analytical sense? Here, my specific aim is to develop the concept of youth practice as the performance of collective understanding of political generation. Developing this form of analysis provides leverage in exploring how the *shabāb al-thawra* differ from other political actors in Egypt. Third, the dissertation aims to apply key concepts and modes of analysis from social movement theory to the empirical case. How can we conceptualize and assess the revolutionary youth as a social movement, and what tools from social movement theory are most analytically useful? The vast majority of social movement analysis concerns movements in the global North; by undertaking social movement research on a case outside advanced capitalist democracies, this dissertation proffers analysis of a largely understudied case-type and assesses the applicability of the subfield across different cultural and political contexts. Finally, the dissertation aims to utilize the precepts of social constructivism and to develop a constructivist analytical framework. In this vein, how can we re-read key concepts of social movement theory in order to bring forth collective interpretation and attribution of meaning? The effort to incorporate constructivism into social movement theory is not new; however, it has not yet become mainstream and as such reveals space for innovation. Here, I specifically aim to conduct a culturalist analysis of the social movement through the development of an analytical framework that brings to

the fore the internal movement culture of the revolutionary youth. More precisely, this dissertation seeks to conceptualize internal movement culture through the concept of practices. These four aims represent the empirical and theoretical dimensions encompassed in the overarching research question, and their fulfillment allows the dissertation to make a contribution to the existing body of knowledge on the *shabāb al-thawra*.

1.2 State of the Art on the *Shabāb al-Thawra*

To my knowledge, no major study on Egypt's revolutionary youth has thus far been conducted, although numerous articles and book chapters do exist and a handful of researchers are dedicating their talents to investigating this political actor, including Abdalla (2013, 2014); El-Mahdi (2009, 2011); Hassabo (2009, 2014); Onodera (2009, 2011a); Shehata (2008, 2010, 2011a); and Sika (2011, 2012). A good portion of the research has been dedicated to understanding the novel aspects of youth political activism with regard to tactics and strategies, models of cooperation and collaboration, and the formulation of demands. These studies have demonstrated an important degree of consensus regarding certain defining characteristics of the revolutionary youth, including their favoring of highly inclusive and non-ideological contestation, their promotion of internal democratic procedures and tendency towards horizontal organizational structure, their reliance on new media and communication tools, and their bridging of socio-economic and political demands. Less prominent, however, has been effort to conceptualize these youth activist groups as a collective political actor or a discussion of what is meant by either "youth" or "revolutionary" beyond their descriptive sense. This dissertation is situated precisely within this identified gap in the literature.

In a certain manner, research conducted on this topic prior to the 2011 uprising[1] was not researching the *shabāb al-thawra* at all: this appellation for

[1] Although usually referred to in Egypt as the 25 January Revolution, the use of the term "revolution" is debated in the scientific literature, with many preferring "uprising," "upheaval," "revolt," "riot," or "insurrection." These different appellations reflect the varying interpretations scholars attribute to the processes involved in and outcomes of the event, as well as the difficulty of comparing the events in Egypt with other classic cases of

a particular group of activists only came into existence in the aftermath of Mubarak's departure. Instead, what was investigated prior to 2011 was the phenomenon of youth activism in a quite general sense, thus treating a wide range of different types of youth political engagement within the broader context of renewed contestation and street action that became increasingly visible in Egypt in the last decade of Mubarak's rule. In these studies, everything from pro-Palestinian demonstrations taking place outside university campuses to the rise of oppositional blogs to the mobilization efforts of specific activist networks were assembled under the broad rubric of "youth activism" without significant differentiation or identification of a distinctive collective political actor, nor a conceptualization of youth beyond age category. Shehata (2008, 2010), for example, investigates the topic of youth political activism in the 2000s, exploring the diverse channels and means of political engagement that go well beyond the bounds of action of the *shabāb al-thawra*; her analyses focus on the overarching novel characteristics that are common across the various forms of youth activism, including the internally diverse nature of groups as well as their move away from university campuses and reliance on new communication technologies as resources for mobilization. Likewise, El-Mahdi (2009) explores the guerrilla street tactics of youth groups as well as their utilization of blogs and websites in mobilization, placing the activists within a larger analysis of a pro-democracy movement, while Bayat (2010) places emphasis on youth "nonmovements" and the accommodation strategies of youth that made claims on power structures. While such studies provide critical information regarding the context from which the *shabāb al-thawra* emerged, there is less emphasis placed on the political actor itself. In a different vein, both Hassabo (2009) and Onodera (2009) conduct ethnographic research on one particular

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revolution (Coombs, 2011:138-139). Indeed, the distinctiveness of the events in Egypt (and other countries experiencing similar phenomena in 2011) has led some scholars to invent new terms altogether. Bayat (2013:53) for example argues for the term "refolution" to describe a process of "revolutions which aim to push for reforms in, and through, the institutions of existing regimes." For the purposes of this dissertation, the event will be referred to as "uprising."

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youth activist group, Youth for Change, a spin-off of the 2005 Kifāya[2] initiative. Their studies provide fascinating insight regarding how these activists conceived of themselves as a distinctive group, and their attempt to establish organizational and operational independence; however, they do not treat the *shabāb al-thawra* in the sense of the broader and more disparate collective actor.

In the immediate period after the 2011 uprising, an abundance of research touching upon the revolutionary youth was produced, specifically focusing on the organizational and political origins of the uprising and the role of social media in the process of mobilization. A brief glance through library databases reveals countless press and academic articles that specifically treated the thematic of social media, online activism, and new youth movements in Egypt. While such studies added important nuance to the initial narrative that the uprising was spontaneous or that Facebook was the critical resource allowing for its organization, they were not analyzing the *shabāb al-thawra* as a political actor but rather processes of mobilization. Sika (2011, 2012), for example, traces the rise of youth mobilization capacity and political consciousness in the Mubarak era, focusing in particular on the construction of very broad frames that were able to promote inclusive political demands. Lim (2012) discusses how social media was utilized to build broad networks, frame grievances, and establish online activism that could then jump into street action, while Ezbawy (2012) and El-Chazli (2012) provide detailed accounts of the actual organization of the 18 days of mass protest and the role of youth activist groups therein. As the initial surprise of the 2011 uprising and fascination with social media and new communication technologies began to decrease, other studies emerged that considered the role of these youth activist group in Egyptian politics more generally, thus moving away from topics of mobilization and into the subject

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[2] Kifāya, also known as the Egyptian Movement for Change, was launched in late 2004 as a coalition opposition movement. Comprised of well-known elites from across the political spectrum, including leftist and secular factions as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, the group focused primarily on the pending 2005 presidential election and the dual problem of Mubarak's extension of his presidency and the bequeathing of office to his son, Gamal. Kifāya differed from previous forms of opposition both in its organizational format as well as discursive content, providing a non-ideological model of contestation and advocating radical change directly targeting the president.

of transition. Meringolo (2013) and Abdalla (2013) both focus their attention on the *shabāb al-thawra* in particular, exploring the relationship of the revolutionary youth to formal politics in the post-Mubarak period. Both authors depict the heterogeneous approaches that the revolutionary youth have adopted vis-à-vis institutionalized politics, focusing in particular on elections and political parties and the difficulty the *shabāb al-thawra* have faced in the transition process. Cole (2014) also provides a detailed account of the role of the revolutionary youth in post-Mubarak politics up through 2013, and in particular the various instances of mass mobilization and anti-regime protest they have organized in the three years since the fall of Mubarak.

While these studies have provided some critical information regarding the origins, methods, and evolving position of the revolutionary youth in Egyptian politics, there has been less emphasis on the nature of the *shabāb al-thawra* in the sense of collective political actor. While most of the major works cited here view the revolutionary youth as some form of social movement(s), they fail to delve further in depth into this conceptualization or conduct analyses pertinent to social movements. For example, both Sika and Abdalla refer to the revolutionary youth as social movements, yet do not tie this into an investigation of the actor as such nor provide analytical delimitations necessary to grasp the contours of the movement. In a slightly different vein, Onodera argues that these youth activists form "submerged networks" (2009:59) that represent less a formal social movement than a series of complex and overlapping relations between members, yet does not undertake a more formal analysis of these networks. This dissertation contributes to current research through a detailed analysis of the social movement itself, utilizing an analytical framework derived from social movement theory that allows for the particularities of the revolutionary youth in the sense of social movement to come to the fore.

With regards to the quality of youth, the major work being conducted on the revolutionary youth has made strides towards understanding what is meant by the term from the perspective of the actor, developing in particular the concept of political generation and the associated development of specific political consciousness. Hassabo, for example, utilizes Mannheim's seminal 1923 essay, "The Problem of Generations," to explore how shared lived experience formed the basis of generational consciousness within Youth for Change (2009:242-243), and how this in turn drove the desire for an expressly "youth" venue for contestation. Similarly, Onodera argues that

youth activists should be understood as a social category based on Erlich's (2000) discussion of political generation, putting forth the notion that the activists' shared formative experiences of protest and political uprising fueled collective political identity (2009:56-57). Bayat, on the other hand, argues that youth as social category should be understood as shared habitus, behavior, and cognitions that are socially constructed in the period between childhood and adulthood (2010:116), while Cole argues that characteristics of the millennial generation, including increased literacy rates, urbanization, and the facility of communications, influenced the ability to organize politically and make claims against the regime (2014:26). These various conceptualizations of youth have focused largely on the role of lived experience in the formation of shared cognitions and political consciousness. While such investigations are highly useful in understanding how the *shabāb al-thawra* may see themselves as a different political generation, they do not shed light on how this guides behavior. In other words, current research problematizes youth with regards to collective identity and social location, and not action; this dissertation contributes to the literature by investigating how the collective perception of political generation influences the *shabāb al-thawra* in their political actions and interactions.

Finally, there seems to be very little in the literature that actually explores what is meant by "revolutionary." The term's utilization seems to connote a description – youth activists who participated in the uprising and/or proclaim themselves revolutionaries – but is not problematized in relation to either revolutionary ideology or action. In this way, studies on the revolutionary youth have listed the content of demands and their relation to political and economic reform rather exploring the sense of "revolutionary" as held by the activists themselves. The literature thus identifies democratic and secular undercurrents as well as anti-neoliberalism in the activists' political objectives (El-Mahdi, 2009; Sika, 2011) but does not offer a deeper discussion of revolutionary subjectivity or how such demands are linked to a broader understanding of revolution. This dissertation responds to this gap by re-conceiving the term revolutionary within a broader discussion of the revolutionary youth's attributed meanings to the abstract concept of revolution while also exploring their bases of revolutionary subjectivity.

1.3 The Nexus of Practices and Social Movement Theory

In order to respond to these identified analytical and conceptual gaps and answer the overarching research question, this dissertation draws upon two distinct literatures: practice theory and the concept of practice as performances of socially meaningful action; and the culturalist approach to social movement theory that argues for culture to be included at the meta-level of social movement analysis. In this vein, I propose a theoretical framework that lies at the nexus of these two literatures, placing emphasis on the social construction of knowledge, shared understanding and attribution of meaning, and cognitive-symbolic structures. I utilize the concept of practice within a performative view of culture, arguing that practice informs the social movement and inscribes meaning into action. As such, my theoretical approach does not seek simply to add practice as concept to social movement theory; rather, I utilize practice theory to envisage a culturalist analysis of the social movement. In this way, practice functions at the meta-level of the social movement, permitting the incorporation of a cultural dimension while nonetheless building off existing knowledge of social movement theory.

1.3.1 Communities of Practice

With regards to the first axis upon which the research is based, my conceptualization of practices – and in particular my development of the terms "youth" and "revolutionary" as types of practice – derives from Wenger's communities of practice approach (with Lave, 1991; 1998; 2010), which is situated within the broader theoretical stream of practice theory. A distinct, albeit internally diverse, branch of analysis, practice theory does not represent one singular grand theory, nor a unified analytical approach, but rather encompasses a diverse literature that nonetheless shares certain views regarding human agency, the social world, and the manner by which it can be grasped (Reckwitz, 2002:244), itself rooted in Wittgenstein's (1958) work on rule-following and Heidegger's (1962) discussions of understanding and their criticisms of normativity of human action (Rouse, 2007:501-502). Practice theory places at the fore knowledge and interpretation in its understanding of human action and social life. Practice theorists share a conceptualization that

knowledge, meaning, human activity, discourse, power, social structure, and the possibility of change are dimensions of the field of practice, the location of social action and the social world (Schatzki, 2001:11) – a realm that is performed and public. Practice theory thus serves as an umbrella term to capture the analytical approaches of numerous different social theorists and philosophers who are interested in either exploring the field of practices, or the means and possibilities of social change and constitution of the agent, including Bourdieu (1972, 1986); Butler (1990, 1993); Foucault in his later work (1984a, 1984b); Giddens (1984); and Lynch (1997), amongst numerous others.

Despite important differences amongst practice theorists and those utilizing its framework in a variety of subdomains of social science, what these approaches have in common is the analytic focus on practices, a conceptual term referring simultaneously to routinized bodily action, cognitive activity, and background knowledge/understanding. Practices can be understood as "competent performances" (Adler and Pouliot, 2011:6), meaning they are socially meaningful patterns of action that are both embodied and express shared knowledge and attributions of meaning. Practices represent a distinct type of action that is imbued with subjective and intersubjective meaning as well as organizational context; they are repetitive, iterative, and collective and as such can both reproduce existing social order or indeed lead to its change. Practices as such form broad patterns of action as opposed to one-off behaviors, and are conceptually distinct from individual habits or activities (Barnes, 2001:31-33). They are by their very nature collective and produced via interactions between individuals. Practices are embodied forms of action, and demonstrate skill-based and practical forms of knowledge (Schatzki, 2001:11-12), but are also discursive as well as cognitive activity: discourse is a form of practice, as are patterns of interpretation and explicit or implicit understanding. In this sense, practices are not causal products of knowledge but serve to both reify and transform cognitive precepts; they are thus expressions of beliefs, preferences, learning processes, and social context (Schatzki, 2001:21). Practices, however, cannot be understood as fixed empirical objects, but rather only exist in their manifest and processual unfolding. As such, they are not universal but rather are linked to social categories or particular organized contexts that exist through enactment. In other words, practices are bodily actions and cognitive interpretations or understandings that are embedded within social contexts and garner meaning from collective social setting (Schatzki, 2001:12).

The understanding of knowledge within practice theory is critical. Each specific practice is informed by specific knowledge, which includes not only pragmatic know-how but also distinct interpretations of associated intentions and emotions. This knowledge is largely implicit and is inherently linked to historical-social context (Reckwitz, 2002:253-254); moreover, it is by nature a shared, collective form of understanding of social reality that is itself tied to the field of practice and to interactions (Schatzki, 2001:18-21). Knowledge within practice theory is necessarily collective and socially embedded. Indeed, one distinctive feature of practice theory is the emphasis placed on historical-social background and the simultaneous reproduction and contestation of norms and interpretations through practices (Rouse, 2007:506). Practice theory adopts a view of culture that is dissonant and historically-socially dynamic, allowing for the possibility of differences in knowledge and interpretation to come to the fore of analysis. Given the emphasis I place on understanding the meanings invested in the appellation "revolutionary youth" by the actors themselves, practice theory proves a powerful theoretical framework for exploring differences in historical-social interpretation and their impact on patterns of action within the social movement.

In order to develop the notion of "youth" and "revolutionary" as particular forms of practice, I draw specifically upon the concept of "community of practice," most closely associated with Wenger's theory of social learning and the creation and transfer of knowledge. Within Wenger's particular niche in practice theory, a community of practice is understood as mutual engagement of individuals in the negotiation of meaning, the definition of joint enterprise, and the development of a shared repertoire of bodily and mental action (Wenger, 1998:72-83). Communities of practice are in essence domains of likeminded individuals who embody specific practices that represent the particular knowledge and interpretations that the community has collectively created regarding itself and its specific action. Communities of practice negotiate meaning through a dual process of social participation and reification of understandings into "objects" (physical, cognitive, discursive, or otherwise), which in turn creates tight (although not necessarily harmonious) interpersonal relationships that transcend social category. This negotiation of meaning engenders a shared sense of joint enterprise that is defined by participants through the process of enactment of practice; this in turn develops relations of mutual accountability whereby priorities, codes, and goals come to be collectively recognized and

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maintained. Over time, communities of practice create shared repertoires of bodily routines, interpretive sensibilities, and linguistic codes that sustain the particular practices of the community in question. For Wenger, communities of practice are inherently connected to two dual social processes, learning and identity formation, both of which are dynamic elements of shared practice. Participation in a community of practice thus involves both the transmission of historical knowledge as well as its continuous modification through practice, and hence a process of social learning. Yet, communities of practice are also understood by Wenger as the negotiation of identity, the manner of being within a certain social context (1998:149-150). Identity is thus communally constructed through practice and intimately linked to learning trajectory. Communities of practice are not stable or fixed entities but rather arise and vary according to changes in membership and broader context over time; as a result, practices, meanings, knowledge, and identity also vary with respect to community-level participation and broader social context.

The concept of community of practice has been most widely adopted within management and organizational theory, and is generally utilized within discussions of learning in the context of labor; nonetheless, it has also influenced the practice turn within international relations and the study of transnational communities (Bueger, 2012:8). This translation process into IR theory has seen the further development of the concept and its partial detachment from theories of learning. In this vein, Adler and Pouliot describe communities of practice as "intersubjective social structures that constitute the normative and epistemic ground for action" as well as "agents, made up of real people, who – working via network channels, across national borders, across organizational divides, and in the halls of government – affect political, economic, and social events" (2011:18-19). Community of practice as a concept thus proves sufficiently elastic that it can be translated into different fields while nonetheless maintaining the theoretical particularities of practice theory (Bueger, 2012:18). It is in this spirit that I propose to utilize the concept of community of practice, offering my own "translation" of the concept into social movement theory.

I am aware of certain criticisms facing the communities of practice approach in practice theory, and notably the underlying tension between the Bourdieusian understanding of habitus as orienting structure, and the conflicting notion of structure emerging from communities of practice (Mutch, 2003:383); however, this tension results from the way practice is

utilized and not the concept of community of practice itself. I posit that it is possible to resolve this tension by firmly rooting the analysis of a community of practice within the broader historical-social context that acts as both opportunity and constraint to action. My own ontological position posits a relational interdependency of structure and agent, of historical-social context and practice. I thus recognize the dialectic and mutually constituting relationship between context and the implicit and explicit forms of knowledge it produces, and in turn practice as meaningful action. In my conception of the agency-structure relationship, cultural reference points, historical context, the structure of social relations, amongst others, all influence how goals and values are interpreted and the significance attached to them in both conscious and unconscious manners. In this way, structure influences the parameters of interpretation and the attribution of meaning of the group, yet does not wholly constrain practice. Social practice is thus capable of transcending the limitations of the social order through shared goals and the common pathways utilized to achieve them. In other words, by maintaining the situatedness of the community of practice itself, and by rendering explicit the manner in which structure and agent are mutually conditioning, the implication of practice as uniquely generated by the community is removed.

My utilization of Wenger's approach, thus, considers "revolutionary youth" a distinct community of practice, bringing forth the negotiation of meaning, joint enterprise, and shared repertoires, analyzed with respect to broader historical-social context and its conditioning of practice itself (and, of course, vice versa). In this way, I retain practice's theoretical definition as meaningful action (or competent performances) of implicit knowledge and collective understanding, while nonetheless placing analytical focus on the community and its processual constitution, along with the associated dimensions of learning, transmission, and identity formation. Given that the overarching aim of this dissertation is to analyze how practices inform the construction of the revolutionary youth movement, such an approach is particularly suited to the research. Within this vein, "youth" and "revolutionary" are conceptualized as the flagship practices of the community in question.

"Youth" Generational Practice

Building off the concept of generation, I argue that youth practice – as related specifically to activism and contestation – is subject to generational

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differences in meaning and understanding of the political, which informs differences in bodily, cognitive, and discursive performance. Critical here is the distinction I make between "politics" and "the political"[3]: whereas politics refers to the manifold practices and institutional dimensions of social order, organization, and action, the political refers to the ontological dimension of interpretation, expectation, and understanding of power and state-society relations. Put otherwise, politics is the practice whereas the political is the background knowledge informing practice.

The point of departure for developing the concept of youth practice is political generation, which I utilize not in reference to social category but rather to historical-social location and the associated meanings and interpretations of the political attached therein. In this vein, my work falls within the tradition of Mannheim (1923), who proposes a broad theoretical framework for understanding the origins and formation of generations as social group and collective generational consciousness. For Mannheim, generations are distinguished from concrete social groups in that they do not in themselves create social bonds or ties of filiation: it is not merely contemporaneity or the coincidence of being born in the same year that creates a generation in the sense of sociological category. The common thread linking a generation is shared location in a historical-social reality that crucially provides members of a generation with the same potential range of experiences and possibilities of action, as well as similar patterns of thought. It is here where youth figures into his theory. The biological age that we associate with the nebulous notion of youth, which Mannheim identifies as commencing around the age of seventeen (1952:300), is understood as formative of how experiences and the social world are understood and interpreted, and which can never be relinquished. For Mannheim, youth are endowed with particular capacities to perceive social change and destabilize the social order, and thus possess the ability to take sides in these processes. As such, youth are potential agents of social rejuvenation. It is thus during the formative years of youth that generations as sociological category are

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[3] This distinction is inspired by the work of Mouffe (1996, 2005), who argues, "politics refers to the 'ontic' level while 'the political' has to do with the ontological one. This means that the ontic has to do with manifold practices of conventional politics, while the ontological concerns the very way in which society is instituted" (2005:8-9).

formed (Pilcher, 1994:483). Mannheim, however, is careful to state that generations do not form automatically; rather, they require that members participate in historical and social processes, dependent on external factors of social change. The biological fact of shared age combined with shared historical-social location provides the potential for a generation; the conversion to an actual generation imbued with its own distinct consciousness, however, is the result of collective participation in social processes that are themselves an outpouring of the tempo of change. For Mannheim personal experience and structure constitute one another in a dialectic relation. The shared experiences of youth and their impact on cognition, behavior, and attitude are derived from structure and historical-social context, while the possibility of forming distinct generational consciousness and generational unit is dependent on the pace of social and cultural change. In turn, the constitution of generations and generational units implies participation in social processes and thus the capacity to impact and transform structure.

Attias-Donfut (1988) adds to the discussion by insisting that the generation must be understood both within its temporality and historical-social position as well as its relational interplays between generations. Here, generations cannot be understood as existing independently but rather must always be placed within a temporal reference and inter-generational dynamic. Generational consciousness can only exist through acknowledgement of historical position, which itself is the product of the relations between generations. Generational consciousness is, as such, profoundly aware of both its historical time as well as that of other generations. With regards to youth in particular, Attias-Donfut de-emphasizes the importance of shared historical experiences or collective memories, and instead places emphasis on inter-generational dynamics, and in particular how youth as a generation constitutes itself in both reference and opposition to previous generations.

My notion of political generation draws upon this relationship between historical-social context and collective participation that Mannheim theorizes, as well as Attias-Donfut's emphasis on inter-generational dynamic, in order to conceptualize assumptive schemes related to the political. The question of generational practice, in turn, stems from Wenger's discussion of the generational encounter and the intimate link between identity and differences in practice. For Wegner, communities of practice are sites of inter-generational mingling that encompass continuity and discontinuity, transmission as well as displacement (1998:99-101). Generational alignment

and distinction arise when differences in practice are made obvious within a community of practice. For example, in their work on generational encounters and the formation of entrepreneurial identity, Down and Revely (2004) describe how the use of new technologies by younger employees and their relative rejection by older ones informed the perception of generational distinction in management style. As they conclude, the different engagements with social, cultural, or technical repertoires linked to practice delimit generational groupings within a community of practice (2004:243). Yet whereas Wenger and others utilize the term "generation" with regards to differences in practice only, I re-introduce the sociological sense of the term as developed by Mannheim and Attias-Donfut and, hence, the importance of historical-social location and associated generational background knowledge, specifically with regards to the political. Moreover, whereas Wenger's generational encounter reveals differences in practice within a community, I re-situate the generational encounter within a broader field, whereby difference in practice signifies the community itself. As such, I understand youth practice within the broader field of activism and contestation and the process of generational encounters therein. This implies we conceive of "youth" as competent performance signifying a particular community in the field of activism and contestation, marked by its implicit and explicit understandings and interpretations of the political and its specific practice of politics. In this way, the concept of generation is not limited to shared cognitions or identity only, but is inherently linked to the manner of "doing" activism and contestation as informed by background understandings related to historical-social location.

"Revolutionary" Prefigurative Practice

In developing the concept of revolutionary practice, I argue that the term must not be understood simply with respect to the nature of goals sought; in this sense, revolutionary is not reduced to an adjective describing political objectives involving radical change or the seizing of power. Rather, I put forth the notion of revolutionary as the enacted and embodied performance of goals, values, and visions that underlie a collective understanding of revolution. Here, my utilization of the term revolution requires certain precision, as it differs from that of political philosophers as well as the academic left more generally. Revolution is not understood as an absolute concept regarding the overturning of the state, the reversal of class-power relations, or specific programs related to political economy or democracy.

Instead, I posit that we understand the meaning of revolution – the specific vision of power, state-society relations, and the nature of radical change – as that interpreted by the actors (in this case the *shabāb al-thawra*), the sense with which they vest the term within specific historical-social parameters. Revolutionary practice, thus, involves the embodiment of these understandings of revolution, itself a non-reified concept whose meaning is negotiated and situated. Such a conceptualization places centrally the concept of prefiguration (or prefigurative politics) and the manifestation in the present of future changes sought.

The term prefiguration stems from earlier research on the 1960s-era civil rights movement and represents an alternative epistemic approach that seeks to emphasize the actions of revolutionary movements or radical politics as performance of goals and promoted values. Van de Sande (2013:230) defines prefiguration as, "political action, practice, movement, moment or development in which certain political ideals are experimentally actualised in the 'here and now', rather than hoped to be realised in a distant future. Thus, in prefigurative practices, the means applied are deemed to embody or 'mirror' the ends one strives to realize." Analysis of prefiguration essentially reorients our investigation away from outcomes and the evaluation of impact on political program or structure, and instead focuses on practices as the manifestation in real-time of the desired changes. Maeckelbergh (2011), for example, explores prefiguration in the case of the transnational alterglobalization movement, arguing that the iterative development of decision-making structures within the movement represents the current realization of future ideals of an alternative political structure and operation of power. The struggle for an alternative to free-market capitalism is performed in the present through practices of solidarity, equality, and horizontality, prefiguring the change that is sought (Maeckelbergh, 2011:9). In this sense, prefiguration involves reimagining the temporal distinction between the current moment and the future post-movement (or, indeed, post-revolution) society via the practice of the future alternative in the current: the future alternative that the political struggle concerns is inherently integrated into the "doing" of the radical politics itself. In other words, prefigurative politics is not solely concerned with the transformation of the status quo in the future sense but rather the practice of the newly envisioned status quo in the struggle itself. Prefigurative politics is, as such, self-liberating, in that the act of performing desired goals allows for their tangible inhabiting (van de Sande, 2013:230-2033). Given the emphasis on practice, prefiguration is also

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by nature processual: it evolves dynamically in response to changes in context and experiential knowledge, and thus acts as constant experimentation that reflects renegotiations and interpretations of ideals and goals. In this vein, Yates (2015:19), for example, develops the concept of prefiguration along five processual dimensions in order to increase analytical depth and precision of the concept, emphasizing collective experimentation; production and circulation of political meanings; the creation of new social norms; the materialization of these in a group's infrastructure; and the diffusion of ideas, messages, and goals to the wider population.

Within the literature on prefiguration, the work of Polletta (1999) proves particularly useful, given her association of prefigurative politics with free spaces. Free spaces can refer to physical places or communal areas, informal conversations that take place in the margins of other social gatherings, or even linguistic or communicative differences that set a group apart and, by their nature, are free from surveillance – or in the very least control – by authorities. Free spaces allow individuals to recognize themselves as part of a group that faces its own distinct form of oppression or injustice, and allows for the creation of cultural artifacts and practices unique to that group. In other words, free spaces contribute to the development of shared notions regarding the particularities of the group with respect to a dominant force, as well as the conversion of these shared notions into a form of oppositional practice (Mansbridge, 2001:240). Free spaces, as such, are the domains where prefigurative politics takes place, embedded within a broader context that is hostile to the alternative put forth. My notion of prefiguration draws upon the work of Polletta and her discussion of free spaces – a dimension that fits closely with the concept of community of practice and its emphasis on indigenous enterprise. Wenger argues that communities of practice are by essence indigenous enterprises (1998:79-80), meaning that though they are influenced by the broader historical, social, cultural, and institutional system in which they are placed, the joint enterprise itself is always negotiated by the community and not externally imposed or imported. Building off this, my development of revolutionary prefigurative practice argues that the meaning of revolution and its manifestation in current routines and repertoires stemmed from free spaces where the understanding of revolution was negotiated and where processual experimentation of its realization was embodied. I put forth a concept of revolutionary prefigurative practice, informed by the background understanding of revolution as indigenously

held by the practitioners in question, itself derived from free spaces of prefiguration.

It is this tripartite conceptual structure – the revolutionary youth community of practice; youth practice and the generational encounter; revolutionary practice and free spaces of prefiguration – upon which I establish the meta-level of the social movement. This meta-level is in turn incorporated into social movement analysis through the culturalist approach, to which I turn to next.

1.3.2 The Culturalist Approach to Social Movement Theory

With regards to the second axis of the dissertation, my utilization of social movement theory falls within the constructivist branch of the literature, focusing on movement internal culture and its role in informing movement internal dynamics. In broadest terms, social movement theory seeks to explain and understand the emergence and trajectory of social movements as well as their outcomes and relative successes/failures. Today recognized as a distinct subfield in the social sciences, crossing over from sociology into political science, social movement theory has seen an explosion in theoretical and empirical work since the 1950s. The development of social movement theory has led to the creation of three widely recognized paradigms that represent both varying ontologies and positions in the structure/agency debate, as well as differences in North American and European sociological traditions: strain and breakdown theory, resource mobilization theory and its evolution to the political process approach, and new social movement theory. While each paradigm has faced various criticisms regarding inherent internal biases and the tendency towards invariant models at the price of conceptual stretching (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004:27-58), they have nonetheless contributed vastly to knowledge and analysis through the development of a fairly unified set of key concepts and research questions that greatly mark the subfield. This includes notably the concepts of grievances, resources, political opportunity, frames, and collective identity, and questions regarding movement emergence, trajectory, and outcome.

Nonetheless, a distinctive effort within social movement theory to incorporate the social constructivist perspective has emerged, challenging both the structuralist nature of the political process paradigm and its over-reliance on the structure of political opportunities as well as the problematic

macro-structural specificity of new social movement theory (Buechler, 1995; Oliver et al., 2003:225-234). Goodwin and Jasper, two of the most vocal proponents of constructivism in the subfield, advocate that social movements must be understood not as causal products of grand historical factors or the dichotomous presence/non-presence of a restrictive set of variables; rather, they arise and evolve within "historically shifting and situationally contingent combinations and sequences of processes and events" (2004:27) that can dramatically alter both the form and content of collective action. As a result, the analytical concepts to be applied are dependent upon the empirical case(s) under investigation, and not vice versa. The utilization of constructivism in social movement theory, however, does not seek to reject existing concepts or analytical frameworks of the subfield; rather, it seeks to study the social movement's process of interpretation and meaning construction of claims and strategies, and the formation and transformation of group identity and solidarity, all while interacting in a dynamic relationship with the wider historical-social context (Mueller, 1992:6-13). In this sense, constructivism as applied to social movement theory represents an alternative analytical approach to existing concepts and knowledge, rather than a different paradigm altogether. One dimension of this constructivist branch of social movement theory involves the incorporation of culture and culturalist analysis to existing knowledge (see also Surber, 1998); it is within this particular literature of social movement theory where I position myself and where I locate the nexus of practice theory and social movement theory.

The introduction of culture to social movement analysis represents a distinctive approach that utilizes culture to explore collective interpretations and attributions of meaning of existing concepts (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995:21). As Jasper (2010:81) writes, "[a] cultural approach in which human action is thoroughly permeated by meaning, emotion and morality requires more than the addition of culture to other models. It demands that we rethink apparently noncultural concepts from a cultural point of view, demonstrating their meaningful character. Interpretation is required from start to finish." This approach views culture as the symbolic dimension of all structures, institutions, and practices (Polletta, 2003:99-100) and includes shared meanings, intuitions, expectations, and moral principles (Jasper, 2010:60). It is embodied as well as affective, is expressed in both collective action and institutional forms, and is intersubjective; as such, it is both structuring and structured, and has the capacity to both enable and restrict action through collective symbolic mediation of the social world. And while the precise

definition of culture and certain key dimensions of its influence remain debated in the literature, social movement theorists working in this branch of the subfield agree on its non-strategic nature. In this sense, culture is not understood as a resource to be deployed for the achievement of certain ends, but rather operates at the meta-level to influence strategic decisions.

Culturalist analyses of social movements generally focus on three main areas of research and, by extension, three different scopes of culture (Ullrich et al., 2014:8-15). In one category, culture is taken at the systemic level and utilized to explore the possibilities and constraints on movement emergence and trajectory. Here, culture is taken as macro-phenomenon and the framework in which a social movement is embedded, and its analysis is emphasized in the interpretation of opportunities and the influence over movement behaviors and actions. Such an approach rejects separating culture and structure; rather, structural and contextual issues themselves (institutional arrangements and forms of government, public perceptions and expectations thereof) are viewed as inherently cultural. Jasper (2004), for example, posits that strategies and frames must be analyzed within the broader cultural context in which they are embedded in order to grasp how a movement negotiates its margins of maneuver and the implicit trade-offs of action. A second approach considers the impact of social movements on culture, implying the relational and mutually constituting nature of action and structure. Such research focuses on cultural outcomes, such as the extension or exportation of movement rituals, actions, values, or other symbolic content to the broader cultural environment, or indeed the unanticipated cultural impact of a movement. Malets and Zajak (2014), for example, demonstrate the diffusion of norms and practices across transnational social movement networks. The third vein of culturalist analysis in social movement research focuses specifically on internal movement culture, exploring how internal culture both structures and is structured by the movement's internal dynamics. Emphasis here is placed not on questions of outcome but rather processes behind a movement's internal practices and the performance of movement-specific culture. For example, Fine (1995) demonstrates how movement internal culture mediates material and symbolic resources through legitimizing specific actions and goals, constitutes group identity by demarcating boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, and creates affective bonds between members, thereby contributing to mobilization and overcoming the free-rider problem. It is within this third variant of culturalist analysis in

social movement research where I situate my theoretical niche bringing together practice theory and social movement theory.

Analyses on the relationship between movement culture and internal movement dynamics naturally lend themselves to the incorporation of practice theory and in particular the relational ontology between structure and action, historical-social context and practice. Indeed, such research has been broached by other scholars. Flesher Fominaya (2014), for example, employs a Bourdieusian concept of "habit(us)" to explore how unconscious cultural practices as derived from the broader historical-social context can create contradictions between stated goals/ideology and internal dynamics in the case of the Global Justice Movement's Spanish arm. Likewise, Haluza-DeLay (2008) applies Bourdieu's social theory to analysis of the environmental movement, arguing that social movements should be viewed as specific fields where ideologically motivated practices are learned and, in turn, can challenge and transform the habitus. In both cases, movement culture is conceptualized with regards to both the broader context in which it finds itself as well as the particular internal group context existing between members; the internal dynamics of the movement, thus, are naturally conceived as the result of these interactions between broader and movement-specific context. Such an approach brings to the fore how practices reflect implicit and explicit knowledge, as well as learning, and how change can be achieved or indeed resisted.

My culturalist analysis makes explicit the community of practice to conceptualize movement-specific culture, the meta-level of the social movement that is in turn utilized for investigating internal movement dynamics. These internal movement dynamics are, for their part, conceptualized as construction processes, drawing upon the work of Melucci (1980, 1989, 1992, 1996) and his understanding of movement-as-process. Here, the types of questions that my social movement analysis explores are not concerned with issues of trajectory or outcome, but rather the constitution of the movement itself. This conceptual approach proves quite fruitful for investigating the research question at hand, and more precisely understanding the role of practices in the construction of the *shabāb al-thawra*.

Social Movement Construction Processes

The work of Melucci, a leading contributor to social movement theory, is characterized by his conceptualization of the social movement as process, as continual construction of the collective "we," in order to constitute collective

action (Bartholomew and Mayer, 1992:146-147). Melucci's aim is to understand how individuals become engaged in a social movement, how actors co-construct collective action, and their ascribed meanings within a context of dominating cultural and social codes and ensuing individual fragmentation. As he argues, social movements are in a continual process of negotiation and re-negotiation in order to solidify the collective. As opposed to a "unified empirical datum," the social movement is a "composite action system in which widely differing means, ends, and forms of solidarity and organization converge in a more or less stable manner" (1989:28). Melucci is adamantly against the reification of collective action as an object with fixed contours; rather, he suggests that collective action is representative of multiple processes that directly relate to the construction of cognitive frameworks and relationships between individuals (1989:19-20). It is necessary to understand these processes of construction, as well as the plurality of meanings and orientations and relationships that fuel them, in order to understand social movements (Bartholomew and Mayer, 1992:156-157). Taking a decidedly hermeneutic approach, importance is, as such, placed on the examination of construction processes and the meanings that actors attribute to them (Melucci, 1996). The objective of the analyst is to understand the various processes by which the collective is continually negotiated and maintained. It is the process of becoming that represents the social movement and that must be the domain of analysis.

Within his approach, these construction processes represent purposeful action that is nonetheless restrained by the broader context in which they are undertaken. They include the defining of individuals as part of a collective and the activation of relationships, the interpretations attributed to the environment (other actors, resources, opportunities, threats), as well as the negotiation of goals and the means by which they can be achieved (1989:26, 35). Melucci further argues that social movement practice is inherently reflexive in nature in that social claims are manifested in practices. He argues, for example, that a movement's organizational forms are not simply instrumental for the achievement of goals, but indeed act as the manifestation of the goals themselves: the form of the movement becomes itself a "cultural code" that challenges domination (1989:60). The challenges a movement poses are not simply contained in its message, claims, or the goals sought, but are also – crucially – represented in its very process of becoming and manner of being. In this sense, it is via analysis of the movement's continual construction within its own parameters of interpretation and negotiation, as

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well as how its own practices represent a form of prefiguration, that one can grasp the social movement. Social movements are as such not simply reduced to strategic processes as related to the achievement of goals, but their very existence and structure also come to represent contestation and claim making.

Within a culturalist approach to analysis, Melucci's conceptualization of the social movement as process corresponds quite well with my own aims to explore how practices of "youth" and "revolutionary," taken at the meta-level, inform a movement's internal dynamics of continual becoming. Indeed, as Melucci (1989:197) states, "within the boundaries of certain structures, people participate in cognitive, affective and interactive relationships and creatively transform their own social action and to a certain extent their social environment as well." Such a conceptualization strikingly resembles Wenger's communities of practice as pertaining to the negotiation of meaning, the development of mutual accountability, and the co-constitutive relationship between broader context and particular social space. Where I depart from Melucci's (1989:23,74) theoretical framework is the stress he places on the almost uniquely symbolic dimensions of the social movement and the relatively non-political character he attributes to it, as well as his focus on the control of information and knowledge as inherent to contemporary social movements. As opposed to him, I do not feel that social movements are exclusively concerned with contesting dominant cultural codes and signs as related to identity, but can also be concerned with questions of social order and distribution, as well as overtly political issues. In this sense, I offer a broader understanding of signs and symbolic challenges that include not simply identity issues but also distinctly political and economic ones. In this way, I believe that it is also necessary to examine the externally oriented dimensions of mobilization and strategy in order to fully capture the social movement. Put otherwise, in my own conceptualization of movement internal dynamics, it is the ideational as well as the organizational and strategic processes of construction that constitute the movement. My emphasis thus concerns social movement construction on a range of dimensions.

In situating this dissertation at the nexus between practice theory and social movement theory, the analysis of the revolutionary youth derives from the dual theoretical foundation in Wenger's communities of practice and Melucci's social movement construction processes, where analysis falls within the culturalist approach to social movement theory. In understanding practices as movement-specific culture acting at the meta-level, I

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conceptualize the practices of "youth" and "revolutionary" as informing social movement internal dynamics via construction along ideational, organizational, and strategic dimensions. Stated differently, the revolutionary youth is a social movement whose internal dynamics are negotiated and understood within specific historical-social parameters of knowledge and via patterns of meaningful action that reflect a specific community of practice of generational politics and revolutionary prefiguration. It is upon this conceptual foundation that the dissertation is based, and it is through this dual emphasis on community of practice and social movement construction processes that my analysis unfolds.

1.4 Outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation is structured around four core chapters. Chapter two provides an overview of my analytical framework and the methodology employed for research of the empirical case. The chapter presents the epistemological process by which I identify the social movement and the deliberate inclusions/exclusions being made. I am aware that the process of defining the social movement is inherently subjective, and that my identification of the movement can only ever be partial; nonetheless, for the purposes of this research, the *shabāb al-thawra* is empirically delimited to grassroots associations, campaigns, and networks/coalitions of activists, or what can be loosely categorized as "social movement organizations" (SMOs). Chapter two also presents the operationalizations of the construction processes that serve as the bases of analysis, utilizing six key concepts derived from social movement theory (grievances, emotions, resources, collective identity, political opportunity, and strategy), as well as the methodological approach and the manner in which empirical materials are generated and assessed. Of particular importance is the use of narrative analysis to trace the community of practice. Here, my position vis-à-vis the narratives remains that of the researcher: I am not merely recounting the revolutionary youth's stories as they tell them, but rather interpreting them through the conceptual lens of community of practice.

Chapters three, four, and five are dedicated to analysis of the empirical case. These chapters represent three distinct chronological periods of the revolutionary youth movement's development: the period of 2005-2010,

during which the movement's earliest organizations emerged; the 18 days of the 2011 uprising; and the period of 2011-2014, in which the social movement became a dominant actor in Egypt's political scene. Each chapter's argument is structured in the same manner, with the first section exploring the community of practice and in particular the contours of youth practice and revolutionary practice and the background understandings and attributions of meaning therein, and the second section analyzing how these practices influenced movement construction processes along the six key concepts.

Chapter three explores how the perception of distinct political generation as based on different practices of activism and contestation emerged through generational encounters, and notably within the Kifāya initiative and its *de facto* youth arm, Youth for Change. The discussion of the community of practice highlights the negotiation of joint enterprise, and the emphasis placed on radical change to the system of Mubarak's regime. Of particular importance is what I identify as the dignity narrative, a touchstone of the revolutionary youth, which encompasses the battle against physical/psychological abuse and impunity and the claims for justice and accountability. From here, chapter three delves into the analysis of movement construction processes, and how the elements of youth practice along with the joint enterprise of radical change and dignity informed social movement construction. Among the primary insights of the chapter is the identified role of social media in the construction of grievances and collective emotions.

Chapter four focuses on the occupation of Tahrir Square by protesters during the 2011 uprising – what I identify as a free space where prefiguration of revolutionary ideals was embodied and enacted. Emphasis here is placed on the interpretation of lived experience of what the revolutionary youth refer to as the "Republic of Tahrir" and the new social and political order that was manifested therein. Particular attention is given to what I identify as the revolutionary youth's social justice narrative, the vision for a post-revolution social contract based in cultural norms regarding redistributive social welfare, as well as the evolution of the community's joint enterprise and the emergence of revolutionary subjectivity based in prefigurative practice. From here, chapter four turns attention onto movement construction processes, revealing in particular how the revolutionary youth's evolving self-perception as vanguard translated into the organizational formalization of the social movement as well as the development of particular strategies and spaces of action that manifested prefiguration.

Chapter five is centered on how the community of practice's interpretations of historical-social context translated to a shared understanding of politics/the political as standing contrary to revolutionary struggle/the revolution, encompassed in what the *shabāb al-thawra* perceive as the crux of the post-Mubarak generational battle. Essential here is the revolutionary youth's understanding of politics and the institutional elements of the political process as barriers to the achievement of revolutionary ideals, and the ensuing interpretation of older political generations as actors of politics and, as such, anti-revolutionary. The chapter then explores how these precepts and attributed meanings of the political vs. the revolution influenced social movement construction, and the pointed efforts on the part of the *shabāb al-thawra* to manifest their notions of youth and revolutionary. The chapter emphasizes the internal learning and socialization processes of the movement, but also brings forth the inherent dilemmas and tensions that emerged at the level of strategic construction, and in particular the forging of tacit alliances with opponents and the emphasis on backward-looking demands as opposed to concrete proposals for the future.

Through these chapters, the development of the community of practice in relation to the collective interpretations of historical-social context, as well as the particular development of youth practice via generational encounters and revolutionary practice via prefiguration on Tahrir Square, serves as the meta-level analysis through which the movement's organizational, ideational, and strategic construction processes are assessed. The empirical chapters thus demonstrate precisely how youth practice and revolutionary practice inform the construction of the social movement. Further, these three chapters help unravel the puzzles posed at the beginning of this chapter regarding the behaviors and decisions of the *shabāb al-thawra* that seem either counterintuitive or to defy expectations, precisely by bringing forth how differences in understanding of politics/the political and revolutionary struggle/the revolution inform action. In this manner, the empirical analysis of this dissertation not only generates understanding of the revolutionary youth but also sheds important light on the complexity of the contemporary Egyptian political scene.

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Chapter 2: Analytical Framework and Method

The type of culturalist analysis of the revolutionary youth social movement that this dissertation envisages is rooted within the tradition of social constructivism, which places emphasis on shared understandings and the social construction of meaning as fundamental components in assessing a social movement. Such an approach, however, poses several analytical and methodological challenges. This includes determining how social movement construction processes can be operationalized and how these can in turn be represented in empirical materials, and more broadly how understanding of the movement's assumptive and interpretative schemes can be achieved. This chapter responds to these challenges by providing a detailed overview of the analytical framework and method utilized for the empirical research. The first section presents a brief overview of my interpretive process as well as my position vis-à-vis the social movement, including how the revolutionary youth are defined and identified. From here, the chapter presents the overarching analytical framework that guides the research, including the development of heuristic dimensions of analysis and the operationalization of construction processes in six key concepts derived from social movement theory. The third section considers the method employed, highlighting my use of four degrees of narrative analysis for "reading" the empirical case. Section four delves into the various empirical materials generated and gathered for the research, including semi-structured interviews, group interviews, and what I refer to as documentary texts of the movement, in order to triangulate empirical understanding. The chapter concludes with a brief note on ethical considerations, and in particular the question of trust and why I render interviewees anonymous.

2.1 Philosophical Assumptions

Inquiry on social action in the human sciences poses fundamental problems of epistemology, methodology, and the ethics of research. The debate regarding philosophy of science that divides social inquiry hinges on explanation versus understanding: does research seek to explain human action through identification of objective datum and causal mechanisms, or does it focus instead on understanding the meaning that actors attribute to their action, and in this sense attempt to understand phenomenon from the perspective of those who generate it (Hollis and Smith, 1990:1-15)? This discussion in the broad field of social science ultimately concerns what constitutes legitimate social scientific knowledge; where one falls within this debate determines how research is embarked upon, and more precisely how empirical material is constructed, interpreted, and reported by the researcher (Rosenberg, 2012:11-33). While it is true that most research finds some sort of middle ground, and that the self-situating in explanation or understanding is not entirely black or white, acknowledgement of one's own position within the philosophy of science is useful, as it influences the choice of methods as well as means of justifying claims of knowledge.

In this section, I situate myself within the interpretive turn in social science and the ensuing emphasis placed on processes of interpretation, understanding, and reflexivity. I elaborate how understanding was achieved via a continual dialogue between whole/part and understanding/ preunderstanding as well as the continual back-and-forth between deskwork and fieldwork. I also present my position vis-à-vis the social movement, which I posit is researcher-generated, and the epistemological process by which I identify the Egyptian revolutionary youth movement and the deliberate inclusions/exclusions being made here.

2.1.1 The Interpretivist Approach

My epistemological stance falls within the interpretive turn (Rabinow and Sullivan, 1987; Mottier, 2005) in the academy, and as such my philosophical assumptions regarding social research correspond with the move against positivism in favor of reflexivity. The interpretivist approach to social inquiry places emphasis on the contextually significant meanings that actors attribute to various social actions and interactions. It is this inherently meaningful

nature of social action that renders it distinct from natural or physical phenomenon; the goal of inquiry is to grasp these meanings. This understanding of meaning, in turn, is dependent on processes of interpretation as employed by the researcher, itself dependent on epistemological belief. Contrary to approaches that imply the researcher's ability to "objectify" meaning and remain external to the interpretative process (Schwandt, 2000:191-194), I hold that interpretation is influenced by position and context. In this way, I am skeptical that an objective reality of human action exists and can be uncovered and neutrally observed independent of the researcher's own interaction. On the contrary, I acknowledge and incorporate the complex relationship that exists between the process of knowledge production, the interpretation of this knowledge, and the role of the researcher therein. Human action is inherently mediated by broader linguistic, historical, political, and symbolic frameworks of meaning and as such the process of understanding on the part of the researcher is necessarily influenced by her position in quotidian life, in social relations and identities, in institutional settings, and in broader structural, ideological, and scientific contexts (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012: 66-68; 91-112).

In acknowledging this, I heed the call for reflective/reflexive research as prescribed by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009): that attention must be paid to the positionality of the researcher and how this affects the creation of knowledge at all stages of research. Reflexivity in research "turns attention 'inwards', towards the person of the researcher, the relevant research community, society as a whole, intellectual and cultural traditions, and the central importance, as well as problematic nature, of language and narrative (the form of presentation) of the research context" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009:9). Emphasis is placed on critical self-reflection, on awareness and disclosure of my own biases in interpretation, as well as how the interaction with the research subject opens a space for the co-construction of new meaning. I do not assume, however, that it is impossible to elevate one interpretation over another, or that all interpretations are equal given inherent researcher bias. On the contrary, certain interpretations can get closer to the meanings of action and the greater ideational universe in which they are enacted, as understood by the actors (Schwandt, 2000:201-202). Madison (1988) offers a useful set of criteria for supporting the validity of a given interpretation that nonetheless does not signify direct correspondence between "objective" reality and researcher representation. Here, it is the internal coherence of the interpretation with respect to empirical materials as

well as the external coherence with respect to context and the broader universe of interpretations that serve to justify claims of understanding. Essential is a process of argumentation, of making explicit why certain interpretations are favored over others, with reference to both the specific empirical material as well as the theoretical and historical contexts (Madison, 1988:30). Below, I provide an overview of my own interpretive process and the means through which understanding is achieved by way of preamble before delving into the analytical arguments in chapters three, four, and five.

Processes of Understanding

To achieve my own claim of understanding, I structure my process of interpretation around two basic (and interconnected) hermeneutic circles: the circle of whole/part and the circle of understanding/preunderstanding (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009:96). Here, empirical materials are seen as parts (individual texts, actions, speech patterns, etc…) that must be linked to the whole (the wider context of meaning, lifeworld) in which they are produced, whereby penetrating the meaning of one allows for penetrating the meaning of the other in a circular fashion. Likewise, preunderstanding refers to the researcher's own *a priori* interpretations that both influence and are influenced by the evolving understanding of the research object.
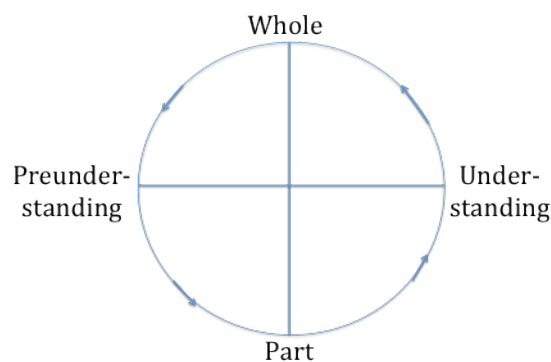
In my own process of interpretation, I revolve through different aspects of part, whole, preunderstanding, and understanding: engagement of *a priori* assumptions; questioning of the empirical material; dialogue with those researched; and reconstruction of the broader context. The engagement of *a priori* understandings serves as the point of departure, based on theoretical

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literature and acquired knowledge of the empirical case to form a cohesive and consistent interpretation. This also involves recognition of my own positionality with regards to language, social setting, and political context and how these may influence my interpretation. The second aspect, questioning of the empirical material, involves the attempt to reconcile each individual part with the *a priori* interpretation. Through this process, a deep questioning of the empirical materials takes place in order to illuminate points of clash or contradiction: where does my *a priori* interpretation fail to reconcile with the empirical material at hand? And what are alternative interpretations? The third aspect involves dialogue with the research subject, here not materials but rather other persons, regarding meanings and interpretation. My view of this dialogical process does not see the research subject as an informant who holds objective answers; rather, I see the process of discussion and exchange as creating mutual understanding and entirely new interpretations. In this sense, I – as researcher – am not independent of the research problem or a neutral observer but rather influence it[4]. Finally, my process turns to reconstruction, where the overarching context in which the empirical material acquires its meaning and significance is reconsidered and revised, thus offering a new interpretation of the lifeworld of those researched.

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[4] This co-process of knowledge production in social movement research has been particularly well developed by Touraine and his method of sociological intervention (see for example Touraine, 1978).
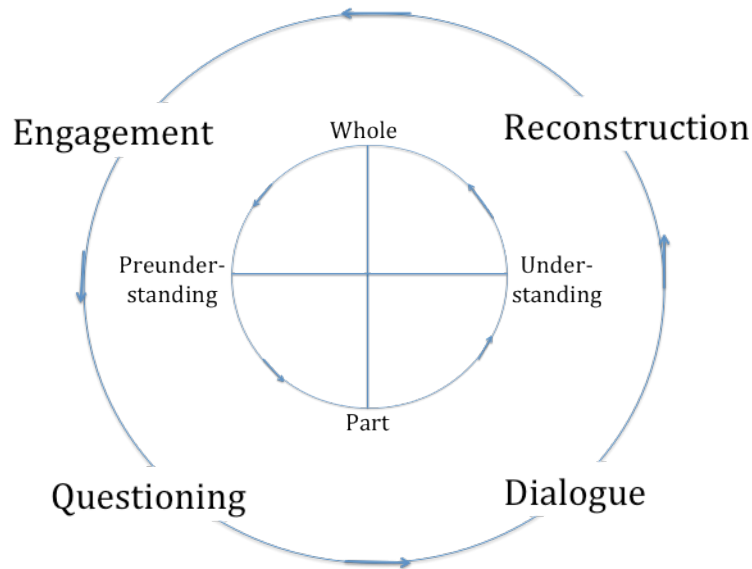
The four aspects of my process of understanding are interrelated and do not always progress in the neat and orderly fashion presented in the figure above. Nonetheless, this provides the reader an overview of the assumptions underlying the research method as well as how the interpretation presented in this dissertation is justified.

Dialogue with the Field

Central to my process of understanding and interpretation is my own belief in personal, lived experience as fundamental source of knowledge. I am acutely aware of the degree of nuance in understanding that emerges from prolonged, personal engagement in the field. This does not imply a preference for grounded theory or overly empiricist approaches to social science research; on the contrary, I disagree with grounded theory's premise that conceptual models prior to material gathering necessarily impose faulty concepts and explanations (for a comparison of grounded theory's primary analytical models, see Glaser, 1992; Walker and Myrick, 2006.). Nor do I believe that knowledge can only be generated by sensory experience. I argue, however, that numerous elements of social life – linguistic practices, cultural conventions, parameters of shared meaning, collective memory, amongst others – are neither immediately visible nor easily gleaned, yet awareness of

them can greatly influence analysis of behavior and social action. It is through long-term and quotidian dialogue with the field that such knowledge can be acquired.

To this end, my process of understanding and interpretation is founded on the continual back-and-forth between the theoretical literature and the empirical understandings, which itself mirrors the continual back-and-forth between deskwork and fieldwork. My interpretation of the *shabāb al-thawra* evolved over three field studies to Cairo, Egypt for a total of seven months (October-December 2012; April-May 2013; October-November 2013). The first field mission served to identify the precise research object – the revolutionary youth – to be investigated. These months entailed broad and wide-reaching interviews with a number of different types of social actors as well as Egyptian political scientists and journalists in order to determine borders of the movement and identify the criteria upon which inclusion/exclusion is based. The goal was not to test a model or hypothesis; rather, it was to refine my initial assumptions and empirical delimitations. Upon my return, an analytical framework for analysis of this newly defined social movement was proposed, based on the empirical understandings obtained as well as a revisiting of the theoretical literature on social movements. The second field mission signified the application of this analytical framework through investigation of construction processes with the constituents of the now-defined movement. Upon return from the field, this framework was once again refined through dialogue with the theoretical literature, allowing for the clarification of concepts and the development of a heuristic device for analysis. The final field mission served to refine the central research *problématique* under consideration, and specifically the dimensions of "youth" and "revolutionary" as practices that shape the movement's internal construction processes. This was accomplished through another round of research with the movement and its various constituent members.

This approach to understanding relies on both inductive and deductive methods, as inspired by adapative theory, which is well suited to research questions that seek to understand the intersections between system/social setting (such as culture, institutions, power, and social relations) and interpretations/lifeworld (such as practice and action)(Layder, 1998:20, 134-139). In this way, my investigation both relies on prior theoretic models as well as new information from the field; the analytical framework, in turn, both shapes and is shaped by this dialogue between theory and empirical

material. The continual back-and-forth between theory and the empirical corresponds well to the research problem being addressed in this dissertation, and in particular understanding the relationship between practices, movement dynamics, and broader historical-social context and how these three elements shape and re-shape one another.

Identifying the Movement

Identifying the contours of the *shabāb al-thawra* as a social movement is a challenging task, given the ambiguous use of the moniker in Egypt today. As discussed in the first chapter, the term "revolutionary youth" is both immediately understood and yet highly vague: though it is readily applied to signify young(er) activists that revindicate the slogans of the 2011 uprising, who exactly this term represents in both sociological and organizational terms remains imprecise. The *shabāb al-thawra* is not a single organization or group. It does not have a unique website, phone number, email address, or office, nor does it have a distinct or even obvious set of members. Instead, it is composed of an ever-evolving body of committed as well as occasional activists, organized in different associations and/or networks of varying degrees of formality. There is constant fluctuation as organizations are formed and disbanded, as coalitions are created and fall apart, and as members join or abandon the movement. Many revolutionary youth activists do not even recognize themselves as part of a broader social movement in the sociological sense of the term; they nonetheless do harbor a strong sense of themselves and their groups as part of the *shabāb al-thawra*, and hold precise and consistent criteria for defining who is and who is not revolutionary youth. As such, my identification of the revolutionary youth as a social movement is not based on observation of an easily identifiable collective actor but rather stems from an iterative dialogue generated between empirical understanding of these criteria and social movement theory. In this way, a defined set of characteristics is established to determine who forms part of the movement and, hence, to render "visible" the movement as well as its frontiers of inclusion/exclusion.

My epistemological process involves understanding the foundations of collective identity shared by the revolutionary youth, and then using these to create criteria to categorize which players are/are not part of the social movement. I posit that the *shabāb al-thawra* possess a common identity inherently found in a shared understanding of politics and the political (in the abstract) and the revolution (the meaning of the 2011 uprising), as well as a

relatively codified set of practices related to their activism, including the use of horizontal and democratic decision-making procedures and the centering of action in the street (as opposed to formal political institutions or electoral instances). It is this combination of background understandings and attributions of meaning, along with their manifestation into a precise way of conducting activism and contestation, that the revolutionary youth employ to reflexively define and identify themselves. As such, my criteria for determining the social movement are based on 1) adherence to this set of values, ideals, and goals, with regards to the meaning of "revolution"; and 2) shared practices that they view as unique to the *shabāb al-thawra*. This criteria is utilized to identify organizations and groups who represent the constituent parts of the broader social movement.

Inclusions and Exclusions

The process of defining a social movement entails not only deliberate inclusions but also exclusions, undertaken both for analytical reasons as well as heuristic ones, which must be made explicit in order to grasp the empirical scope under investigation. For the purposes of this dissertation and my own defining of the *shabāb al-thawra*, one of the most important exclusions involves the very terms "youth" and "revolutionary" themselves. The social movement that I identify here does not include all youth activists in Egypt, nor all young persons under a certain age, nor even a sociological category. Likewise, the term "revolutionary" is not a catchall for participants in the 2011 uprising, and as such does not include the numerous other social groups – as well as millions of unaffiliated individuals – who actively sought Mubarak's departure. As explained in the introduction, these terms are linked to specific practices endemic to this particular community, and as a result are relatively narrow in their scope. For the purposes of this dissertation, the term "revolutionary youth" refers exclusively to the social movement that I have defined.

In addition, the movement identification I propose here is limited to grassroots associations, campaigns, and networks/coalitions of activists, or what can be loosely categorized as social movement organizations (SMOs). This decision aligns with my conceptualization of the social movement as continual processes of ideational, organizational, and strategic construction – processes that can be best ascertained within organizations where negotiation of meaning takes place in daily routine. I am thus explicitly excluding both independent activists who are not officially affiliated with an organization as

well as occasional protesters who participate in major mobilization events only. In this way, my definition of the social movement also excludes other types of actors, such as political parties, trade unions, or artist collectives, all of who may be closely associated with the *shabāb al-thawra* but who do not fit the criteria for inclusion, specifically as related to practices. The revolutionary youth movement as defined here is limited to the various constituent SMOs that constitute the broader movement, and the pool of activists who are official members of these groups and who participate in the daily affairs and management of their organization (in addition, of course, to major protest events).

Below is what can only ever be a partial list of social movement organizations that form the Egyptian revolutionary youth movement. Dozens of other groups – if not more – could easily be included based on my criteria, yet fail to appear on this list because they had either disbanded or had not yet been founded when fieldwork was taking place, or because I am simply not aware of their existence. As of this writing, there are perhaps other small SMOs that could rightfully be considered part of the *shabāb al-thawra* based on my criteria, yet are unintentionally absent here. This list is not meant to provide a definitive portrait of the *shabāb al-thawra* but rather presents the most prominent constituent groups, both past and present, that I have identified as part of the social movement and that are assessed in this dissertation.

Constituent Member	Years Active	Description
Primary Social Movement Organizations		
Youth for Change	2005-2006	Unofficial youth wing of the Kifāya movement, the group initiated several important protests and sought organizational independence in order to specifically practice its generational activism. Is considered here the progenitor of the *shabāb al-thawra,* as most of the movement's current leaders originated here.
April 6th Youth Movement	2008-Present	Founded in 2008 on Facebook by a group of young activists. Was a major player in the protest movements pre-2011. The pre-eminent social movement organization in the revolutionary youth movement, thanks to its media dominance and very public profile.

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We Are All Khaled Said	2010-2012	Founded in 2010 on Facebook following the brutal beating of Khaled Said at the hands of the police. Quickly gained membership throughout 2010, organizing "Silent Stand" protests in Cairo and Alexandria. The group never moved beyond social networking in terms of organizational structure. Has mostly declined since the 2011 uprising as members have gravitated towards other formal social movement organizations or political parties.
April 6th – Democratic Front	2011-Present	Founded in 2011 as a splinter group of the April 6th Youth Movement because of perceived deficiencies in democratic governance of the original April 6th. The two are rivals yet co-mobilize to demonstrate solidarity and their shared work as revolutionary youth.
Revolutionary Socialists	1980s-Present	Founded in the 1980s as a Trotskyist organization. Was a key organizer of the 25 January 2011 protests, and has over the years attempted to form political parties, notably a workers party, as well as a coalition of socialist parties. The only organization within the broader social movement that overtly claims to have a political ideology.
Smaller Social Movement Organizations		
Gabha Hora (Liberty Front)	2010-Present	Founded in July 2010. A relatively small group before the 2011 uprising, it has grown significantly since but remains marginal within the revolutionary youth movement as a whole.
The Justice and Freedom Movement	2010-Present	Founded in July 2010. A relatively small group before the 2011 uprising, yet nonetheless an important organizer of the 25 January 2011 protest. The group has grown significantly since but remains marginal within the revolutionary youth movement as a whole.
Maspero Youth Union	2011-Present	Founded in March 2011. Predominantly Coptic, the group was formed in order to advocate Coptic civil rights and full citizenship for Christian minorities outside the representational dominance of the Coptic Orthodox Church.
Salafyo Costa	2011-Present	Founded in April 2011 following a protest event. Predominantly Salafi, the group promulgates the values of the revolutionary youth movement through its activities and internal membership structure, namely tolerance and co-habitation.
No Military Trials for Civilians	2011-Present	Founded as a campaign in 2011. Primarily concerned with achieving a moratorium on the military trial of citizens. Today functions as a formal

		social movement organization.
Masry Hor (Free Egypt)	2011-Present	Founded in 2011, the group sees itself as a more ideological and less action-based constituent of the movement. The group is quite small (around 15 members) but actively seeks to organize the *shabāb al-thawra* through coalition building.
Kazeboon (Liars)	2011-Present	Founded in December 2011 as a campaign against the abuses of the military. The group creates films and montages documenting abuses by the SCAF, and, subsequently the Muslim Brotherhood and the post-coup regime. These films are then posted online and screened in neighborhoods and public spaces.
Masrena (Our Egypt)	2011-Present	Founded in the spring 2011. The group is primarily concerned with continuing revolutionary struggle and emphasizing the need to train youth as future leaders in order to ensure the realization of the revolution.
Mosireen (We Are Determined)	2011-Present	Founded in 2011 as a media activism collective concerned with documenting and archiving events of the 2011 uprising and thereafter. The group was responsible for Tahrir Cinema, screenings of footage of the uprising and transition process.
Coptic Lobby	2013-Present	Founded in 2013 in response to frustrations with the Maspero Youth Union. A Coptic initiative, the group advocates full citizenship for religious minorities.
Coalitions of SMOs		
Revolutionary Youth Coalition	2011-2012	Founded during the 2011 uprising. Included many of the principal social movement organizations of the revolutionary youth movement at that time, including the April 6th Youth Movement and the Justice and Freedom Movement, as well as prominent activists. The coalition disbanded in June 2012 at the moment of the presidential election.
Alliance of Revolutionary Forces	2011-Present	Founded in spring of 2011 as an alternative coalition, composed of a variety of new activist groups that emerged after the 2011 uprising.
Revolutionary Youth Union	2011-Present	Founded in spring of 2011 as an alternative coalition, composed of a variety of new activist groups that emerged after the 2011 uprising.

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Gabha Tariq Thawra (Way of the Revolution Front, also known as Thuar)	2013-Present	Founded in the aftermath of the 3 July 2013 military coup. Represents a coalition of the most prominent organizations and networks of the revolutionary youth movement, including the Revolutionary Socialists, April 6th Youth Movement, April 6th-Democractic Front, amongst others.

With these precisions regarding interpretation and the movement itself in mind, I now turn to the concrete aspects through which the research is undertaken, including the framework for social movement analysis and the methods for the empirical inquiry.

2.2 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework established for this dissertation involves the operationalization of social movement construction processes in order to understand how these are informed by practices of generational activism and prefiguration. As this dissertation is situated within the culturalist approach to social movement theory, whereby practices are understood as operating at the meta-level of the movement's internal culture, the core analytical focus is placed on the ideational, organizational, and strategic construction processes that I posit constitute the revolutionary youth movement. In this vein, the analytical framework relies upon a heuristic device for empirically grasping these processes, namely by condensing the social movement into three basic dimensions through which elements of construction can be understood: the individual actor dimension, the intra-movement dimension, and the extra-movement dimension. Within each dimension, the processes under investigation are further operationalized through the use of six key concepts directly derived from social movement theory: grievances, emotions, resources, collective identity, political opportunity, and strategy – all of which are conceptualized in the constructivist vein of the literature. While this analytical framework consists of operationalizations from social movement theory, practices lie analytically prior. In this sense, youth and revolutionary practice serve as the overarching parameters through which construction processes are assessed. This section presents how practices are analytically utilized, how social movement construction is broken down into three heuristic dimensions, and the six key concepts that guide the research.

2.2.1 Practices at Meta-Level of Analysis

As presented in the introduction, this dissertation lies at the nexus between practice theory and social movement theory, where I situate my research specifically within the culturalist approach to social movement analysis. In this vein, I take practices – socially meaningful patterns of action – as internal movement culture that permeates and influences all dimensions of internal movement dynamics – here, ideational, organizational, and strategic construction processes that constitute the movement. Practices, and in particular youth generational practice and revolutionary prefigurative practice, thus act at the meta-level of the social movement's construction. In the analysis of the *shabāb al-thawra*, youth and revolutionary practices serve as the lens through which I interpret the movement's various construction processes. The practices themselves are not formally operationalized within the analytical framework; nonetheless, they must be brought to the fore in order to undertake the culturalist analysis of the movement.

As such, the ascertaining of these two fundamental practices – along with the background knowledge/attributions of meaning and definition of joint enterprise they represent – can be better understood as analytically before the framework. Given my theoretical alignment with the communities of practice approach, I apprehend these practices through investigation of generational encounters and free spaces in order to grasp the meaningful patterns of behavior and how these reflect historically-socially situated understandings of politics, the political, and the revolution. In essence, this prior dimension to the analytical framework involves an assessment of the community of practice itself in order to grasp the universe of understandings and knowledge, and their translation into competent performances, which will then inform the analysis undertaken through the analytical framework.

2.2.2 Heuristic Dimensions of Analysis

Given that my conceptualization of the social movement places emphasis on process and the continual negotiation and maintenance of the collective, the analytical framework is primarily concerned with the operationalization of the ideational, organizational, and strategic construction processes that constitute the revolutionary youth movement. To achieve this, I concretize the social movement into three different dimensions upon which these

processes take place: the individual actor dimension, the intra-movement dimension, and the extra-movement dimension. These are directly derived from social movement theory and what we know regarding social movements and how they exist and operate as a collective actor. At each dimension of analysis, specific and empirically operationalized questions are asked that directly pertain to the negotiation and continual becoming of the social movement. In this way, each dimension represents a specific inquiry into the movement that is itself an operationalization of construction processes. Taken in their ensemble, these three dimensions represent the core construction activities of the social movement.

The concretizing of the social movement into three dimensions of analysis – and the ensuing units that correspond with each – raises the obvious "level of analysis" problem in social science and the choice of investigation of micro, meso, or macro-level phenomena. The levels of analysis problem has implications for concepts and methodology, as different levels of analysis necessitate different modes of research and as generalizations from one level of analysis cannot be inferred from others (the so-called "ecological fallacy," see Singer, 1961; Moul, 1973). In the analytical framework here, the classical level of analysis problem is alleviated given that my scientific approach does not aim at causal explanation. Here, the dimensions of analysis should not be understood as "visible" within the revolutionary youth movement, nor are they latent structures through which collective action takes places. Rather, my operationalization of the movement into dimensions of analysis is a heuristic device that allows for complex processes to be empirically identified and analyzed by asking specific questions related to the social movement and the construction of the collective. In this sense, the dimensions of analysis are utilized in order to formulate different types of questions regarding the constitution of the collective actor upon which organizational, ideational, and strategic processes can be gleaned. I am aware that a Meluccian conceptualization of the social movement alongside an analytical framework proposing distinct dimensions can read as problematic, as an incoherent mixture of process-oriented and structuralist approaches; however, I stress that these dimensions are not rigid levels as conceptualized in international relations theory but are instead fluid and interdependent aspects comprising a social movement's self-constitution. Indeed, the types of questions that are being asked at each dimension reflect the core issues that are encompassed in Melucci's conceptualization of the social movement, and specifically the dual

emphasis on individual units and collective units. Moreover, I do not associate each dimension with one specific construction process; rather, I recognize that various construction processes transcend the different dimensions in interconnected ways. Thus although I am bounding social action in a strategic way for my analysis, this is a researcher tool that allows for quite broad processes to be broached in a manageable manner.

The Individual Actor Dimension

How do individuals become engaged in the larger socio-political project of the Egyptian revolutionary youth movement? A social movement can only exist in the form of a collective and as such it is essential to understand how such a collective is formed (and re-formed) if we are to fully flesh out movement construction. This dimension of analysis seeks to understand the move from individual to collective. Of interest here is less the practical elements of joining the movement than the social-psychological moves that take place within the individual. For individuals to join the revolutionary youth movement, they must come to identify with the movement's cause and reconceive of themselves as members of a collective. This requires adherence to a movement's mission and a move from a passive to an active role in the political arena.

Such moves are not undertaken by the individual alone; on the contrary, the social movement itself plays a critical mediating role in influencing the individual's interpretations and realignment. As such, this dimension must be considered from two separate perspectives, that of the individual activist (i.e. the move from individual to member of a collective) and that of the movement itself (i.e. the efforts at recruitment). From the perspective of the individual activist, this dimension of analysis broadly relates to social-psychological processes that are at play. How do individuals overcome the barriers of fear and of apathy to join an oppositional movement, and how do they come to associate their own personal experiences with the collective claims as expressed by the movement? From the perspective of the movement itself, this analytical dimension addresses more specifically the question of recruitment and how the movement seeks to enlarge its constituent base. This considers the various strategies utilized to shape individuals' understandings so that they come to identify with the movement.

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The Intra-Movement Dimension

How do the constituent organizations of the social movement constitute themselves operationally and ideationally? This second dimension of analysis concerns the internal process of movement construction, specifically as related to the movement's SMOs. This includes the construction of each individual organization as well as the interactions between the various constituent parts that contribute to the movement in its ensemble. This analytical dimension considers two different types of materials that are at the disposal of the movement in its process of construction: the organizational and the ideational. Organizational materials may include a wide range of concrete goods such as membership fees, in-kind donations, and other types of funding; communication and outreach tools such as social media; and physical structures such as offices. Organizational materials may also include non-tangible goods such as member training, management capacity, and leadership skills. Ideational materials, for their part, may include cultural references and touchstones; socio-cultural or religious values; and shared experiences or collective memory.

Of interest here, though, is not simply the identification of these materials, but rather analysis of how they are utilized by the movement in its internal construction and as a reflection of goals. In other words, how the movement is built along operational and ideational lines. With regards to individual SMOs, this can include internal procedures and decision-making processes, rules of membership and conduct, and other issues related to governance and organizational values. At the movement-wide level, the construction and consolidation of the movement can include the establishment of collaborative structures and forums of exchange, such as coalitions. This also includes the overarching values, principles, and moral positions of the movement.

Examining the internal construction of the movement along operational and ideational lines reveals the changes in strength and weakness at the level of the individual organizations as well as at the movement-wide level, including problems of power struggle or rivalry that may have emerged over time. This inquiry also points to the creation of ideational borders and boundaries between the movement and other players in the political realm and how these have evolved over the movement's lifespan.

The Extra-Movement Dimension

How does the Egyptian revolutionary youth movement act and interact in the broader arena of action and contestation? This third dimension of analysis seeks to understand how the movement positions itself in the political sphere, and how this positioning is reflected in its public profile. This level concerns specifically two dimensions of construction at the extra-movement level: the instances of mobilization and collective action carried out by the movement; and the external relations with other players, namely opponents, allies, bystanders, and the media. With regards to actions, this is mainly concerned with the specific operational and ideational repertoire of contention used by the movement, including tactics such as marches and sit-ins, as well as the slogans and frames employed. Regarding external relations, this includes the structure of alliances, the identification (and denouncing) of opponents, and efforts directed at bystanders and the media.

This analytical dimension does not limit itself to merely identifying these actions and interactions, but rather pursues deeper analysis by seeking to understand what factors shape the movement's decision to act and interact the way it does. In other words, of interest is understanding the movement's calculations of its opportunities and threats within the broader arena, and how these become translated to specific decisions with regards to other players as well as displays of collective action. In assessing the question of extra-movement construction, changes in the movement's positioning within the political arena become apparent. These construction processes take place at the movement-wide level via coalitions or other discussions within the movement (i.e. across its individual constituent parts), or instances of collective mobilization.

2.2.3 Key Concepts

To build the analytical framework, the research utilizes six key concepts from social movement theory: grievances, emotions, resources, collective identity, political opportunity, and strategy. These represent common, widely accepted concepts that have proven both their theoretical and empirical utility across the literature and various paradigms of the subfield. Indeed, these concepts may be considered umbrella terms: political opportunity, for example, can be broken down into a number of different sub-concepts (external allies, elite rifts, state repression, etc…), as can strategy (frames, recruitment, tactical

repertoires, etc…), among others. My choice to utilize broader concepts under which more specific ones can be housed corresponds to the type of analysis being undertaken in this dissertation: as I am interested in the construction of the social movement and the various processes of constitution of the collective, broader concepts that capture multiple different processes are more analytically useful than rather limited concepts that explore only specific questions. Moreover, my intent is to maintain common taxonomy with other social movement researchers in order to contribute directly to ongoing dialogue rather than attempt lexical innovation. That being said, my use of these concepts demonstrates their social constructivist reading in the theoretical literature. In this sense, these concepts are not treated as reified objects but rather constructs by social movement actors.

My choice of these six concepts is both empirically and theoretically driven, in reflection of the approach outlined in section 2.1.1. At the empirical level, these six concepts are selected based on the type of information and understanding generated from fieldwork and in this sense represent the dialogic process of interpretation. In addition, these concepts are selected for their analytical utility in operationalizing organizational, ideational, and strategic construction processes as well as their ability to elucidate the key questions posed at each dimension of analysis. Grievances, emotions, and collective identity, for example all capture elements of ideational and strategic construction; while resources, political opportunity, and strategy encompass organizational and strategic construction. The use of these six concepts allows for overlapping processes to be captured, highlighting the links between the concepts; this is further enhanced by assigning to each concept a specific dimension of analysis. At the individual actor dimension, which considers the move from individual to collective, the relevant concepts are grievances and emotions; at the second dimension, which considers intra-movement construction, the concepts utilized are resources and collective identity; finally, at the third dimension, which looks at the movement's external actions in the political arena, the concepts put forth are political opportunity and strategy. Because the construction processes captured by different concepts overlap into different dimensions of analysis, the links between the dimensions are revealed.

The Individual Actor Dimension

Grievances

Grievances – real or perceived causes of complaint, and especially of injustice – have always been understood as underpinning any social movement, be it a rights based movement in an advanced democracy, a non-violent revolution in an authoritarian regime, or a transnational movement concerned with some aspect of global governance (Davies, 1962; Smelser, 1962; Geschwender, 1968; Gurr, 1970; Walsh, 1981; Gamson et al., 1982; Mueller, 1992; Johnston, 1994). Indeed, virtually all definitions of the social movement as used by the field's scholars acknowledge the existence of grievances in social movement emergence, be it implicitly or explicitly. Individuals, organized as a collective, form and participate in social movements because they hold shared grievances; their aim through the movement is to address these grievances and promote their resolution.

Despite the recognition of grievances as fundamental to the formation of social movements, the concept nonetheless remains under-theorized in the literature (Klandermans, 2001). Within social movement theory, it is arguably in the collective behavior research where grievances and their role in social movements are most analytically clear. Founded largely on the work of Durkheim, this body of literature stemming from the 1950s and 1960s conceives of the social movement as the result of strains to and breakdown in the normal social order, including structural changes in socio-economic life, that lead to situations of disequilibrium, or malintegration, or some other form of social malaise (Marx and Holzner, 1977:417-419). Such changes lead simultaneously to deterioration in social and moral constraints, and create new pressures on the psychological states of individuals with respect to their actual or perceived situation, thereby invoking an atmosphere of excitability, emotionality, and irrationality in a collective contagion effect (Buechler, 2004). Grievances are viewed as a byproduct of these strains and breakdowns that the society has undergone. They are collectively shared and equally experienced by certain groups or classes or categories of the population and, when combined with a perception of injustice, form the ideological basis for mobilization, where the social movement is specifically aimed at responding to the deteriorated social order (Johnston et al., 1994:3-4). In this vein, structurally produced grievances are conceived as contributing directly to the formation of a social movement through the collective, negative psychological effect they invoke.

As the collective behavior paradigm fell largely out of favor, theorization on grievances somewhat subsided and the concept has assumed less prominence in analyses of contemporary movements; nonetheless, some scholars, and especially Klandermans (2001; and with Roefs and Olivier, 2001), are making important efforts to contribute to the concept's development. This conceptual work builds off the collective behavior paradigm, while nonetheless adding significant nuance with regards to how grievances are formulated and received and removing the overly structuralist bias and premise of automatism of previous theories. Klandermans' work displays a dual interest in both the process of grievance construction by a social movement as well as the manner of appropriation by individuals, considering both the "supply" and "offer" side of grievance. On the side of the social movement itself, Klandermans, Roefs, and Olivier (2001) argue that the relevant grievances for a social movement are not individual but rather are systematic to an entire group, based on some form of injustice or inequality that is directed in a non-random manner. Related to Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation theory, grievances are constructed by some form of comparison or evaluation, which could either include comparing one's group against itself over time or against other groups. Grievance construction relies particularly on the sentiment of injustice, which has been identified as the most salient characteristic in grievances (Gamson et al., 1982; see also Walsh, 1981). This perception of injustice can rely either on notions of distributive justice (concerned with equity in outcomes) or procedural justice (concerned with fairness in method of distribution).

On the side of individuals, Klandermans (2001) identifies four distinct vectors by which individuals adopt articulated grievances: interpersonal interactions (and especially those within personal social networks), media discourse, experiential knowledge (either personal direct experience or that of others), and popular wisdom. Citing Gamson (1992), Klandermans states that media discourse is useful for assigning blame, whereas experiential knowledge and popular wisdom lend to the interpretation and "emotional loading" of the information (2001:279). By extrapolating the channels of appropriation, Klandermans (and, by extension, Gamson) adds crucial intermediary steps between the social construction of grievance by social movement actors and the development of a collective out of individuals.

The analytical framework developed here elevates grievances as an explicit factor by which individuals come to associate themselves as revolutionary youth. I build off the work of Klandermans and his dual

approach to both the supply and the offer side of grievance construction. Within my analytical framework, grievances are understood not as by-products of structural inequalities or changes in the socio-economic and/or political system, but as socially constructed interpretations of a societal malaise, injustice, or some other complaint. They are constructed with the explicit purpose of mobilization in mind; indeed, the construction of grievances represents one of the "core framing tasks" (Benford and Snow, 2000:615-618) of social movement actors in the creation of collective action frames (see discussion of strategy below). Grievances are constructed by social movement actors through diagnostic framing, the process by which a problem or issue comes to be collectively understood and its source commonly attributed. While the modalities of this can vary, the essential component to a diagnostic frame is the attribution of responsibility, as it allows for directing blame against a common target (Snow and Benford, 1992:137). In my conceptualizing of grievance construction from the side of the social movement, I also place emphasis on injustice and the use of comparison/evaluation as a means of pinpointing the social complaint and attributing responsibility. On the side of the individual, my use of grievance focuses on the means of appropriation, as based on Klandermans' vectors. To summarize, the analysis explores how grievances are constructed via diagnostic framing and the processes of comparison/evaluation, specifically with regards to justice issues, as well the channels by which these grievances are in turn appropriated by individuals.

Emotions

Amongst the six key concepts being put forth in this analytical framework, emotions are by far the least developed and utilized in the literature on social movements, although certain scholars, and in particular Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta (2000, 2001, 2004) are reviving the analysis of emotions to understand social phenomenon (see also Gould, 2004, 2009; Flam and King, 2005; Traïni, 2009). One reason emotions have been underutilized is the tendency to dichotomize "rational" action and emotional reaction (McAdam and Aminzade, 2002; Oliver et al., 2003:233); emotions have as such been excluded from analysis as they are difficult to operationalize and are seen as exclusively byproducts as opposed to deliberate processes. Emotions have also become closely associated with social-psychological branches of social science, and are utilized with respect to individual as opposed to collective phenomenon (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2010:172-175). Moreover,

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the term "emotions" actually covers a broad range of different emotional processes and feelings, ranging anywhere from immediate urges to general moods to long-term sentiments (Jasper, 2011:286-287); this diversity in typology can weaken the concept by its imprecision. Nonetheless, emotions are recognized by social movement theorists as playing a fundamental role in the maintenance of movements and in mobilization/de-mobilization (Jasper, 2011:286). Emotions serve a critical role in developing the sentiment of a collectivity and long-term commitment to a cause. For example, emotions such as fear and shame can hinder individual participation in a social movement, while shock, hope, and pride can work in favor of mobilization efforts. A prime example of this is the moral outrage that the Three Mile Island nuclear accident provoked and its contribution to the creation of a movement among a previously demobilized population (Walsh, 1981; see also Wettergren, 2005 for a similar analysis of moral shock and its role in mobilization). The sentiment of a collectivity is strengthened when emotions are shared, and even "negative" emotions such as anxiety can contribute to reinforcing the sense of group when commonly felt across a mobilized population (see for example Ketchley, 2014). Indeed, for anyone who has ever participated in a protest or a social movement more generally, it is impossible to deny the wide variety of emotions that are not individual but on the contrary shared across participants, and the impact these emotions have on reinforcing adherence. There is an emotional communion that occurs in collective action that is not incidental to a movement but rather an essential element in the construction of the collective.

As with grievances, the utilization of emotions as a concept in social movement theory emphasizes their formation as social constructs that embody a diverse range of shared social feelings as opposed to individual psychological states. In this sense, they are expressed in manners that follow social rules and are interpreted through specific socio-cultural precepts; indeed, the emotions that are most relevant to politics are those that are more cognitively constructed (Goodwin et al., 2001:12-13). What is essential is not merely the identification of emotions that are present (or absent) but rather explicitly how they contribute to collective action. Emotions are constructed by movement actors in order to attract new members, convert bystanders into activists, and sustain dedication to the movement amongst the rank and file – in other words, to build a collective out of individuals (see for example Broqua and Fillieule, 2009; Sommier, 2010). This can include both rhetorical as well as embodied actions that are specifically aimed at the construction or

the conversion of shared feelings. For example, diagnostic framing for the purpose of grievance construction can also allude to moral outrage as provoked by injustice; in transmitting the frame, thus, a shared emotional response is also inherently incorporated (Gamson, 1992:73). Likewise, acts of solidarity can generate emotions that reinforce loyalty to the collective (Hunt and Benford, 2004:434). Emotions, of course, can also be generated in more spontaneous fashions, as in crowds during instance of mobilization; however, the means by which they are interpreted demonstrate construction and attribution of meaning (Jasper, 1997). In this sense, emotions are both the product of directed, purposeful action as well as spontaneous reactions that nonetheless are interpreted within specific interpretive frameworks.

The analysis conducted here seeks to understand how emotions have been constructed by revolutionary youth activists to facilitate the move from the individual to the collective, as well as to trace how organically arising emotions have contributed to this process through their collective interpretation. In this way, I utilize the term "emotions" as a rather broad term to capture the various processes of deliberate construction and projection of emotions specially aiming at recruitment and the building of the collective, as well as how organically arising emotions are interpreted and assigned meaning in order to contribute to the social movement. Special emphasis is also placed on the connection between the construction of emotions as prefiguration: emotions can "fuse" means and ends (Jasper, 2011:296) in the sense that satisfaction in the process becomes as important as the end result itself. This connection between the construction of emotions and their reflection of goals is particularly useful for the purposes of this research and the aim to explore revolutionary prefigurative practice in movement internal construction.

The Intra-Movement Dimension

Resources

Resources as a concept is most closely associated with the resource mobilization paradigm of the literature, and generally refers to the variety of tangible and symbolic resources amassed by a movement for its institutional development (McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977, 2001; Jenkins, 1983; Cress and Snow, 1996). Resources are understood as strategic supplies or materials that can be converted for the development of a social movement at its institutional and/or organizational level. For scholars utilizing the concept of

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resources in their analyses, the organizational and strategic capacities of social movement organizations are understood to increase or decrease as the availability of resources fluctuates; in this way, resources are conceived as a primary explanation of movement emergence, trajectory, and outcome. The concept of resources has also been enlarged by some scholars into the notion of mobilizing structures, which refers broadly to a wide variety of external organizations or pre-existing networks that help a movement to mobilize through the rapid acquisition of physical and symbolic resources (Tarrow, 1994; McAdam et al., 1996). For example, McAdam's (1982) study of the American civil rights movement in the 1950s sees the black insurgency as linked to urbanization, the rising middle class, and increased education levels of southern African-Americans as well as the organizational network of black churches that acted as pre-existing networks that could be tapped for mobilization.

Although no definitive typology of social movement resources exists, Edwards and McCarthy (2004:125-128) provide a useful set of categories that capture an ensemble of different types of resources that are organizationally and strategically deployed by a social movement for the purposes of its action: moral, cultural, social-organizational, human, and material resources. Moral resources can include sympathy, support, and legitimacy; they are externally generated and can be used by a social movement to increase the credibility of its message. Cultural resources can include know-how and skills that are particularly advantageous to a social movement's action, such as tactical creativity and social media savvy; such resources can be garnered over time and transmitted. Social organization resources include the various types of organizational structures upon which a social movement can build itself, including networks and civil society infrastructure; such resources are both public goods as well as internally generated. Human and material resources, for their part, include members and personnel (along with their personal skill sets) as well tangible goods ranging from funds to fixed assets to everyday materials such as computers; material resources can be acquired or bequeathed, and human resources can be enhanced through training and directed recruitment. Given these different typologies of resources, four different channels of resource acquisition are identified in the literature: self-production (resources internally generated by the movement itself); aggregation (the collection of resources by individual movement sympathizers); co-optation/appropriation (the utilization of

resources from other organizations or networks); and patronage (resources stemming from outside the movement)(Edwards and Gilham, 2013).

In this dissertation, my concept of resources aligns with that proffered by Edwards and McCarthy, and thus focuses on both material and immaterial resources that are converted for the purposes of organizational development. The difference, however, is that my use of the concept applies a social constructivist reading. As such, emphasis is not placed on the objective existence of resources and their rational application but rather how movement actors perceive and interpret the existence of resources. Particular emphasis is placed on the self-production and internal generation of resources. In addition, emphasis is placed on understanding why social movement actors favor or highlight certain types of resources in the process of movement construction. This concept is not concerned with which resources contributed to which types of internal organizational issues, but rather how resources are perceived and created by the movement, and the meanings attributed to their utilization in internal movement construction. In other words, to assess the construction processes at this second dimension of analysis, the concept of resources examines how organizational, material, human, moral, and cultural resources are self-propagated by the revolutionary youth movement, how they are converted into specific organizational dimensions of social movement organization and coalition construction, and the meanings attributed to these organizational issues.

Collective Identity

Collective identity is among the most widely used concepts in the literature and covers a variety of different issues with regards to mobilization. At its base, collective identity can be understood as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001:285) that nonetheless remains distinctive from both individual identities as well as shared ideological commitments or interests. Understood in the literature as both a product of a social movement as well as a process of it (Flesher Fominaya, 2010a:396-398), collective identity is seen as both constructed and constructing and as such existing in a dialectic and mutually-constituting relationship with the social movement itself. In this vein, collective identity serves to delineate the movement's boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, a process that reinforces the collective by strengthening movement consciousness (Taylor and Whittier, 1992:111-114). Indeed, this process of

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border demarcation is a primary task not only in the construction of collective identity but also in the reinforcement of membership and the delineation of opponents.

As a concept, collective identity is closely associated with the new social movement theory paradigm, in which the process of identity construction and the refashioning of new social identities represent one of the distinctive features of new social movements (Melucci, 1988, 1989, 1996; Johnston et al., 1994:10, 15-18; Pichardo, 1997; Buechler, 2004). Here, the struggle for individual identity is a product of the de-socializing quality of modernity and the ensuing loss of self. Participation in a social movement grafts the individual self onto a collective identity while providing new spaces for expression of this identity as well as communion with others. The social movement transforms personal identity but also social interaction and one's relationship to society more generally. Collective identity, for its part, is constructed in a manner that validates the existence of the social movement by giving coherent meaning to individuals' experiences and reinforcing the group through identification of a common cause. Within this paradigm, collective identity is inherently linked to the formation of grievances and claims that go past the traditional bounds of class-consciousness and instead relate to shared social experience defined with respect to lifestyle, values, or other cultural content (Pichardo, 1997:417, 422-423).

Beyond the confines of the new social movements paradigm, collective identity has been used to grasp a diverse variety of dynamics within social movements, including the formulation of claims, recruitment, and mobilization processes; how strategies and tactics are defined; and outcomes of a movement (see for example Mueller, 1992; Johnston and Klandermans, 1995; Rupp and Taylor, 1999; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Flesher Fominaya, 2007; 2010a; Voegtli, 2010). Perhaps most importantly, collective identity is understood as playing a critical role in the question of participation (Klandermans, 2004; Flesher Fominaya, 2010b) and as such is utilized in discussions of social movement formation, the stimulation of solidarity between members, and the maintenance of commitment. The ubiquity of the concept and its conceptual application to a number of different questions has resulted, however, in a degree of conceptual stretching (Polletta and Jasper, 2001:284-285). This has also created a certain lack of precision in the relationship between collective identity and participation, and specifically how different dimensions of collective identity shape participation and vice versa (Hunt and Benford, 2004).

As I define the concept, collective identity refers to the shared definition of a group, which can be founded on communal beliefs, practices, morals, or purpose. It is not a fixed object but a continuous process of construction by members of a group through their interactions and their own process of self-naming and self-definition. In this sense, my conceptualization of collective identity corresponds with that of Whittier (1995:16), who argues that collective identity is "located in action and interaction-observable phenomena rather than in individual self-conceptions, attitudes, or beliefs." As in the work of Melucci (see introduction), I place particular importance on the defining of boundaries between the group and those external to it, and as such the categorization of insiders and outsiders. These boundaries, which can shift, are drawn based on the shared meanings that members of a group attribute to their collective. In other words, the constructing of a collective identity is inherently intertwined with the defining of the movement and the reflexive understanding of movement's position within its context and greater environment. Collective identity is intimately linked to the ideational dimensions of a movement, and namely its values. Here, the expression of collective identity is achieved by the manifestation of values.

In my conceptualization, collective identity contributes to the construction of the revolutionary youth movement in several ways. First, it is intimately related to commitment. Collective identity goes beyond merely the affective loyalties and solidarities members of the movement feel towards one another; instead, it strengthens the movement by reinforcing commitment on the part of members. Second, collective identity serves to better define the movement's identity externally: the expression of collective identity serves to carve out distinct ideational or value-based space for the movement within the political arena. For the analysis conducted here, emphasis is as such placed on the processes by which these identity borders (both for individual organizations and the movement as a whole) are created, the lines along which they are drawn (ideational/values or other), and how this collective identity is expressed in action.

The Extra-Movement Dimension

Political Opportunity

Like resources and collective identity, political opportunity is an existing concept that largely represents a paradigm in the social movement literature, here the political process approach. In its earlier iterations, the political

process approach placed primary explanatory emphasis on the opening (or expansion) and closing (or contraction) of political opportunities as determinants of movement emergence, trajectory, and outcome (Tilly, 1978; McAdam 1982, 1996; Kitschelt, 1986; Tarrow, 1994; Kriesi, 2004; Meyer, 2004). Here, political opportunities are understood as specific structural aspects of the political context ("political opportunity structures") that influence the strategic actions of a social movement, its margins of maneuver, and its potential outcomes in relation to access to the political system. In this way, emphasis shifts from the movement's internal capacities to the fluctuations in external context in which the movement operates. Initial efforts sought to identify causal relationships between typologies of political opportunity structure and effects on social movements. Research along this line produced a general consensus on the most relevant political opportunities: 1) changes in access to decision-making bodies; 2) rifts within the elite; 3) the existence of external allies; and 4) changes in the capacity or likelihood of state repression (McAdam, 1996; Tarrow, 1994; see also Brockett, 1991; Williams, 2010 for empirical examples). For example, shifts in the application of repression are conceptualized as determinants for levels of mobilization and the likelihood to join a movement, while increases in external allies are conceived as positive opportunities eliciting increased movement strategic action. The concept of political opportunity structure allowed for longitudinal explanations for movement action and outcome as well as changes in the mode of contention through a decidedly structuralist approach (see for example Tilly, 1995).

As the political process approach expanded over time to include other concepts, and namely resources/mobilizing structures and frames (McAdam et al., 2001), the concept of political opportunity was also expanded from its narrow link with structural political context to include questions of discourse and perception. In this vein, the concept of discursive opportunity structure was introduced (Koopmans and Statham, 1999), emphasizing the cultural context in which a movement operates and the link with the symbolic dimensions of contestation. Here, the discursive opportunity structure is conceptualized as including ideas, ideologies, beliefs, and symbolic content within the broader political culture that serve as open or closed possibilities for a movement's message and claims. In this sense, discursive opportunity is conceived as enabling and/or constraining collective action frames. In addition, the concept of political opportunity was expanded to downplay the purely structural aspects of political context and instead highlight how these

are popularly ascertained and the ensuing effect on social movements. For some scholars, this emphasis on perception of open opportunity was in fact detached from measurable structural changes in political context altogether. A prime example is Kurzman's (1996; 2004) emphasis on the perception of opportunity despite the inexistence of increased access to the political system in the case of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. His analysis argues that despite the lack of "objective" changes in political opportunity, the perception of a potential revolutionary moment on the part of social actors informed strategic action to produce the event. Here, the perception of a shifting balance of power was not a reflection of changes at the level of the state but within the opposition movement itself.

Though the concept of political opportunity has proven empirically powerful, two critiques have arisen (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004:6-7). First, the concept has been found to be sufficiently vague that any idiosyncratic phenomenon can be filed away as yet another example of political opportunity expansion/contraction. This elasticity undermines the theoretical utility and analytic relevance of political opportunity (see also the frequently cited critique of conceptual stretching by Gamson and Meyer, 1996:275). Second, the relationship between expanded political opportunity and movement emergence does not prove empirically consistent; in some cases, movements seemed to flourish as political opportunities diminish, as with the repression-mobilization dynamic in Opp and Ruehl's influential study (1990). As a result of these inconsistencies scholars have created caveats and exceptions to the generalizability of political opportunity that have deteriorated broader theoretical objectives.

For this thesis, I propose to utilize the concept of political opportunity in a slightly different sense from that advocated by political process theorists, namely by removing the concept from its structuralist bent and focusing on interpretation and the attribution of meaning. In this vein, I propose a constructivist reading of the concept whereby political opportunity does not operate as a causal mechanism that emerges from outside the movement but rather involves characteristics that social actors attribute to their environment. More specifically, the concept as used here refers to how the revolutionary youth movement interprets its context: the positions of and goals attributable to other players in the arena of political action; the identification of allies and opponents; and the possibilities and constraints for public intervention. It is these interpretations of the context and environment that elucidates when the movement enters the public arena, and with/against which players it works.

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The analysis here thus examines how the context and various players therein are debated, negotiated, and interpreted by the movement.

Strategy

As with grievances, the concept of strategy is both inherently embedded into most social movement analyses while nonetheless remaining relatively under-theorized in the literature (Jasper, 1997; Meyer and Staggenborg, 2012:4). Strategy refers to the "overall plan for action, the blueprint of activities with regard to the mobilization of resources and the series of collective actions that movements designate as necessary for bringing about desired social changes" (Jenkins, 1981:135). Strategy in this sense concerns the movement's external actions – its physical tactics such as protests and campaigns; its messages, slogans, and other forms of communication and the symbolic content therein; its efforts at recruitment of bystanders; its participation or collaboration with political institutions or bodies; and the content of its demands and claims. While the concept has been utilized to explore issues of movement trajectory and outcomes (Gamson, 1975; Freeman, 1979), it is not simply shorthand for the list of potential external actions or the repertoire of tactics that do or do not produce a desired effect but concerns instead the processes by which social movement actors make decisions regarding their external actions (Jasper, 2004; Smithey, 2009).

In this sense, strategy is conceived as negotiated and collective phenomena occurring in dynamic intra- and extra-movement relationships (Taylor and van Dyke, 2004; Ganz, 2005:215). Strategic decisions are influenced by cultural and political context, by the characteristics attributed to other players (including bystanders, allies, and opponents), by past experiences and historical memory, by existing tactical know-how, and by the manner in which claims and goals are understood. These various parameters serve as non-reified contexts within which social movement actors find themselves and which guide how strategy is formulated (Ryan et al., 2012). In this sense, strategy is a quite broad concept that covers a range of different dimensions regarding the social movement's actions as well as ideational content; however, the conceptual focus of strategy remains on decision-making processes and their relation to broader contextual features and/or interpretative schemes. Of particular conceptual interest are the trade-offs, potential dilemmas, and possible constraints to strategic decisions; how the movement interprets and negotiates these contributes to understanding the relationship between context and the social movement, and how the

movement understands its goals and their achievement (Jasper, 2004:10-12; Meyer and Staggenborg, 2012:18). In this sense, the concept of strategy helps reveal not just the content of movement external action but its motivational underpinnings as well.

One major element within the rather broad conceptualization of strategy is collective action frames, and the processes of framing that are essentially strategic choices. The term framing refers to the deliberate process of meaning construction used by social movement actors, or "an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction" (Benford and Snow, 2000:614). In this sense, it is directed action that is meant to challenge existing meanings or interpretations; when successful, this process can produce collective action frames. As opposed to individual frames, collective action frames do more than simply provide interpretative tools to understand and organize experience, serving as well a mobilization purpose to gather support, recruit adherents, and delegitimize antagonists.

The key analytical concept employed by social movement scholars for the study of framing is frame alignment, an umbrella term referring to a number of processes regarding the building of collective action frames (Snow et al., 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000). The manner by which these collective action frames are constructed can be quite varied, and can include both discursive processes as well as strategic ones. With regards to the latter, four different processes have been identified in the literature and confirmed through empirical studies: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation. Frame bridging refers to the process by which ideologically cohesive but structurally unrelated frames come to be linked, either between a social movement and a thus far non-mobilized population or across a social movement network; frame amplification in the strategic context refers to the valorization, embellishment, or re-deployment of a pre-existing societal value or belief; frame extension connotes the enlarging of an existing frame to include other beliefs or issues that are seen as pertinent to potential adherents; and frame transformation refers to the changing of existing beliefs or understanding in order to proffer a new interpretation (Snow et al., 1986:238-240). As strategic choices, framing processes take place within specific parameters, here ideational and symbolic, that influence decisions (Carragee and Roefs, 2006).

My own concept of strategy includes the range of externally oriented actions undertaken by the revolutionary youth for the purposes of achieving

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their goals, with special emphasis placed on frames. Here, I detach my concept of strategy from intra-movement organizational issues, focusing instead on external strategic actions that are conceived with respect to the achievement of goals. My concept of strategy goes hand-in-hand with political opportunity: while political opportunity clarifies when the movement enters into the public sphere and with/against which other players, strategy illuminates the choice of tactics and actions. The two concepts combined directly respond to the process of movement construction at the third dimension of analysis. Here, my analysis of strategy seeks to understand how strategic choices, including framing, have been undertaken by the social movement, the calculations of potential trade-offs entailed within these strategies, and the meanings attributed to these strategies with regards to movement objectives.

Summary of the Analytical Framework

Lens of Practice	Analytical Focus	Dimensions of Analysis	Concepts
Generational practice within field of activism and contestation ("youth") Prefigurative practice of movement-specific meaning of revolution ("revolutionary")	Ideational, organizational, and strategic construction processes	*Individual Actor Dimension.* Move from the individual to the collective. Includes process of alignment of parameters of understanding and re-identification of the individual.	Grievances _____ Emotions
		Intra-Movement Dimension. How the movement builds itself internally in organizational and ideational terms. Includes formal organizational structures, solidification of values, and collective identity.	Resources _____ Collective Identity
		Extra-Movement Dimension. Movement's strategic positioning and articulation of its mission in the broader arena. Includes the perception of political opportunities, identification of allies/opponents, and formulation of external actions and frames.	Political Opportunity _____ Strategy

2.3 Method

In order to achieve thick understanding that emphasizes the tripartite relationship between historical-social context, attributions of meanings and background knowledge, and social action, the overall research strategy follows the single case study design, while the empirical materials are assessed through multiple layers of narrative analysis. The single case study design – common in the study of social movements – provides not only the possibility for in-depth analysis and understanding, but also provides the possibility for theoretical and analytical development that can be applied in future comparative cases. Narrative analysis, for its part, represents a relatively common method both within the practice turn as well as the culturalist approach to social movement analysis, precisely because of its ability to draw out the connection between socially constructed meaning and action. This section presents the justifications for the single case study design and selection of the Egyptian revolutionary youth case, as well as the precise manner by which narrative analysis was undertaken with respect to the empirical case at hand.

2.3.1 Single Case Study

This dissertation is structured along the case study design, a research strategy that "seeks to generate richly detailed, thick, and holistic elaborations and understanding of instance or variants of bounded social phenomenon through the triangulation of multiple methods that include but are not limited to qualitative procedures" (Snow and Trom, 2002:151-152). The case study approach is well adapted to the research problem under exploration in this dissertation, as well as the philosophical assumptions that underlie the research. The case study allows for a deeply contextualized understanding of a given phenomenon; indeed, Snow and Anderson (1991:153) argue that the case study is particularly well suited for research that seeks to understand how actions and processes "are produced and re-produced or changed by examining their ongoing interactions with other elements within the particular context." The case study strategy therefore appears pertinent, given that the ambition of this dissertation is to understand historically-socially situated practices and how these in turn inform processes of construction of a particular social actor. The case study also allows for deep immersion into a

broader universe of meaning that goes beyond extracted data points, which contributes to the hermeneutic process of understanding outlined in the beginning of this chapter.

The particular type of case study method employed here is the single case design, with the revolutionary youth movement representing the case under investigation. The use of a single case is of course a debated topic in the social sciences but in fact represents very standard research procedure in the study of social movements (Snow and Trom, 2002:148-149). Single case designs are ideal for the study of major movement processes – the core analytical focus of this dissertation. This choice of research strategy is particularly suited to the theoretical and analytical objectives of this dissertation, and in particular the utilization of practice theory within a culturalist approach to social movement analysis. In theoretical terms, the social movement selected here can be jointly considered under the nebulous categories of "youth movement" and "revolutionary movement," categories that provide convenient classifications but that have either been under-investigated and under-problematized in the literature (in the case of youth movements) or overly associated with structural approaches to movement analysis (in the case of revolutionary movements). By conducting the type of in-depth research that the single case study approach permits, the dissertation sheds theoretical light on how such terms can be understood not as descriptors of movement typology but rather community-specific behaviors and actions. These terms become analytical tools themselves for understanding movement processes. Thus although the study of a single case does not itself advance comparison across empirical cases, it nonetheless provides the possibility for generalizability through theoretical and analytical development (Yin, 1989:21). Here, the analysis of the role of practices in movement construction processes, and more particularly the investigation of "youth" and "revolutionary" as practices in the case of the Egyptian social movement, allows for future application of practices to social movement analysis as well as future comparisons to other social movements in the contemporary Arab world that have witnessed phenomena similar to Egypt.

This last point relates directly to the case selection and the decision to focus on Egypt's revolutionary youth. In empirical terms, the case of Egypt's revolutionary youth is of intrinsic value given the historic momentousness of the Arab uprisings in 2011. The mass movements that have moved in wave-like fashion across the Arab world over the last several years represent a remarkable phenomenon that was unpredicted and, for many, thought

impossible. These episodes of mass collective action have radically altered the political landscape of the region and will be the subject of research in a variety of different subfields for decades. Analyzing in detail a social movement that was both an instigator and product of this historic episode in Egypt (although, it should be stressed, not synonymous with the mass movement) thus makes a worthwhile contribution to overall empirical knowledge. The choice to focus my research on Egypt in particular is driven by the country's importance at the regional level: Egypt represents the largest country in the Arab world, and has enormous political and cultural clout over the rest of the region. What happens in Egypt has profound ripple effects throughout the Arab world and Middle East more broadly, and as such the country is the crucial case.

2.3.2 Narrative Analysis

While the overarching research strategy of this dissertation entails the detailed study of the single case, the primary method utilized for analysis of the empirical material is narrative analysis. Narrative analysis starts from the premise that social life is storied, that individuals and collectives make sense of reality through the recounting of stories about themselves, each other, and outsiders. As elaborated upon by Somers (1992, 1994) Somers and Gibson (1994), and Andrews et al. (2007), narrative is an ontological condition of social life, with different types and levels of narratives co-existing and their various parts – as recounted by the narrator – ontologically related. This includes ontological narratives (individual life histories), public narratives (narratives of collective actors, ranging from social groups to states), and meta-narratives (master narratives of social life, such as capitalism or nationalism) (Somers, 1992:13-17). Individuals construct their identities by locating themselves within emplotted stories, and action is guided by the repertoire of social and cultural narratives through which individuals make sense of their world (Somers, 1994:613-614). At the level of collectives (communities, social groups, states, or other), narratives serve to demarcate community-level identity, carving boundaries of inclusion/exclusion and the relationship to outsiders. Collective narratives are, as a result, ultimately related to power: they bound differences and exclusions, allowing outsiders to participate in the definition of others (Czarniawska, 2004:5). Narratives as held by collectives serve to guide and constrain action through the inhabiting

of a particular social, political, or cultural identity. In this sense, narratives as recounted by collectives not only mediate shared interpretations of social life, but also social practices themselves (Andrews et al., 2015). Agency, as such, is negotiated and social action is mediated through different and overlapping narratives upon which individuals and collectives plot themselves and assign themselves particular roles within a story.

Narratives are not independent cognitive precepts or fixed interpretations; rather, they must be understood in intersubjective terms and related to broader historical-social context. In this way, narrative analysis emphasizes the dimensions of time, space, and relationality as dynamic and interlocking factors, where time and space represent both historical moment as well as historicity, while relationality represents the constellation of social and institutional relationships (Somers, 1994:606). Events only take on meaning when understood as episodes within larger narratives. This method has been criticized in the social sciences for its seeming resemblance to history: in the absence of pursuing causal explanation, narrative analysis has at times been understood as mere representation of reality as opposed to social analysis (Somers, 1994:614-615). Such criticism, however, fails to grasp the essential goal of narrative analysis to reintroduce the understanding of social being to action and agency. Narratives cannot be understood as the recounting of isolated events or chronological histories, but as personal and collective stories reflecting embedded relationships and shared understandings within particular historical moments and places. As such, narratives cannot be simply created as an agent sees fit; instead, they are developed within a set of legitimate stories that nonetheless evolve over time (Czarniawska, 2004:5).

The study of social life through narrative analysis explores, from the perspective of the agent, the self-situating along different and interconnected dimensions of narrativity that give meaning to action (Somers, 1992:13-17). Narrative analysis reveals an agent's interpretations and understandings of the ordinary and the extraordinary, the remarkable and the unremarkable, via examination of how the narrative is constructed: what is said and omitted, which events are highlighted, the order of sequences, running themes and symbolism, and the relation to broader context and cultural setting (Patterson and Monroe, 1998:316). Just as important, however, are the deviations to the story line, the ambiguities and incoherence that can produce contradictions within a narrative, especially those recounted by collectives. Narrative analysis does not strive to reproduce a cohesive story or account; rather, it

seeks to understand the lifeworld, meanings, and cognitions of the story tellers and how these in turn relate to action, behavior, and, ultimately, social transformation (Andrews et al., 2015).

For this dissertation, which is situated at the nexus of practice theory and social movement theory, narrative analysis proves a powerful method for understanding the empirical case. Indeed, narrative analysis is a common method within both the study of practices and culturalist approaches to social movement research (see for example Fine, 1995; Davis, 2002). I utilize narrative analysis to identify and reconstruct the practice of generational activism and prefiguration endemic to the revolutionary youth. Here, the narratives as recounted by the revolutionary youth serve to trace the community of practice: their negotiation of meaning regarding themselves and their position vis-à-vis other actors, the definition of a joint enterprise and in particular their goals and values, and the development of a shared repertoire of bodily and mental action as captured by the terms "youth" and "revolutionary." The use of narrative analysis, moreover, with its emphasis on the dimensions of time, space, and relationality, permits not only the identification of practices themselves, but also how these reflect the community's specific historically-socially contextualized understandings, meanings, and background knowledge, especially as related to meanings of politics, the political, and the revolution.

In addition, narrative analysis allows for understanding the construction processes as related to the six key concepts of the analytical framework. This is particularly useful for studying the construction of identity and the meaning behind individual and collective action, but also serves for other ideational and symbolic constructs captured in grievances, emotions, and strategy. Narrative analysis is also particularly strong for analyzing relations and the perception of others, which corresponds to my concept of political opportunity. In this sense, narrative analysis is an effective manner of achieving the type understanding that my particular framework and concepts seek.

Interpreting Narrative Accounts

As will be shown in the empirical chapters, I strive in this dissertation to elevate the voices of Egypt's revolutionary youth, to let the actors speak for themselves, to allow the reader to "hear" their stories. However, this space given to the narrative account of the movement should not be confused with my own interpretation via narrative analysis. This dissertation is not simply a

verbatim transcription of the activists' autobiographies and the public narrative of the movement; these narrative accounts are presented through the lens of my own analysis and interpretation. As a result, contradictions may at times be present, where the narrative account differs from the researcher interpretation. Part-and-parcel to this, while I take at face value the narratives collected and recounted over the course of the research, I remain acutely aware of my own role as researcher and how this may influence a narrative account. The process of narrative analysis involves a constant reflexive questioning of the narrative and the effect of my position in its production; in turn, the interpretations presented here aim to make transparent when contradictions or differences between account vs. researcher interpretation are present. The narrative analysis conducted for this dissertation involves four degrees of analysis, with each degree extracting different elements of the overall narrative.

Two broad types of narratives are collected and analyzed for this dissertation: the public narrative of the revolutionary youth as a collective, and the individual narratives of activists as related to their history of activism. With regards to the public narrative, the first degree of analysis involves understanding the overarching story of the movement: pinpointing which events are depicted as critical to the movement's story, how these events are connected in consequential sequences, and why certain events are highlighted above others. Critical to this process is linking the events to their temporal, spatial, and relational configurations: where do events take place; what are the relations to other individuals/groups at these times; how are the events linked in time to others? This step of narrative analysis also asks critical questions of the movement's public narrative: given my position as researcher, what is the intended purpose of the story; what cultural resources and meta-narratives does it draw upon; what does the story reflect about the perception of its protagonists and antagonists; and are there ellipses or clear deviations from record that might suggest a preferred narrative? This level of narrative analysis involves both thematic analysis in order to identify the key themes, symbols, and red lines running through the story as well as to identify the gaps, omissions, and potential contradictions and how they are either resolved or avoided. With regards to the individual narratives of the activists, the first degree of analysis involves understanding their life history of activism: when they become involved in activism, their vector of adhesion, and the reasons for their participation. As with the public narrative of the movement, analysis involves placing the narrative within the individual's

personal temporal, spatial, and relational configurations. This step of narrative analysis also seeks to draw links between the personal and public narratives: to what extent does the individual narrator utilize the same narrative markers in her personal history as in the public account of the movement?

From here, four narrative types are identified within the broader public and individual storied accounts of the *shabāb al-thawra*, as inspired by the work of Fine (1995:135-136) and his narrative typologies. The first type I refer to as "motivational narratives," stories that explain or justify involvement in the movement. These stories generally relate a personal, negative encounter with injustice and are recounted with anger and urgency. Motivational narratives make explicit the scope and source of the problem to be addressed through participation in the movement. Second are the "battle narratives," stories that specifically relate movement-specific contests and confrontations in the pursuit of goals and collective action. Such stories identify enemies and allies, explain the issues (both explicit and implicit) at stake, and plot the movement within the arena of Egyptian politics. Battle narratives also reveal what are viewed as the critical events/moments both with regards to the overall struggle and the movement itself. Third are "ideal narratives," stories that explicate the visions and goals of the movement. These stories are not simply explanations of movement objectives but depict how such objectives will be achieved and the future projection for society. In this sense, ideal narratives relate the envisioned future history. The fourth narrative type I identify are the "counternarratives," stories that clash or reveal inconsistencies with the overall public narrative of the movement. These counternarratives reveal internal points of discord between activists, or indeed failures of the movement, that are sublimated by the movement's dominant narrative. Counternarratives as such reveal structures of domination and power within the movement, as well as deliberate efforts at spin.

The third degree of the narrative analysis involves analyzing how the terms "youth" and "revolutionary" are utilized across the different narrative types. This involves close reading of when these terms appear in narratives, and to what precisely they are referring; in this sense, the analysis pays particular attention to the contextual setting in which the terms are evoked as well as the relational configurations present in the narrative. This degree of narrative analysis also traces the evolution of the terms over time. Of particular importance is identifying how such terms are ontologically related

to underlying understandings and attributions of meaning, especially with respect to politics/the political and the 2011 uprising.

Finally, the fourth degree of narrative analysis plots the key concepts of the analytical framework across the narrative types. Grievances and emotions, for example, are traced within the motivational narratives and battle narratives: the temporal, spatial, and relational configurations of the individual in relation to the movement are evaluated to elucidate the embeddedness of social setting and how the overlapping of narratives contributes to the re-aligning of the individual's personal identity to become part of the movement. Collective identity, for its part, is plotted along the battle narratives and ideal narratives of the movement in order to understand how certain key episodes in the movement's history contribute to identity formation, and the relationship between values and goals to the delineation of identity borders. Resources and strategy are both analyzed within the ideal narratives in order to understand how activists relate their current actions with the realization of future projections, while political opportunity, and in particular the perception of allies/opponents, is plotted along the battle narratives by tracing changes in relational and contextual setting over time. Through the four degrees of narrative analysis, the empirical case can be fully assessed as per the analytical framework, drawing forth both the practice dimension as well as the operationalization of movement construction processes along the six key concepts.

2.4 Empirical Materials

The empirical materials gathered for this research represent a mixture of both primary and secondary sources, aiming specifically at the triangulation of material types as well as their method of generation in order to further empirical understanding. These materials are qualitative in nature, which lend themselves to studies of social movements that inquire into the symbolic and cultural dimensions of movement development (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995:18). The use of qualitative materials, gathered through standard qualitative practices such as interviews, allows for obtaining "multiperspectival orientation" (Snow and Trom, 2002:154), or the inclusion of different yet interacting perspectives that shed light on complex processes of construction and negotiation of meaning. The empirical materials gathered

and assessed for this research are delimited with respect to timeframe and geographic zone. With regards to timeframe, the period under investigation covers the years 2005–25 January 2014 (the third anniversary of the 2011 uprising).[5] With regards to the geographic delimitation, the research is restricted to the study of the movement in the capital, Cairo. This delimitation reflects the geographic and symbolic reality of the movement: the most important organizations and virtually all its leaders and founders are based in Cairo, and the symbolic centerpiece of the movement – Tahrir Square – lies in the heart of the city. In addition, the restriction of the empirical research to the Cairo-based section of the movement reflects methodological considerations. The differences in social setting, political practice, and historical context between Cairo and other parts of the country are vast, and including empirical material from the movement as expressed in other cities or rural areas would have likely necessitated a comparative approach or within-case comparison.[6] This section provides an overview of the various types of materials utilized for the analysis and the techniques employed to gather them, as well as other sources of empirical understanding.

2.4.1 Primary Sources

The primary empirical materials utilized for this dissertation derive from two sources: interviews with movement activists (including both semi-structured individual interviews with movement leaders and group interviews with rank-and-file members) and various documentary texts (visual, oral, and written)

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[5] These dates are partially arbitrary. There is no official or entirely obvious emergence date of the revolutionary youth movement; the year 2005 is chosen for the start of the empirical inquiry as the movement's origins can be traced back to this time, specifically with the establishment of Youth for Change. With regards to the other bookend of the timeframe, the third year anniversary of the 2011 uprising serves as a symbolic end point. Though the movement does not come to an end on 25 January 2014, it is necessary to define a closed period in order to avoid studying a "moving target."

[6] While such a research strategy would have potentially unveiled important geographic differences in the movement's practices, background understandings, and construction processes, time limitations as well as practical constraints regarding fieldwork prevented the possibility of embarking upon such an approach.

as produced by the movement (including Facebook posts, protest materials, and press statements). These types of sources represent a mixture of both intensive fieldwork and deskwork, as well as two qualitatively different types of materials: while interviews are co-produced between interviewer and interviewee and present a co-construction of interpretation and recollection, documentary texts are fixed snapshots in time that represent artifacts of the movement's externally promulgated image and message. Taken together, these sources of empirical understanding provide multiple avenues for gleaning individual and movement narratives.

Interviews

Interviews represent one of the most prominent methods utilized by social movement scholars, as they are an effective means by which to gather information regarding movement activities and the understandings and motives of leaders and participants (Blee and Taylor, 2002:92-113). Two types of interviews were conducted for this research: semi-structured individual interviews with movement leaders/prominent members, and group interviews with rank-and-file members. Interviews were carried out over the course of seven months, divided into three study missions, to Cairo: October-December 2012; April-May 2013; and October-November 2013. The interviews placed emphasis on narrative, whereby interviewees were invited to recount different types of stories: the story of the *shabāb al-thawra* in its ensemble; the story of their particular constituent organization and its evolution over time; the story of the 18 days on Tahrir Square and the lived experience that was shared by protesters; and their own personal story of becoming an activist. A total of 57 interviews were conducted for the research: 36 individuals interviews and eight group interviews representing 21 different interviewees.

Semi-Structured Interviews
Semi-structured individual interviews are based on an interview guide that allows the interviewer to direct the topics of conversation while still maintaining a degree of spontaneity and the possibility of digression towards new information. They are a useful form of co-constructing empirical understanding of social movements that have a low degree of formalization, shifting membership, or little by way of documentation (i.e. movements where desk research alone is difficult to conduct), and are particularly powerful in allowing researchers to probe how activists interpret their

context, how this in turn informs action, and the meaning attributed by activists to their movement. Moreover, semi-structured interviews are important for obtaining a longitudinal view of the movement, its evolution over time, and the various dynamics of the movement in its broader context as observed by activists themselves (Blee and Taylor, 2002:94-95).

For this thesis, semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to garner information related to internal movement construction, and specifically internal organizational issues, as well as extra-movement interaction and strategy (i.e. the intra-movement and extra-movement dimensions of analysis) in addition to the life history of the interviewee as activist (i.e. the individual actor dimension of analysis). The interviews as such represent a mixture of key informant interviews (Lofland and Lofland, 1995:61), where the interviewee is considered as an expert providing crucial information about the movement, and (limited) life history interviews, where the interviewee's personal experience in the movement is sought (Cole and Knowles, 2001:70-92). This mixed position of the interviewee is reflected in the interview guide (annex 1).

Given the dual purpose of the interviewee as both key informant and respondent, semi-structured interviews were carried out primarily with leaders and/or decision-makers, as well as particularly active or high profile members. These leaders/prominent members stemmed from the key constituent organizations and networks that make-up the revolutionary youth movement, several smaller constituent organizations, and two coalitions. The sample of groups represented in the semi-structured interviews is: Youth for Change, We Are All Khaled Said, April 6th Youth Movement, April 6th-Democratic Front, Revolutionary Socialists, Kazeboon, Maspero Youth Union, Salafyo Costa, Masry Hor, Justice and Freedom Movement, Revolutionary Youth Coalition, and Gabha Tariq Thawra, plus one prominent blogger who was formerly considered "Muslim Brotherhood youth"[7] and two representatives of Kifāya. The sampling method for selecting interviewees strove for completeness and in this sense effort was made to speak with leaders/prominent members from as many groups of the revolutionary youth movement (as I have defined it) as possible. In this vein, interviews were partially sought through cold calling of constituent

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[7] For more on this particular sub-category of Muslim Brotherhood, see Martini et al., 2012.

organizations that comprise the movement, where contact information was obtained either through my own personal network or from chance meetings during protests. For the majority of the sample, however, a snowballing technique was utilized: interviewees provided contact information for other activist friends, and allowed me to use their names as the point of entry. In addition, for the third round of fieldwork, two "fixers" – students with extensive social networks across the revolutionary youth movement – were hired in order to facilitate the organization of interviews. The semi-structured interviews continued until a point of saturation was reached, where the types of information and interpretations provided became quite consistent across the interviewees. Nonetheless, given these techniques I recognize that the resulting sample is perhaps somewhat biased in that it may have produced interviews with largely like-minded individuals.

36 interviews were conducted with representatives of the movement (three with coalition leaders; 18 with movement leaders and co-founders; 10 with prominent members). Of these, five interviewees were met two different times over the course of fieldwork, allowing for the updating of information across time. This proved particularly useful for demonstrating changes in the movement's interpretations and understandings, and the effect on movement construction processes, in response to the country's rapidly shifting political context between when fieldwork commenced (under the regime of President Morsy, in a relatively calm moment) and when it ended (after the military coup and violent crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood and, eventually, the revolutionary youth themselves).

Profile of Semi-Structured Interviews

Interview Reference Code	Organization and Position	Activist Profile (occupation, gender, age, start of activism)	Date of Interview
I1	Kifāya, co-founder	Political elite from secular-liberal faction; male; 70s; 1970s generation of activism	28 May 2013
I2	Kifāya, rank-and-file member	Specialist in human rights; male; 20s; started activism in 2008	23 October 2012
I3a I3b	Youth for Change, rank-and-file member	Master's student; male; 20s; started activism in 2004	28 May 2013 20 October 2013
I4	We Are All Khaled Said, co-founder	Freelance computer programmer; male; 20s;	26 November 2012

		started activism in 2005	
I5a I5b	Youth for Change, rank-and-file member; April 6th Youth Movement, co-founder	Computer programmer, male; 20s; started activism in 2005	28 November 2012 13 November 2013
I6a I6b	April 6th Youth Movement, co-founder	Teacher; female; 30s; started activism in 2008	10 April 2013 16 April 2013
I7	April 6th Youth Movement, co-founder	Master's student; male, 20s; started activism in 2008	16 April 2013
I8	April 6th Youth Movement, co-founder	Medical doctor; male; 30s; started activism in 2008	22 April 2013
I9	April 6th Youth Movement, co-founder	Political analyst; male; 20s; started activism in 2006 (left the movement in 2012)	08 May 2013
I10	April 6th Youth Movement, prominent member	Student; 20s; started activism in 2010	14 November 2013
I11	April 6th-Democratic Front, co-founder	Accountant; male; 20s; started activism in 2008	05 May 2013
I12	April 6th-Democratic Front, Political Office elect	Lawyer; male; 30s; started activism in 2003	26 October 2013
I13	April 6th-Democratic Front, Law Office elect	Lawyer; male; 30s; unknown activism start date	02 November 2013
I14	Revolutionary Socialists, prominent member	Graphic designer; male; 30s; started activism in 2011	07 November 2012
I15	Revolutionary Socialists, prominent member	Unknown occupation; male; 30s; started activism in 2002 (left the RS in 2013)	29 October 2013
I16	Revolutionary Socialists, Political Office elect	Computer programmer; male; 30s; started activism in 2011	02 November 2013
I17	Kazeboon, co-founder	IT specialist; male; 30s; started activism in 2011	28 October 2013
I18	Maspero Youth Union, co-founder	Engineer; male; 20s; started activism in 2010	01 November 2013
I19	Justice and Freedom Movement, co-founder	Unknown occupation; male; 30s; started activism in 2001	21 May 2013
I20	Salafyo Costa, prominent member	Graphic designer; male; 20s; started activism in 2011	15 October 2012
I21	Salafyo Costa, prominent member	Master's student, female; 30s; started activism in 2011	15 October 2012

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I22a I22b	Salafyo Costa, co-founder	IT manager; male; 30s; started activism in 2011	15 October 2012 26 May 2013
I23a I23b	Masry Hor, prominent member	Journalist; male; 30s; started activism in 2011	19 October 2012 14 May 2013
I24	Masry Hor, prominent member	Management consultant; male; 40s; started activism in 2001	27 October 2012
I25	Masry Hor, prominent member	NGO program director; female; 30s; started activism in 2011	28 May 2013
I26	Al-Sahwa (since disbanded), prominent member	Unknown occupation; male; 20s; started activism in 2008	06 November 2012
I27a I27b	Gabha Tariq Thawra, prominent member	Student; male; 20s; started activism in 2009	20 October 2013 15 November 2013
I28	Gabha Tariq Thawra, co-founder	Student; male; 20s; started activism in 2008	02 November 2013
I29	Gabha Tariq Thawra, co-founder	Unknown occupation; male; 30s; started activism in 2011	15 November 2013
I30	Former Muslim Brotherhood youth blogger	Journalist; male; 20s; started activism in 2007	01 November 2012

Interviews commenced with a brief introduction of the dissertation and my own background, and the type of information hoped to be obtained from the discussion. Interviews were conducted primarily in English (30 out of 36); when interviewees preferred Arabic, a translator was present. Nonetheless, linguistic touchstones of the movement (slogans, demands, identities markers, enemy nicknames, etc…) were always expressed both by myself and the interviewees in Arabic in order to create a consistent vocabulary across the interviews. Interviews lasted one-and-a-half to two hours and mostly took place in public cafes in downtown Cairo. As the political situation became increasing unstable, interviews were often held in loud and highly anonymous downtown alleyways (home to myriad Cairenne coffee and shisha cafes). Interviews were recorded with the permission of interviewees and then transcribed in minute detail.

Group Interviews

Group interviews represent a different type of interview procedure, where the researcher acts as both as the prompter as well as facilitator of discussion, posing questions but also seeking the reactions and exchanges between

participants (Hamel, 2001:343-344). The goal of the group interview is not a series of individual discussions in a group setting but rather a collective conversation reflecting on common perspectives and experiences, as well as differences of opinion, and the effort to harmonize discourse (Liamputtong, 2011). In this sense, group interviews provide information about the group itself: its interactions, dynamics, and the co-construction of interpretation. Given that my conceptualization of the *shabāb al-thawra* places emphasis on the negotiation of meaning, the group interview provides a glimpse of such process in action. For the dissertation, group interviews were conducted with rank-and-file members of the movement's constituent organizations in order to gather information regarding how they came to be part of the movement (the individual actor dimension of analysis) and how the experience of activism has impacted their lives, as well as to probe points of contention or debate within the movement. In particular, the group interviews were utilized to explore the perspectives of minority members within the movement itself: Copts, Salafis, women, and demobilized activists who left the movement out of dissatisfaction or disenchantment. The group interviews were therefore utilized both to garner information of interest and to identify sub-groups and sub-issues within the revolutionary youth movement and to explore hidden power dynamics. Eight group interviews were carried out, representing the following sub-group characteristics: a group of female activists, a group of Coptic activists, a group of Salafi activists, a group of former activists (those who have purposefully left the movement), two mixed-gender groups of activists, and two groups with male activists. The formation of groups was based on the principle of homogeny, meaning that participants were part of the same social movement organization (with one exception). This was a pragmatic choice, as it proved easier to convince activists from the same organization to meet and discuss given the existence of important rivalries between the constituent groups of the movement; nonetheless, it also represents a standard practice in the formation of group interviews (Millward, 2012:424). For each group, one person was contacted and asked if she or he would be willing to organize a discussion with fellow activists. I provided the profile of activists sought (i.e. women, Copts, former members, etc…) in order to ensure that the participants reflected the particular sub-group or sub-issue I was interested in exploring. As such, while the profile of the group was researcher-determined, the actual participants were selected by the activists themselves. The groups represented in the group interview sample are: the Revolutionary Socialists, Coptic Lobby, Kazeboon, Masry Hor,

Salafyo Costa, April 6th-Democratic Front, Gabha Hora, and April 6th Youth Movement. Group size ranged from two to four participants.

Profile of Group Interviews

Group Interview Reference Code	Group Characteristics	Participants	Organization	Date of Group Discussion
GI1	Women	GI1a GI1b GI1c	Revolutionary Socialists	22 November 2013
GI2	Copts	GI2a GI2b GI2c	Coptic Lobby	21 November 2013
GI3	Salafis	GI3a GI3b GI3c GI34	Salafyo Costa	03 December 2012
GI4	Former Activists	GI4a GI4b	April 6th Youth Movement	05 November 2013
GI5	Mixed-Gender	GI5a GI5b	Masry Hor	13 May 2013
GI6	Mixed-Gender	GI6a GI6b	Kazeboon	13 November 2013
GI7	Male Activists	GI7a GI7b GI7C	Revolutionary Socialists	21 November 2013
GI8	Male Activists	GI8a GI8b	Gabha Hora April 6th-Democratic Front	20 May 2013

The discussions were based on a group interview guide (annex 2). As with semi-structured interviews, group interviews commenced with a brief introduction of the dissertation and myself as well as the type of information sought. Discussions were conducted in both English and Arabic; when participants preferred to express themselves in Arabic, translation was provided by another participant. As with the one-on-one interviews, Arabic was always used by myself and participants to express key terms as used by the movement. Group interviews lasted one-and-a-half to two hours and took

place in public cafes. They were recorded and then transcribed, with each participant being assigned a respondent identification number (GI1a, GI1b, etc...) in order to accurately re-create the conversation in written format. This included transcribing interruptions and when more than one person spoke at once, as well as noting moments of laughter, joking, misunderstandings, etc… This precise transcription was undertaken in order to capture the dynamics of the conversation, the points of disagreement, and how convergence of opinion was achieved.

Documentary Texts

The second type of empirical material gathered represents what I identify as a host of documentary texts created by the movement in order to present publically its grievances, demands, values, and objectives. These documentary texts include slogans, chants, public statements, artwork and graffiti, posters, and recruitment materials. The creation of these documentary texts by the movement stems from brainstorming sessions, discussions and exchanges, and at times intensive debate between activists regarding the public persona of the movement, the identity and claims to be put forth, and how these should be framed in a way that reflects internal norms and external goals. These documentary texts are reflections of strategy, and can materialize only when a degree of consensus is achieved between members (and in particular those in executive or decision-making roles). Although these documentary texts alone cannot unveil the specific negotiation processes that lie behind them, they nonetheless shed important light on the accepted or official interpretations and attributions of meaning that the movement seeks to promulgate.

In order to triangulate the empirical material, the sample of documentary texts produced by the movement mirrors the groups represented in the semi-structured interviews and group interviews. As such, it is the documentary texts of Kifāya, We Are All Khaled Said, April 6th Youth Movement, April 6th-Democratic Front, Revolutionary Socialists, Kazeboon, Salafyo Costa, Maspero Youth Union, as well as two main coalitions of the movement, the Revolutionary Youth Coalition and Gabha Tariq Thawra, that were gathered. Further reduction of the sample size is necessary, however, based on the vast quantity of documentary text that has been produced in the nine-year period under consideration in this dissertation. To narrow the sample, only documentary texts produced on and around key dates were researched. These dates represent pivotal events in the movement's history (as recounted by the

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activists and gleaned from narrative analysis) as well as in the Egyptian political sphere more generally. For each date, all documentary texts produced during a five-day period (two days before, the day of the given event, and two days after) are analyzed, with the exception of the 11 days between the ouster of President Ben Ali in Tunisia and the start of the 2011 uprising in Egypt, where all 11 days are considered.

Key Dates for the Production of Documentary Texts

Date	Event of Importance
12 December 2004	First Kifāya protest.
15 June 2005	Youth for Change protest at Sayyida Zaynab.
25 April 2006	Youth for Change protest at Judges Club.
6 April 2008	General strike organized by April 6th Youth Movement, in support of the textile workers strike in al-Maḥala al-Kubra.
6 April 2009	General strike organized by April 6th Youth Movement.
20 August 2010	Silent Stand by We Are All Khaled Said.
12 December 2010	Protest against fraudulent parliamentary election.
14 January-25 January 2011	Lead up to the 2011 uprising, following the ouster of President Ben Ali in Tunisia.
28 January 2011	"Day of Rage." Number of protesters increases dramatically as the Muslim Brotherhood joins the mass anti-Mubarak street movement.
11 February 2011	"Friday of Departure." Announcement of Mubarak's resignation and transfer to interim military rule under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF).
8 July 2011	Protests against SCAF and stalled transition to civilian rule.
9 October 2011	Maspero massacre: SCAF forces brutally repress a Coptic demonstration, killing 28.
21 November 2011	Mass anti-SCAF protest/Mohamed Mahmoud street battle between the SCAF and the revolutionary youth, waged on Mohamed Mahmoud street in downtown Cairo for six days, killing 40 activists.
25 January 2012	One year anniversary of uprising.
28 May 2012	Announcement of run-off candidates for presidential election: Ahmed Shafīq (Mubarak insider) and Mohamed Morsy (Muslim Brotherhood), leaving the revolutionary youth movement without a desirable candidate.
24 June 2012	Election of President Morsy.
22 November 2012	Mass protests against Morsy for his presidential decree granting himself near absolute power as well as the referendum on the new constitution, largely discredited based on procedural problems.

26 November 2012	Death of Gika, popular April 6th Youth Movement activist killed during a protest commemorating the Mohamed Mahmoud battle.
25 January 2013	Two year anniversary of uprising.
30 June 2013	Mass anti-Morsy protests, as launched by the campaign Tamarod (Rebellion).
3 July 2013	Military coup, toppling Morsy and the Muslim Brotherhood from power and greeted with overwhelming support by the Egyptian people.
26 July 2013	General al-Sīsī requests a popular mandate to suppress unrest and anti-coup protests.
14 August 2013	Rabʿa al-ʿAdawiyya massacre, in which a Muslim Brotherhood sit-in was violently dispersed, killing hundreds.
19 November 2013	First major anti-military protest by revolutionary youth movement since the coup.
25 January 2014	Three year anniversary of uprising.

For this thesis, three types of documentary texts in particular are utilized for empirical understanding: Facebook posts by the constituent groups; visual and auditory materials as produced for and during protests; and statements/interviews to the press.

Facebook Posts
The revolutionary youth movement's various constituent organizations and networks, as is widely known, make extensive use of social media and Facebook in particular in order to communicate with members and present their organization's claims, positions, and various mobilization activities, as well as to transmit and provide commentary on news items and points of interest. As opposed to interviews, Facebook posts have the advantage of offering a snapshot in time: they reveal the opinions and positions of the movement as they occurred at the time, and thus are free from the biases of recall and recollection. The study of Facebook posts presents a unique opportunity to capture the movement's publically promulgated interpretations and positions at precise moments in time.

Facebook posts are made by web administrators and/or executive decision-makers within the various organizations and as such are quite representative of the official line or position of the group. In this sense, they represent the results of strategic discussions taking place within leadership structures of constituent groups; however, utilizing Facebook to explore the processes underlying strategy is problematic for two reasons. First, the discussions and possible debates that occurred over the content of posts are of

course not garnered by simply perusing Facebook entries. In addition, the posts that I am able to access are only those that are made public (as I am not a member of any of the movement's constituent organizations, I cannot access private posts), thereby eclipsing the complexity of positions and debates. While public posts are doubtless more "strategic" in the sense that they are very consciously aiming at those external to the organization, including bystanders and opponents, they can lead to biased interpretation by only representing official stances. Moreover, while the comments on posts could have possibly provided a trove of material regarding negotiations and debates over messages, claims, and positions between members, these had to be excluded from analysis here given that the affiliation of commentators on public posts cannot be identified. Facebook thus provides only a partial view of movement documentary texts, necessitating triangulation with protest materials and statements to the press.

The analysis of the documentary texts as posted on Facebook was facilitated by a translator, which proved necessary given the regular use of slang, plays on words, and cultural references that render straightforward translation impossible. For each Facebook post corresponding to the above set of dates, a screen shot was taken and accompanied by the translation. This permits a more accurate level of documentation as well as the possibility to exploit visual images in addition to written text. Facebook posts from two constituent organizations are included in this research: those of the April 6th Youth Movement and those of the Revolutionary Socialists.

Protest Materials

Protest materials include the wide range of visual and auditory texts that are utilized both to recruit participants to a demonstration as well as to voice grievances and claims during the event itself. Protest materials can be both pre-planned as well as spontaneous. For example, the publication of pamphlets, stickers, posters, or other visual materials is generally pre-planned and thus revealing of deliberate strategy, whereas chants often emerge rather organically from the dynamics of the crowd. Yet even in this latter case, spontaneous protest materials reflect the basic grievances and claims around which the protest itself takes place. In this sense, they are also products of shared interpretations and attributions of meaning across chanters.

Two tactics were utilized to gather protest materials for the empirical research. First, a limited number were obtained directly from participation at protests, specifically during the first round of fieldwork. I was able to attend

the 9 October 2012 protest commemorating the Maspero massacre, as well as the 22 November 2012 protest against President Morsy (which was not limited to one day but rather spilled into several weeks, allowing for repeated observation of the protest and its evolution over time). Unfortunately, such participation could not be continued in the following rounds of fieldwork. Violence, specifically against women, became a rampant feature of street demonstrations in Cairo by the end of 2012, with the situation only deteriorating in the wake of the 3 July 2013 military coup and use of forceful repression. As such, alternative sources were utilized to gather protest materials. Facebook photo albums provide archives of visual protest materials as developed by the movement and are handily organized by date. In addition, visual and audio images of protests were accessed in the online archives of Egyptian newspapers, the most reliable and credible of which are al-Shorūq, Egypt Independent, and Mada Masr. In addition, the website Tahrir Documents (www.tahrirdocuments.org) provided a wealth of scanned and translated activist papers from the period of March 2011-May 2012. As with the Facebook posts, a translator was utilized on an as-needed basis in order to capture the precise meanings of chants and written texts.

Statements to the Press
Statements to the press made by representatives of the revolutionary youth movement's various constituent organizations and networks represent the final source of empirical material generated for the research. Statements to the press are made by the movement's more prominent groups, and specifically the April 6th Youth Movement, as well as the various coalitions, and specifically the defunct Revolutionary Youth Coalition and Gabha Tariq Thawra. These statements represent clear pronouncements of grievances and claims, as well as the movement's commentary on the political situation more broadly. To obtain these statements to the press, the online search engines of the three press outlets cited above – al-Shorūq, Egypt Independent, and Mada Masr – were employed, using key word searches of both the name of the organization (i.e. April 6th Youth Movement) or the name of the co-founder/spokesperson of the movement.

2.4.2 Others Sources of Empirical Understanding

Beyond these specific empirical sources, the fieldwork undertaken for the project provided an abundance of opportunities for observation and discussion that proved invaluable to understanding the broader and ever-evolving political context of post-Mubarak Egypt as well as refining my own assumptions, positions, and understandings. A total of 20 additional discussions and meetings were conducted in Egypt in this vein, which included eight interviews with political scientists and researchers concerning the broader political context; two interviews with Egyptian journalists who have extensively covered protests since 2011; three interviews with representatives from other Egyptian political factions; five meetings with NGO representatives (three of whom represented specifically youth-oriented civil society initiatives); and participation at two workshops regarding youth activism in Egypt (one hosted by the Arab Forum for Alternatives, one hosted by the American University in Cairo).

Profile of Discussions

Discussion Reference Code	Interviewee	Date of Interview
D1	Muslim Brotherhood member; Third Square initiative activist	13 November 2013
D2	American University in Cairo; Professor political science	29 October 2013
D3	American University in Cairo; Professor political science	29 October 2013
D4	Arab Forum for Alternatives, Researcher	28 October 2013
D5a D5b	Youth community organizer	17 April 2013 21 October 2013
D6	Nazra for Feminist Studies; Researcher	27 May 2013
D7	Egyptian journalist	7 November 2012
D8	al-Wasat party member	24 October 2012
D9	Cairo University; Doctoral student in political science	21 October 2012
D10	CEDEJ, Researcher	17 October 2012
D11	Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Researcher	16 October 2012
D12	Egyptian journalist	14 October 2012

D13	Oxfam, Policy advisor	12 May 2013
D14	American University in Cairo, Master's student in political science	21 October 2013
D15	Masr Huriyya, Party administrator	25 November 2013
D16	Misriyyati, Silmiyya (non-political youth groups); Co-founder	20 November 2013
D17	Misaha (non-political youth group); Co-founder	8 May 2013
D18	Arab Forum for Alternatives, Research Workshop with Youth Activist Movements (not revolutionary youth)	27 October 2013
D19	American University in Cairo, Conference "Elite Change and New Social Mobilization in the Arab World"	14 November 2013

These more formal sources of empirical understanding were supplemented by countless discussions with average Cairennes – taxi drivers, shop owners, students, etc… – who provided a precious peak into the political consciousness of the Egyptian "street." I also sat through three internal meetings of two of the movement's constituent organizations (two with Salafyo Costa, one with Kazeboon). While these discussions and instances of observation were not undertaken in a systematic manner as part of material gathering, they have nonetheless provided invaluable insight into the movement, including its sociological make-up and the process of member socialization, as well as how the movement is perceived by those external to it and why the revolutionary youth represent their own category of political actor. Finally, the breaking up of fieldwork over three separate periods provided a unique opportunity to witness firsthand the profound changes in Egypt's political life over the period of 2012-2013 and their impact on Cairennes, including the shifting alliances between major poles in the country's political life (and namely the move toward and away from a military-Muslim Brotherhood tacit alliance); the waxing and waning of popular legitimacy of the revolutionary youth movement, the military, and the Brotherhood; and phenomena of mass euphoria and rage that are endemic to large scale demonstrations.

In addition, the research relied on secondary sources, namely local newspapers and academic studies, in order to complement information regarding Egypt's political arena and the stakes of political battles, and to keep informed on a daily basis of the various political discourses as espoused by the country's dominant actors. These have been cited where appropriate.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The fieldwork carried out for this dissertation took place under increasingly difficult circumstances. Whereas the political situation in Egypt in October 2012 was relatively stable (although certainly unsatisfactory for many), by November 2013 the country was under renewed emergency laws, Cairennes were living under a nightly military curfew, and the crackdown on all forms of protest had led to mass abuses of human and civil rights. The revolutionary youth movement, the hero of the 2011 revolution, saw a steady decline in its popular legitimacy as well as the willingness of the ruling authority to tolerate its dissent. At the moment of my final departure from Cairo, numerous activists interviewed for this dissertation had been arrested; as of this writing, at least three are still in jail and will carry out a several years prison sentence, and the April 6th Youth Movement – the flagship organization of the *shabāb al-thawra* – has been outlawed. In light of this, several ethical issues with regards to both the gathering of information as well as its transmission via this dissertation must be taken into consideration, including questions of trust, the commitment to reciprocity, and the imperative of anonymity.

Gaining trust was essential to obtaining interviews, and in this vein several different tactics were utilized to contact movement activists, alongside a policy of transparency with regards to my own identity and intentions. As the political situation deteriorated over the course of 2012-2013, potential interviewees were quite reticent to respond to calls or emails without prior verification of my institutional affiliations. This problem became especially acute following the 2013 military coup and crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood (and eventual crackdown on the movement itself). Xenophobia ran high and a general atmosphere of intense distrust of foreigners permeated the city, rendering my ability to conduct interviews at times difficult. The activists were particularly cautious given the tendency of the government to vilify the existence of "foreign agents" conspiring against Egypt, where any known foreign contact was trumped up to discredit the *shabāb al-thawra*. To overcome this problem, the use of the snowballing technique and, eventually, interview fixers proved a pragmatic choice, despite the drawback of potentially biasing the sample. By going through the personal, social networks of interviewees and the fixers, I was partially able to bypass the inherent lack of trust of potential interviewees. In this vein, activists were far more likely to respond positively to my request for

interviews if my identity had been previously vetted. In addition, interviewees were allowed to select the places of meetings at their personal convenience and comfort, and permission to record interviews was systematically requested and respected.

I also maintained transparency during fieldwork and throughout the dissertation writing process. I opened a public Facebook page clearly presenting myself and the purpose of my research in Cairo, and provided interviewees with links to my university webpage and publications. Such information was frequently provided before interviews took place, thereby allowing activists the opportunity to verify both my identity as well as my interpretations of the *shabāb al-thawra*. Effort was also made to establish rapport with key contacts: special relationships built on mutual respect and empathy that contributed to shared understanding (Springwood and King, 2001:404). To establish this rapport, I accepted invitations to socialize with activists and cultivate relationships outside of the interview space, usually involving late-night tea-drinking and backgammon-playing sessions in Cairo's downtown street cafes, where discussion topics ranged from life ambitions to football. Rapport requires honesty on the part of the researcher with regards to her own positions and beliefs – a task far more easily accomplished when researcher and research subject hold values and worldviews in common. While I maintained honesty in my opinions and responses to questions, I also maintained a degree of formality in order to keep certain distance. These more personal exchanges have continued with key contacts since the end of fieldwork through discussions on Facebook and email. In addition, I have made commitments of reciprocity to a number of interviewees, including sending copies of the manuscript upon completion and, when requested, providing advice regarding their organizations and how they can be strengthened. My intention is also to return to Cairo upon completion of the dissertation in order to present the results to the movement activists and other informants who played such a critical role in the co-construction of empirical materials and my own interpretations and understanding. Practicing reciprocity thus becomes a means of further nurturing long-term rapport despite the conclusion of this particular research.

Finally, given the increasing repression that the movement is facing as of the writing of this dissertation (2014-2015), a decision has been made to render anonymous my list of interviewees. In the vast majority of cases, interviewees did not request anonymity, and on the contrary preferred to present themselves publicly as *shabāb al-thawra*. Indeed, publicly affirming

this identity is a source of pride for the activists, and they are generally quite content to share as much information as possible regarding their movement, values, and goals. Nonetheless, when cited here, interviewees are referred to by their interview or group discussion reference code as listed in the previous section. I have also intentionally obfuscated sociological data, preferring to remain vague about their precise occupations in order to prevent unwittingly revealing their identity, and have rendered their exact positions within the organizations vague. This effort at anonymity faces several obstacles, however. The circle of activists in Cairo, especially those in decision-making roles, remains small, and the phenomenon that "everybody knows everybody" is quite real. As a result, even an interviewee rendered anonymous is likely to be recognized by other activists, and thus perhaps by internal security. In addition, my public Facebook page – which has been left active as part of the continuation of my own transparency – could potentially be used to find links to my contacts. Although my list of Facebook friends has been made private, I cannot control whether the same is true for the activists. The use of anonymity can also pose certain scientific dilemmas. In addressing this same problem, Onodera (2011b) writes of the difficulty in maintaining the epistemic partnership of co-creation of meaning and understanding when credit cannot be fully assigned. Given the philosophical assumptions of this dissertation, the use of anonymity runs the risk of discrediting my hermeneutic process, and thus the validity of my interpretations. However, given the existential threat to personal security that the activists are facing, anonymity is an ethical imperative. In turning now to the three empirical chapters, it is my sincere hope that the activists who so generously participated in this study are able to remain anonymous while making their voices and message heard.

Concluding Remarks

The analytical framework and method presented in this chapter provide a comprehensive approach to answering the research question that this dissertation poses. The approach to analysis and method of empirical understanding place emphasis on the construction of meaning by both the research subject and researcher, and in this way allow for the type of reflexive, constructivist research that the study of practices and social movement construction necessitates. The use of narrative analysis for the treatment of empirical materials provides careful tracing of the community of practice by revealing the intersection of historical-social context, collective

interpretation, and meaningful action. This understanding of the community of practice in turn serves as the overarching lens through which construction processes are analyzed. Moreover, the division of construction processes into three heuristic dimensions of analysis allows us to explore multiple aspects of the social movement within one unified approach and to consider the various ways in which organizational, ideational, and strategic processes coalesce in the constituting of a collective political actor. More precisely, the operationalization of construction processes into the six key concepts allows for a detailed assessment of how practices of "youth" and "revolutionary" inform the social movement, thereby bringing forth the role of practices in the construction of the *shabāb al-thawra*. The following three chapters represent the empirical analysis of this dissertation and are structured along the lines of the analytical framework and method as presented here. Each empirical chapter commences with the discussion of the community of practice itself, including an extensive discussion of the specific practices endemic to the *shabāb al-thawra* (generational practice of activism and contestation; prefigurative practice of revolution) and how they arose through generational encounters and free spaces, as well as the negotiated meanings with regards to context and joint enterprise. The chapters then move to the analysis of construction processes and movement internal dynamics. Here, each dimension of analysis, along with its associated key concepts, is explicitly presented, following the logical order as laid out in section 2.2. In this way, the analytical framework exists as the very visible backbone of the empirical chapters.

Chapter 3: Generational Activism and Radical Change

Although the term *shabāb al-thawra* only came onto the Egyptian political scene after the 2011 uprising, the revolutionary youth movement as I define it actually dates back half a decade earlier. This chapter explores how the movement arose and how it began carving space for itself as a distinctive, collective political actor during the period of 2005-2010. Of particular concern here is the emergence of youth consciousness and the facets of youth practice, and how these shaped the movement's internal dynamics. How did the frustrations with the previous generation's methods of activism and action influence the movement in organizational and strategic terms? How were the joint enterprises as developed by the community of practice translated into ideational and strategic construction? And how did the movement's revindication of itself as a distinct actor – based precisely on its youth practice – impact its development in the arena of opposition and contestation?

To answer these questions, the chapter commences by exploring the development of youth community of practice and the shared understanding of generational activism and contestation. Part one of the chapter includes an exploration of the generational encounter that took place within the field of anti-Mubarak contestation and the revolutionary youth's identification of differences in both the doing of activism as well as the meanings attributed to it, specifically between themselves and the 1970s-era of political elites and oppositional figures. In addition, the analysis of the community of practice delves into the definition of joint enterprise (understood as goals and priorities), and in particular the objective of radical change as collectively held by the activists. Part two of the chapter then analyzes how these meta-level collective understandings and practices were imbued in movement construction processes. This includes how the promulgation of youth consciousness in social media fueled adhesion to the movement's constituent

organizations, how the practice of youth informed organizational governance structures, and how youth joint enterprise translated into strategies of inclusiveness and non-ideological contestation.

3.1 Youth Community of Practice

Although the revolutionary youth social movement was in its nascent stages of development, the years 2005-2010 saw the flourishing of youth community of practice, based on a notion of political generation and a distinctive understanding of activism and contestation. The section commences with a discussion of youth practice and the emerging awareness of political generation amongst the *shabāb al-thawra*, focusing on the role of the generational encounter – in particular between Kifāya and Youth for Change – and the crystallization of youth consciousness through the development of new, independent activist groups that specifically proclaimed youth identity. This also includes an overview of youth practice in terms of meaningful actions as well as the underlying motivations of activism and contestation. From here, the section explores other dimensions of the community of practice, and in particular the meanings and interpretations assigned to the broader social, economic, and political context and how these related to the definition of objectives. This includes the specific understanding of radical change of the Mubarak regime, the quest for justice and accountability captured in what I refer to as the revolutionary youth's dignity ideal narrative, and the re-appropriation of Egypt as the identified source for realization of goals.

3.1.1 Political Generation and Shared Practices

The development of the youth community of practice emerged from the perception of distinctive differences in practice at the generational level within the field of activism. As noted in the introduction, the notion of one's group as a distinct generation with regards to political practice is neither intrinsic nor an outcome of structural situation in the age pyramid; rather, it is a negotiated process that results from both multigenerational interaction as well as private exchange within the generational unit itself (Down and Revely, 2004:234). These interactions stimulate the awareness of

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generational differences with regards to dimensions of political practice, and allow for the expression of a specific generational consciousness and the internalization of a common code of practice. The period of 2005-2010 saw an acute sense of political generation arise within the field of anti-Mubarak activism, and would serve as the point of departure for the development of youth community of practice. It was during this period that revolutionary youth activists commenced identifying themselves as a generation of political contestation that was distinct from that of the 1970s-era opposition forces and traditional political players, based precisely on differences in practice.

In this vein, the activists who would eventually form the revolutionary youth movement did not from the outset see themselves as distinct from older members; on the contrary, they were united by shared grievances and goals that transcended age gaps. However, within very short order, the budding movement developed a distinct notion of youth as a form of practice unique from that of previous generations. The movement's earliest organization, Youth for Change, although not initially interested in the idea of separating activism generationally (Hassabo, 2009:246) quickly adopted the concept of youth as marker of lived experience and manner of action. This defining of political generation and youth practice was further entrenched through the creation of distinct social movement organizations that allowed for youth consciousness and identity to solidify, as recounted within the narratives of two of the movement's flagship organizations, the April 6th Youth Movement and the We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page. The dimensions of youth practice that emerged during this period placed emphasis on non-affiliation and non-alignment with any one political ideology; decision-making based on consensus and power-sharing; the rejection of figureheads and cults of personality; the values of solidarity and non-violence; and altruism as the basis for action.

Youth for Change and the Generational Encounter

Given their fluid and internally heterogeneous nature, it can be difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when a social movement is born: should origins be traced back to key events, or the precursors to such events? Should the foundation of a social movement be linked to the establishment of formal collectives, or are the individual initiatives of leaders more important? In the case of the revolutionary youth movement, tracing the genealogical origins is rendered somewhat difficult given the different personal narratives of the movement's most senior individual activists. As the biographical information

from interviews reveals, the life of activism for some commenced with early mobilization efforts on behalf of the Palestinian plight, stemming directly from university campuses to the streets. For others, activism saw its origins in the more formal political sphere, through participation in groups such as the al-Ghad party or the Muslim Brotherhood. These various points of departure attest to the ideologically and organizationally diverse backgrounds of the movement's earliest activists. More useful than considering the individual biographies of the movement's original members, however, is instead to consider the first collective youth political activist group: Youth for Change. Youth for Change acted as an incubator for many of the movement's future leaders, providing them with skills for street action and popular mobilization. In examining the personal narratives of activists interviewed for this thesis, what becomes apparent is the extent to which Youth for Change allowed a core group of activists to develop into a loose network that would continue to work together and co-mobilize, both in the physical as well as virtual world.

The last decade of Mubarak's rule saw innovation in the field of contestation, with the entrance of new players into Egypt's political arena and a noticeable change in the tone and degree of opposition. This included the legalization of the al-Ghad party in 2004 and the bid for presidency of its leader, Ayman Nour, as well as the return of Mohamed ElBaradei to Egypt in 2010 and his establishment of the National Association for Change, an activist platform and signature campaign that sought seven key reforms that would enfranchise voters, render electoral instances free and fair, and end the State of Emergency (Piazza, 2010:161-165; Collombier, 2013:5-6). While such initiatives certainly played important roles in fissuring the authoritarian structure of the Mubarak regime, it was the Egyptian Movement for Change, a heteroclite opposition coalition better known under its popular slogan "*Kifāya*!" (*enough*) which provided the most innovative and transformative source of opposition. The seeds of a distinctly youth community of practice within the field of activism and contestation during the waning days of Mubarak's presidency can be traced to the generational encounter that occurred within Kifāya, and specifically the interactions between Youth for Change (the *de facto* youth arm of the coalition) and the older generation of opposition forces.

Kifāya was launched in late 2004 under the basic shared demand for an end to Mubarak's rule and in order to prepare the terrain for the country's first multi-party presidential election in 2005. Commencing with a silent demonstration, the group would eventually organize a wide variety of

protests, meetings, marches, campus activities, and other forms of mobilization in 2005 and 2006 (Vairel, 2006; Shorbagy, 2007; El-Mahdi, 2009:89), as well as a signature campaign against the extension of Mubarak's presidency and the efforts to pass the position along to his son, based initially around the simple, singular message "no to extension, no to inheritance" (*lā-l-al-tamdīd, lā-l-al-tawrīth*). Overtime, Kifāya's political demands became more extensive and precisely defined, advocating broader changes and democratization efforts, focusing almost exclusively on domestic issues (El-Mahdi, 2009:89-90). The group called for the divestment of power outside the hands of the executive, the establishment of rule of law and an end to the country's notorious emergency laws, and a revision of economic policy and wealth redistribution. In this sense, Kifāya did not advocate surface level reforms or concessions from the regime but rather sought the radical transformation of Egyptian politics – without recourse to Islamist discourse. The group's unauthorized mobilization efforts, which directly protested against the president, represented the first of their kind under the Mubarak regime (Shaaban, 2007:3).

Beyond this bold discursive content, Kifāya also differed from previous forms of opposition in its organizational format (Oweidat et al., 2008:17-20). The group did not seek contestation via the institutionalized path of creating a political party but rather aimed at political inclusiveness and grassroots action. One of the most notable – and novel – aspects of Kifāya was its non-traditional organizational structure. The group, which was formed as a political movement based on specific grievances and an agreed-upon set of demands, was founded by 1970s-era activists and political leaders stemming from across the political spectrum, including Marxists, liberals, Nasirists, and Islamists as well as civil society leaders and public intellectuals (Piazza, 2010:159-160) – a coalition that had been previously inconceivable in Egyptian politics. Indeed, Kifāya provided the first model of political collaboration that effectively broke the Leftist-Islamist divide. In addition, through a horizontal organizational structure and decision-making mechanism based on consensus (El-Mahdi, 2009:92), Kifāya was able to at least partially break from the top-down and hierarchical form of organization that marked Egyptian political parties.

Kifāya's contestation strategy was built around the dual efforts of street action as well as internet and media presence. Protests, demonstrations, marches, and rallies were held in highly visible public spaces, carried out with strict adherence to the principle of non-violence. Within the virtual

world, Kifāya utilized its website as well as a network of bloggers to gather a constituency and disseminate information regarding instances of mobilization. The group's website became a forum where the general public could air grievances, document examples of abuse or corruption, or discuss other aspects of the state's performance; independent bloggers sympathetic to its message also became vectors for the transmission of information regarding Kifāya activities (Oweidat et al., 2008:22-23). In addition, Kifāya voiced its message across the independent press and Western and pan-Arab media as a means to pressure the regime. At its height, Kifāya had representation of some sort in nearly every governorate of the country and attracted members and supporters from a broad cross-section of society.

Despite initial success, Kifāya failed to achieve the changes it sought and by 2006 was largely in decline (although never formally disappeared). The group faced intense repression from the regime and its security sector, which relied on tactics of abuse, detention, and torture along with various forms of public humiliation to deter street action (El-Mahdi, 2009:97). This alone, however, does not account entirely for the waning of the group. The organizational model of consensus and collaboration across the political spectrum eventually proved a double edge sword: while highly effective in stimulating the initial advance of the movement and garnering diverse support, the Leftist-Islamist divide was ultimately insurmountable, with Islamists preferring to exit altogether (Oweidat et al., 2008:32-35). Moreover, organizational difficulties also debilitated the movement. Though the group strove for non-ideological collaboration and consensus decision-making, the lack of effective organizational experience prevented the group from building a long-term agenda while the movement's political message was never able to find mass support amongst average Egyptians who were more concerned with their own socio-economic problems (Oweidat et al., 2008:38-39). Despite these shortcomings, Kifāya's lasting success was to transmit a message of rights and duties to the general public. As Shaaban states,

> [T]he most important and exemplary achievement by the Kifaya [*sic*] initiative, and its original agenda, is that all those who had a legitimate right, grievance or demand were encouraged to raise their fist in defense of their existence, once it became unequivocally clear that the state and the regime had totally abandoned their social responsibilities towards their citizens (2007:3).

This transmission of the logic of rights and responsibilities would be adopted by a number of Kifāya spin-off groups that would continue to mobilize even

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after the original group's decline, allowing the initiative to continue through a multiplier effect. Discursively focused on the possibility of change, these spin-off groups were often associated with specific professions, spawning for instance Doctors for Change, Writers and Artists for Change, and Journalists for Change (Shaaban, 2007:4). Amongst the most important of these spin-offs was Youth for Change, an activist network that essentially functioned as Kifāya's youth arm, taking mobilization initiatives of its own. It is here the story of the *shabāb al-thawra* begins. Given its status both as an independent organization with membership drawn largely along age-related lines as well as its constant contact – and indeed maneuvering – by Kifāya and the associated political parties therein, Youth for Change proved a crucial venue of the generational encounter.

Youth for Change was launched in 2005, comprising around 50-100 core activists in Cairo and perhaps as many as 500 total (Onodera, 2009:49). Although officially an independent group with its own decision-making structure and set of procedures, Youth for Change nonetheless maintained close contact and coordination – verging on outright control – with its progenitor, Kifāya (Hassabo, 2009:246). As a result, Youth for Change activists were in relatively close contact with the intellectual elites of the opposition as well as key members from major political opposition parties and currents. The group actively disseminated the banner and visual materials of Kifāya and promoted its activities (I9; Onodera, 2009:45), in particular within the online world where younger activists animated Kifāya's network of blogs; nonetheless it also maintained a degree of operational independence through the organization of protests, demonstrations, and other forms of street action that were tactically and spatially distinct from those of Kifāya. For example, on 15 June 2005, Youth for Change organized a protest in front of the mosque and shrine of Sayyida Zaynab, a revered site located in a working class district south of Cairo's downtown area and relatively removed from the normal space of protest.

Almost from its outset, the members of Youth for Change began to utilize a phrase to sign their statements, communications, and calls to mobilize: "the generations who have always lived under the emergency law." As Hassabo (2009:242-243) argues, this phrase succinctly captured the shared awareness that the activists within Youth for Change – all born around the same time, near the start of Mubarak's presidency or shortly thereafter – had known no other political order than that of the State of Emergency and the Mubarak regime more generally, and that this shared lived experience

formed the basis of their uniqueness as a political generation. In other words, in its initial interpretation, the notion of political generation as held by the activists was linked to this generationally specific common destiny that transcended any other differences (ideological, sectarian, etc…) existing within the cohort – a sentiment in fact reiterated in interviews (I5a, I8). Overtime, however, and through repeated interaction with Kifāya and representatives of the 1970s-era of activists and political actors, the notion of youth and sentiment of political generation became linked to differences in repertoires of contention.

Early on, the utilization of new technologies separated Youth for Change from Kifāya: the use of the internet as a communication tool, as well as the willingness and energy for street action, demonstrated a certain gap in the manner of carrying out contestation and activism (I3b, GI8b). As one interviewee recounts, "[Youth for Change] was more real, more vivid and close to the street-language, and surprisingly more organized and structured. Kifāya had a wonderful kickoff, but by time it became very ceremonial" (I3b). This was eventually combined with accumulated frustrations that would translate into an understanding of youth in a much broader sense, based on a different way of doing activism and contestation altogether and not simply alternative approaches to protest and mobilization. The members of Youth for Change were critical of the decision-making apparatus of Kifāya as well as the attempt to promulgate the ideological programs and specific political platforms by its various member organizations and parties (Hassabo, 2009:248). In this sense, the Youth for Change activists perceived a democratic deficit as well as a lack of loyalty to non-ideological contestation within the previous political generation. Graver still, the activists began to see the older generation as more interested in their own political projects than the greater good for the Egyptian people (I13), referring to 1970s generation and the political parties more generally as "opportunists" (Hassabo, 2009:260). A former member of Youth for Change addresses this point by stating, "youth also were against any compromise and did not accept the status quo. Older leaders, like George Isḥāq and Hamdīn Sabāḥi, [accepted] part of the status quo – particularly the state security and the intelligence" (I3b). Here, the interviewee hits upon a key point reiterated by a number of other activists from this early period of the movement's development: that

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the older generation of activists, who were major figures in their own right, were willing to work within the "red lines"[8] as determined by the regime rather than jeopardize their personal status (I7, I12, GI8a).

Perhaps the most important element driving the sense of political generation based on practice, however, was the activists' experience of repression and prison. In April and May 2006, Youth for Change participated in protests in front of the Cairo Judge's Club in an act of solidarity with the judiciary independence movement, leading to the arrest and detention of some 60 members (Onondera, 2009:51). This shared experience forged a strong sentiment of solidarity (GI8b), both between those imprisoned (who often shared the same cells) as well as those who escaped detention (Onodera, 2009:51). This production of solidarity, however, did not extend to the older generation of activists, who many within Youth for Change felt did not do enough to assist them (Hassabo, 2009:259-260). The importance attached to solidarity in times of crisis would become a key theme in the construction of the revolutionary youth movement and will appear repeatedly throughout my analysis of movement construction processes in the empirical chapters.

The Judge's Club incident would mark the last major mobilization of the group, who would disband thereafter; however, generational encounters and their impact on the collective interpretation of generational practice did not stop after the demise of Youth for Change. As recounted in interviews, in addition to continuing interaction with Kifāya, many members went on as well to (re)join political parties or other oppositional groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood and eventually the ElBaradei campaign and the National Association for Change (I3, I4, I9, I26, GI1b, GI8a, GI8b). In adhering to these structures, the activists found themselves confronted with hierarchical organizational models or "pyramidal structures" (GI8a) and an

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[8] The emergence of a truly radical movement under authoritarianism is rare. As activists and political opponents enter into open contestation with the regime and utilize the various repertoires of action at their disposal, the tolerated limits become established and serve as "red lines" that are rarely crossed (Larzillière, 2012). Through the "routinization" (Vairel, 2008) of their interaction, the opposition and the authoritarian regime enter into a form of agreement where the rules of engagement are known and largely respected, serving to diffuse radical content. Evidence of this diffusion effect on the opposition in Egypt during the Mubarak era, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, was widespread (see Albrecht, 2005).

inability to influence decision-making, as well as "cults of personality" in which excessive emphasis was placed on the elite leader at the top (I12). The frustration with these rigid structures – especially after the experience of Youth for Change – greatly influenced their interpretation that politics as practiced by the older generation was overly individualized, opaque, and concerned with personal glory as opposed to achieving actual change (I5a, I13, I22b, I25). As a co-founder of Gabha Hora states, in commenting on this practice of politics by the preceding generation, "the [older] movements and the parties used… a pyramid structure…It's not important to be known internationally or by the people. I know that I am effective in the political decision-making" (GI8b). Here, the interviewee makes clear the problem with the personalization of politics, in which both political parties as well as opposition forces become linked to individuals located at the top of hierarchical organizational structures. He goes on to comment that decision-making failed to consult or take into account the positions of other members, and that this represented a significant problem in internal procedures. These encounters thus not only shaped this perception of generational practice, but also helped push the creation of separate organizations where youth consciousness and identity would flourish.

Youth Consciousness in New Activist Groups

The development of youth consciousness and a specific identity of political generation increased throughout the period of 2005-2010 as new activist groups were established precisely to respond to the desire for autonomy and the capacity to practice generational politics. Although by 2007 Youth for Change's activists had largely gone their separate ways[9], new organizations and virtual networks were emerging as specific vectors of youth activism and contestation. In the case of more traditional social movement organizations, membership was tightly controlled in order to maintain the youth profile of

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[9] The constraints of repression and the crackdown of the security forces on the group's street action certainly contributed to this decline, causing some members to question the purpose and efficacy of protests (Hassabo, 2009:259-260). Beyond these obvious obstacles, however, Youth for Change also faced internal disagreement resulting from a degree of ideological strife between partisan members. Despite the effort to promote the possibility for mutual collaboration in the face of political and personal differences, Youth for Change proved as susceptible to rivalry and ideological conflict as Kifāya (Hassabo, 2009:249).

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the group, as well as to prevent infiltration by the authorities or traditional political forces (I6b, I15). In the case of virtual spaces in which the movement operated, such as blogs and Facebook, while not necessarily established with the intention of autonomy from older generations (I16), the utilization of new technologies served as a natural gatekeeper, as access to such networks naturally attracted younger populations and remained somewhat beyond the reach of the political elite or 1970s generation (I13). As such, these various organizational venues of youth activism were by and large detached from supervision or direct influence by the older generation of political activists and opposition forces. The April 6th Youth Movement and the Facebook group We Are All Khaled Said – two of the most important organizations of the revolutionary youth movement during the Mubarak period – represent critical spaces where this consciousness of political generation and notion of youth as distinct political category would be publicly put forth.

Launched in 2008, the April 6th Youth Movement emerged out of a Facebook initiative in solidarity with a workers' strike. From 2004-2010, Egypt witnessed the unprecedented mobilization of workers, and whereas strikes from previous decades mainly entailed laborers in state-owned enterprises, the 2000s saw the movement spread to private industry and the bureaucracy (Beinin and El-Hamalawy, 2007; Shehata, 2011b:27). The heart of the oppositional labor movement was located in the textile sector and in particular the public company, Misr Spinning and Weaving, in the industrial town of al-Maḥala al-Kubra (Abdalla, 2008). The three-day strike organized by the company's workers in December 2006 represented the largest and most politically important workers movement to have taken place in decades, and provoked a spin-off effect throughout the country (Beinin, 2009:79). By 2008, the Maḥala movement was once again active, calling for a strike on April 6th in favor of workers' socio-economic conditions. Though severely repressed, the day of demonstration managed to move beyond the factory premises to include mobilization by the city and its citizens more broadly (Abdalla, 2008:4).

The 2008 Maḥala strike resonated with a group of Cairo-based activists who had cut their teeth in Youth for Change. In an act of solidarity with the workers, these activists established a Facebook page calling for a nation-wide strike under the title "6th of April, Day of Rage" – the first time social media had been utilized in this fashion in Egypt. The online network commenced with 300 invitation-only members, but within a few days swelled to 3,000

(Lim, 2012:240). Information regarding the strike was also disseminated along blogger networks, eventually making its way to the mainstream media, providing the Facebook page with a degree of visibility to those without internet access. While the general strike failed to garner national support, the popular belief amongst the activists is that certain sectors, specifically in Cairo, did heed the call and stayed home from work (I8, I21; April 6th Youth Movement, 7 April 2008). The success, albeit limited, of their efforts demonstrated the real possibility for online activism to jump to the non-virtual world; it also reinforced amongst the activists the necessity for creating a specifically youth organization dedicated to contesting the Mubarak regime. Following the initial call for action, the organizers of the Facebook page made the decision to form an official youth opposition group, named the April 6th Youth Movement in honor of the foundational event. As stated by one of the co-founders of the group, "we were just some youths working on the web and… seeking to mobilize people... after the general strike, we said we must work together to start a youth movement" (I5a). This desire to establish a specifically youth contestation movement was confirmed by another co-founder of the group, who recalls the "dream to rebuild a youth movement" (I9).

Through the creation of the April 6th Youth Movement, activists began to see youth as a specific category of political actor, set apart from the other major forces in Egypt's political arena. This youth consciousness became infused within the April 6th Youth Movement, as apparent on the group's Facebook posts from this period. For example, on 11 December 2010, the group posted,

> When Egypt's youth unite, are "one hand," they can do a lot. On the 6 April 2008 strike, the government threatened those who would participate, the Muslim Brotherhood refused to participate, and the parties made fun of people who would participate in the strike. But Egyptian youth were the strongest of all, by their faith in God and their love of Egypt. Youth… we can.

This insistence on youth as a separate category of actor from traditional opposition forces was further developed via the creation of the We Are All Khaled Said (*Kulna Khaled Saʿayd*) Facebook page, where generational consciousness and youth identity became hallmarks of the group's public narrative. In June 2010, Khaled Said, a young Alexandrian man, was beaten to death by police after being dragged out of an internet cafe in broad daylight. Pictures of his mutilated face circulated on social media, serving as

visual proof of the brutality that the Mubarak regime doled out to average citizens (Ahram Online, 2012). Shocked by the savagery of the police and the lack of accountability for their criminal act, a Facebook page was launched in order to stimulate awareness of the case and put pressure on the system to achieve justice for the deceased. This Facebook page gathered thousands of members almost immediately (Ghonim, 2012:56-57), becoming the most popular online contestation group in Egypt (Lim, 2012:241). Within a short time, members of the page moved from the online world into street activism through the organization of "Silent Stand" protests in Cairo and Alexandria. As on administrator explains, "we were trying to create a new way to attract thousands of youth in Egypt… we were trying to create a new way for Egyptians to be civilized… They just go stand and go home" (I4).

As with April 6th, We Are All Khaled Said was inextricably linked to the notion of youth as a distinct community of activism and opposition. In this vein, the group's Facebook posts made frequent and deliberate use of the term youth in order to identify members and highlight the difference with other political generations and traditional players, stating for example, "do you know what is brilliant about this idea? That we are not an organization… and we are not a political party… I swear the whole world will marvel at the Facebook youth" (Ghonim, 2012:65). Here, the page's administrators specifically indicate that youth operate within different organizational models than those of previous generations, preferring more anonymous and fluid operational structures as opposed to the top-down and personified models of political parties and older opposition forces. This consciousness of youth as different from previous generations of contestation is frequently present when the discussion focused on the group itself. For example, the administrators of the network distinguish youth as less compromising and complicit with the regime and its system of repression, stating that youth do not "receive bribes" or "succumb to security pressure" (Ghonim, 2012:67-68). Such posts also express that youth are fueled by different ambitions or motivations based on the love for Egypt and one another (and not personal glory, as the subtext indicates). Critical to this collective understanding is the association of youth with a distinct set of practice: the understanding of political generation as put forth by the *shabāb al-thawra* was profoundly based on the perception of a different manner of action and a different set of underlying motivations fueling it. It is these differences in action and the meanings invested therein that comprise the dimensions of youth practice as understood by this particular community of activists.

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Meaningful Actions of Youth

As garnered from the narrative analysis, the meaningful actions of youth as specific manner of activism and contestation – or what can also be understood as generational practice of the *shabāb al-thawra* – in the period of 2005-2010 (and thereafter) can be delineated along three lines: operations, values, and motivations. In operational terms, one of the most important dimensions of youth practice as proclaimed by the activists is non-ideological affiliation. In multiple interviews conducted for this dissertation, members of the revolutionary youth movement describe youth political practice as non-ideological and as such "open to everyone" (I3b); in this sense, the activists refuse to categorize their broader movement along the ideological lines of Egypt's political arena (I11, D4). Across the interviews, activists recount that political ideologies – liberalism, socialism, Islamism, etc… – are sources of division (I7, I22b), creating weakness within the opposition camp, which had been observed in both Kifāya as well as Youth for Change. For the activists, youth contestation is to be "post-ideological" (I12, I20) or "non-ideologized" (I4), based on common objectives that transcend ideological differences, and not political programs (GI2, GI8). Youth practice does not put forth any particular political program or philosophy, and the contestation of the *shabāb al-thawra* focuses on inclusive claims rather than advocating a particular position within the political arena (I7, I19). In this vein, youth practice positions itself in stark contrast to that of political parties and traditional opposition groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood. As will be shown in the second half of this chapter as well as chapter five, this emphasis on non-ideological contestation and the de-emphasizing of specific political programs would significantly inform construction processes as related to both political opportunity (and in particular the perception of allies) and strategy. The understanding of youth practice also places emphasis on diffuse power structures, and the eschewing of the cult of personality around political leaders (GI8). Youth practice thus involves decision-making based on consensus and consultation (I6b, I7, I8, I19), with power not concentrated in certain hands but rather distributed evenly amongst members (see also Hassabo, 2009).

With regards to values, the notion of youth practice places huge emphasis on solidarity and non-violence (I6b, I13, I19, I23a). This dimension of solidarity as part of the notion of youth can be observed in the numerous Facebook posts, which speak at length about the love and sense of mutual care shared by members. As will be shown in the following chapters,

demonstrating solidarity with other members of the *shabāb al-thawra*, especially in times of hardship or danger, would become a principle value of youth. Likewise, non-violence is referred to as a "guiding principle" (I6b) that must manifested specifically during demonstrations and protests (see also Ketchley, 2014). As will be shown throughout the empirical analysis, these two values of generational politics directly influenced how and when the revolutionary youth mobilized.

Finally, the understanding of youth as generational practice within the field of activism and contestation also influenced the attribution of meaning to action, influencing how the activists perceived their motivations. In interviews, movement members describe their activism in a manner that verges on altruism: the fight for change is an act for the good of the country as a whole and not for the amelioration of one's personal status in particular (I5a, I7, I11, I19). This focus on activism as detached from personal gain in fact is a running theme across the interviews and across time. In this sense, the activists distinguished the reasons behind their action from the previous generation, in that they were fighting for the Other, whereas the 1970s political generation was "just looking for their own personal interest" (I25) and lacked "sincerity" (I3b). This notion of altruism in youth practice was visible in the major mobilization efforts that the movement adopted in this pre-uprising period: mobilizing with the judges in 2006, or with the Maḥala workers in 2008, or on behalf of Khaled Said and his family in 2010 were all interpreted as decidedly youth actions precisely because they were concerned with others and not with the status of youth *per se*. In addition, youth practice was understood as holistic in nature, in that actions were carried out to improve the country in its ensemble (I19). The fight for the Maḥala workers, thus, was not exclusively for the textile sector but for the plight of Egyptian labor in general (I8); likewise, the battle to achieve justice for Khaled Said was not understood as a unique case but rather part of a broader battle to change the brutality and lack of accountability inherent in the system (I4). One co-founder of April 6th expounds on this in an interview, stating, "youth, they didn't have anything to lose, they didn't have jobs or money or children or houses….Our message at this point: we just need to build our future. We are a generation, our title is that we are a generation, and we can" (I5a). The interviewee's comments point to a truth that was not missed on the part of the movement: the activists did not hail from the least privileged populations, nor were they overly weighed down by familial or professional responsibilities.

Aware of their relative ease, the movement also attaches a certain duty behind their actions.

In the second half of the chapter, these various dimensions of youth practice – operations, values, and motivations – will be shown to have directly influenced movement construction processes in the period of 2005-2010 (and indeed later). Yet in addition to this increasingly well-codified set of practices associated with the notion of youth and political generation were the shared interpretations of context and definition of common goals and priorities. It is these other dimensions inherent to the development of youth community of practice to which I now turn.

3.1.2 Joint Enterprise and Goals of Radical Change

Hand-in-hand with the development of shared practices is the community's negotiation of common meanings and joint enterprises with regards to itself and its purpose. Here, the development of the *shabāb al-thawra* as youth community of practice during the period of 2005-2010 also entailed the definition of the set of claims and objectives upon which the social movement was founded. In looking through the interviews, Facebook posts, and statements to the press gathered for this research, there seems to be no collective understanding of revolution or revolutionary practice in the period of 2005-2010. There were no specific goals linked to achieving revolution, nor was there a vision of what a post-revolutionary Egypt should look like; indeed, the use of the term "revolution" or "revolutionary" by the movement was quite rare. Online networks such as We Are All Khaled Said actively avoided a political discourse advocating direct confrontation (Ghonim, 2012:89-90), and when the term was used, it made reference to the means of contestation rather than a political goal. Thus for example the April 6th Youth Movement referred to its call for a general strike as a "youth revolution" (Al-Din, 6 April 2009), referring to the transformation of youth as new opposition actors, and We Are All Khaled Said called its silent protest a "Revolution of Silence," referring to the innovation in repertoire of contestation (Ghonim, 2012:89-90). The exception to this constrained concept of revolution was, of course, the Revolutionary Socialists, who proffered Trotskyist ideology. Nonetheless, the construction of a collective interpretation of "revolution" and "revolutionary" as a set of goals and vision for the state and society

within the specifically Egyptian context would only commence with the 2011 uprising, as will be shown in the next chapter.

From the narrative analysis, however, what becomes clear is that although a notion of revolution was not yet present within the movement, there was nonetheless a distinct set of goals and a unified interpretation of context that drove action. This section explores these shared meanings and joint enterprise that were inherently linked to youth practice. The goals collectively defined within the community of practice were based on the precept of radical, though relatively undefined, departure from the current status quo. This objective touched upon both socio-economic as well as political issues, with the greatest attention paid to the exercise of brutality by the state and the quest for dignity. Moreover, this definition of joint enterprise also included the common understanding of the source of change, placing emphasis on grassroots, bottom-up efforts as opposed to institutions or top-down approaches. Comprised within this understanding of the source of radical change was a rethinking of state-society relations through a re-appropriation Egypt. This focus on Egypt and its people as both the object and the subject of change would later develop into a more full-fledged understanding of revolutionary action, as will be developed in the next two chapters.

Mubarak and the Niẓām

The revolutionary youth in the period of 2005-2010 were largely concerned with radical change to the system of Mubarak's regime, broadly identified as the source of a variety of social and political ills; however, the exact nature of this change sought was relatively vague – a reflection of youth practice and its non-affiliation to specific political parties or programs (I19). At the time of his ouster on 11 February 2011, Hosni Mubarak had been president of Egypt for three decades, a period which had not only been devoid of power sharing but which indeed was set to continue with the presumed inheritance of the office by Mubarak's son, Gamal. Every aspect of daily life in Egypt under Mubarak was dominated by the *niẓām*, Arabic for "order" or "system" but used in Egyptian parlance also to refer to the ruling regime and its institutional apparatus. While discussion of the *niẓām* is both abundant and readily understood when utilized colloquially, acting as a signifier for domination, injustice, and impoverishment, the precise definition of the ruling regime proves somewhat more elusive. The heart of Mubarak's regime – where power and influence reached their apex – rested in the hands of the

president and his family, a small group of elites surrounding them, and a selected set of high-ranking military, intelligence, and party officials (Blaydes, 2011:6). Life under this system was marked by punishing neoliberal economic reform and the slashing of the state's role in the economy (Wurzel, 2009:97-99) and carefully controlled waves of political liberalization and de-liberalization leading to the consolidation of semi-authoritarianism (Brumberg, 2002; Albrecht and Schlumberger, 2004:373-375; Langohr, 2004; Koehler, 2008). This regime sharply demarcated insiders and outsiders, rendering the state and its economy the private domain of cronies and key allies such as the military while placing the vast majority of the country's citizens in a situation of political disregard and economic precariousness, and the subject of physical and psychological brutality.

In the period prior to the 2011 uprising, the defining of joint enterprise by the revolutionary youth around the keyword of "change" was not innovative or unique to the movement itself: Kifāya utilized this term as a form of shorthand for its demands, and ElBaradei and his National Association for Change employed the term as an umbrella concept to represent a host of different goals. However, by 2010, the activists had made a conceptual differentiation between "change" and "reform" (I5a, I6b, I7, I11, I14): while change was associated with radical transformation of the political arena and the rules of its operation, reform was associated with Mubarak's authoritarian strategies to maintain power via minimum concession-making. Nonetheless, the specific objectives of change were quite vague, acting as backward-looking goals as opposed to forward-looking ones. In this sense, the movement had a general idea of what it did not want, but less capacity to precisely define the sought alternative. This nebulous concept of what change actually looked like was applied both to the country's socio-economic situation and in particular the plight of the downtrodden as well as the system of government and position of the executive in particular.

With regards to socio-economic conditions, the movement's objective was based on the improvement of the lot of the country's masses. The economic outcomes of Mubarak's neoliberal reforms had proven disastrous for the country's lower and middle classes and had exacerbated the gap in wealth (see Adams, 2001; Bush, 2007; Marfleet, 2009; Prosterman, 2011; Roccu, 2013). The 1996 Human Development Report for Egypt revealed an increase in combined urban and rural poverty levels from the period of 1981/82 – 1991/92 from 17.0% to 25.1%, as well as rise in the moderately poor from 26.9% to 39.2%; by 1995/1996, the combined total poverty level

was measured at 47.6%. Parallel to this, adequate state-run poverty alleviation programs failed to materialize; instead, investment was made in high-luxury areas that catered to the rich and spatially segregated them from the poor. Such policies not only created increased gaps in living conditions between the rich and poor, but also were a means of granting power to local elites (Bayat and Denis, 2000).

For the activists, the goal of change within the socio-economic realm touched on a variety of different dimensions, ranging from salaries and working conditions, to access to education and healthcare, to guaranteed jobs and the practice of nepotism (I4, I10, I14, I19, I23a). Activists recount that their struggle sought to change "the misery… that the vast majority of Egyptians were living" (II7), the fact that "the government didn't do anything… the government didn't give them [the poor] any kind of support or help" (I11), and the differences in treatment between "businessmen" and unskilled labor (I12). As expressed in the interviews, it was the system of inequality and unequal access to a decent life that was to be changed; however, the mechanisms for achieving this change were mostly unaddressed. For example, the objectives as enunciated by the April 6th Youth Movement during their eponymous protest in 2009 included price controls, an end to economic favoritism, increased salaries, and improved education for school children (Saoud, 2009); a program for achieving such changes, however, was not put forth. As one co-founder of the Justice and Freedom movement succinctly states, "we did not have many details like how can we solve the problem of the poor... It wasn't on the table at this time" (I19). In this way, the revolutionary youth at this period in their development acted more to support the demands of others than propose concrete systemic programs of socio-economic change.

Likewise, with regards to the political realm, the movement's discourse of change was largely reduced to the rejection of Hosni Mubarak and the transmission of the presidency to his son as opposed to a program for the redistribution of power. The Facebook page of the April 6th Youth Movement, for example, posted the following change-related demand with regards to the political order, "down with Mubarak… a general strike and protest in Egypt against the corrupted regime of Mubarak's family" (April 6th Youth Movement, 5 April 2009). Here, the goal of change only pertains to Mubarak and his family, seen as profiteers of the state. This was complimented with graffiti around the city stating things such as, "April 6th Youth… No to Mubarak" (April 6th Youth Movement, 4 April 2009).

Likewise, when asked about their goals in the period of 2005-2010, interviewees responded, "Mubarak. It was crystal clear… Mubarak was the main concern" (I3b) and "we don't want Mubarak and his son and his police minister and his foreign minister…. we don't want these billionaires and this system" (I19). This is not to say that the activists had no specific change-related political demands; on the contrary, the movement largely supported ElBaradei's seven points for change in the electoral law and the management of electoral instances. However, as with socio-economic changes, the specificities came from outside the movement, who was instead contented to lend its support to the initiatives of others.

April 6ᵗʰ Youth Movement Facebook page, 4 April 2009
Anti-Mubarak graffiti, reading, "April 6ᵗʰ Youth… No to Mubarak."

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While this focus on change in the absence of specific proposals can be understood as the result of political inexperience, it also is a reflection of the movement's youth practice and the desire to avoid political ideologies or acting as a political party pushing forward a specific – and, hence, potentially divisive – program. As one administrator from the We Are All Khaled Said page states, "these free activists and thinkers… they were trying to work with the Egyptians more. For the first time in Egyptian history, all the opposition was united on the statement of change" (I4). This was also re-affirmed during interviews (I5a, I8, I11, I19) as well as in other Facebook posts, in which the movement attempted to differentiate itself from the "regular" opposition. For example, April 6th posted on Facebook, "of course we will not surrender, as we are not just opponents, but we are resisters, and there is a great difference between opposition and resistance" (April 6th Youth Movement, 6 April 2009). The joint enterprise of the youth community of practice, thus, promulgated an inclusive and unifying discourse of change largely devoid of specific proposals for alternatives in reflection of its understandings of generational activism and contestation – something that would directly shape strategic construction processes, as will be shown in the second half of the chapter. The major exception to this, however, was the demand for radical changes to the system of abuse and lack of accountability that so marked the Mubarak regime. Indeed, this emphasis on accountability and justice comprises one of the revolutionary youth movement's key ideal narratives, and is a quintessential dimension of youth community of practice.

The Dignity Narrative

Among the most important dimensions of joint enterprises and collective understanding of purpose as held by the revolutionary youth during the period of 2005-2010 is the quest for dignity, or what I identify as the movement's dignity narrative. A veritable touchstone of the *shabāb al-thawra,* the dignity narrative – falling within the ideal narrative type identified in the previous chapter – comprises the movement's interpretation of claims, its understanding of context and the source of problems, and the vision for the future. The dignity narrative derives from the activists' collective interpretation of the most heinous aspects of the Mubarak regime: the interminable emergency law, the Ministry of the Interior, and the systematic practice of torture and humiliation. Indeed, this is perhaps the most common narrative theme across the interviews: in the vast majority of my discussions with representatives of the movement, the issue of abuse,

impunity, and lack of justice was mentioned as the fundamental driving force of the revolutionary youth.

One of the authoritarian pillars of Mubarak's regime was the notorious State of Emergency, put into place at the moment of Sadat's assassination in 1981 and continuously renewed for the next 30 years. For the entire duration of Mubarak's presidency, Egypt was under emergency law that rendered demonstrations and political gatherings of virtually any sort illegal, permitted detentions without trial for indefinite periods as well as the military trial of civilians at the regime's discretion, and generally allowed the state to pursue repression and injustice without violating the façade of rule of law (Ottoway, 2003:44-45). The emergency law also reinforced the executive by granting the president power of law through presidential decrees (Brownlee, 2002:6-7) as well as extraordinary power to authorize searches and arrests, restrict freedom of movement, and enforce censorship on any form of communication (El-Dawla, 2009:123).

The State of Emergency drove the massive expansion of Egypt's security sector, the rampant use of torture at all levels, and the infringement on basic rights without the possibility of recourse to justice for citizens. Egypt's security sector during the Mubarak era was a vast and somewhat incoherent apparatus, helmed by the Ministry of the Interior, which included special police, security agents, and riot police, as well as the regular police and a wide network of informants spread over three agencies; the state's intelligence service played a similar role, with three agencies of its own, at times working in parallel with the security sector and at times at odds (Droz-Vincent, 2009; Marfleet, 2009:23). The emergency law essentially granted these sectors free reign to make arrests, transfer detainees to military courts, disrupt or ban gatherings and meetings, and censor newspapers without recourse to the penal code or regard for basic citizen rights. This also translated into the widespread use of torture, which was not limited to the political opposition or "enemies of state" but indeed was applied to virtually anyone, including newspaper editors, the intelligentsia, and above all the country's poor and marginalized who lacked the connections and monetary means to free themselves from detention (El-Dawla, 2009:122). In addition, the utilization of military courts for the trying of civilians became standard practice while the near total impunity of security and intelligence agents rendered null the possibility of justice for victims. Torture and other acts of abuse were vehemently denied by the authorities, even in the face of overwhelming evidence. The lack of accountability and punishment for abuse

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became a defining feature of the system of repression that developed under the State of Emergency.

As described in the interviews, the problem was both the emergency law and its suppression of citizens' rights along with the Ministry of the Interior and its vast forces, who were the culprits of abuse (I5a, I7, I16, I18, I24). Change involved repealing the State of Emergency and the recourse to military trials for civilians as well as repealing the practice of brutality by the police and security affiliates, including some form of restructuring of the Ministry altogether (I23a, GI5, GI6, GI8). This also included a transformation in the culture of impunity and lack of accountability with regards to abuse, as well as the achievement of justice for victims through prosecution of those responsible (I4, GI6). One activist explains, "it wasn't an isolated incident of Khaled Said, it was a message to us that we were nothing" (GI6b).

This demand for radical change with regards to abuse by state security and police, the culture of impunity attached to it, as well as the insistence on justice for victims form the basis of the dignity narrative. The use of the word "dignity" (*al-karāma*) figures dominantly in the vocabulary of the *shabāb al-thawra*: it forms part of the movement's most oft-repeated slogans, becoming a linguistic marker of the movement, and is frequently mentioned in external communications as well as in my discussions with the activists. Via the narrative analysis and the parsing of interview transcripts as well as the Facebook pages where the term is used, I argue that the term "dignity" as used by the revolutionary youth is a multifaceted concept. It refers to respect for the corporal and social self by the Other, which includes both individuals (other citizens) as well as the state (institutions as well as individual or collective representatives). The practice of torture and abuse attack an individual's corporal dignity; the practice of humiliation and invocation of fear attack an individual's social dignity. By fighting to end to the State of Emergency (I12), for a restructuring of the Ministry of Interior (I10, I16), and for an end to brutality, the movement sought to restore and ensure corporal dignity; likewise, by fighting for change in the lack of accountability or punishment of those guilty of abuse, and by restoring justice to victims, the movement sought to restore social dignity. One prominent member of the movement, who began her career in activism with the National Association for Change, recounts, "if we are talking about human dignity, how can you have human dignity now without transitional justice, without police reform?" (GI6a). A connection is clearly drawn here between the achievement and

guarantee of dignity on one hand and the bestowing of justice along with reform of police action on the other. This is reiterated across interviews, whereby dignity is linked to justice (I22b). A co-founder of the April 6th Youth Movement, further describes dignity as, "the freedom from fear, the stop of torturing, respecting the Egyptian citizen in the police stations, and offering him a good education, a good health service. Because even these things humiliate people... All these things are dignity, respect, dealing with the Egyptian as a human being" (I7). Here, the interviewee clearly links dignity to the problems of fear propagation and torture while adding the dimensions of inadequate healthcare and education as forming part of respect to the corporal and social self (this link between dignity and socio-economic conditions would be further developed by the community of practice during the 2011 uprising, as will be shown in the following chapter). These various problems are seen as demonstrations of lack of respect of human dignity, which amounts to dehumanization, as the average Egyptian citizen-outsider is viewed as "the cheapest thing in Egypt" (I10) and is placed lower than government property (I27a, GI3, GI5). The dignity narrative as presented above thus identifies both the problem itself as well as the source of the problem, namely the state and its various institutional arms.

In this pre-uprising period of the movement's construction, I argue that the dignity narrative was symbolized and transmitted through an increasingly codified set of images and words, hence leading to the reification of meaning. The names and pictures of victims came to symbolize the fight for dignity, and were utilized in protest materials to transmit the activists' claims and objectives. For example, members of We Are All Khaled Said developed a banner featuring the image of the eponymous man prior to his death, superimposed on an Egyptian flag and captioned "Egypt's Martyr" (Ghonim, 2012:62). As an extension of this, the term "martyr" also came into the discursive and symbolic vocabulary of the movement as shorthand for the broader struggle against abuse and in favor of justice. In other words, the utilization of these words and images, which are present throughout the Facebook pages but also figured heavily in discussions with activists, became carriers of the movement's demand for dignity and the various goals of change associated therein. And as will be shown in later chapters, the dignity narrative, which so heavily infuses the revolutionary youth's definition of its goals and sense of purpose, would continue to exert enormous influence throughout the nine years under consideration here.

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Re-Appropriating Egypt

Beyond these objectives built around the idea of radical change, the revolutionary youth movement in the period of 2005-2010 also began to develop collective understanding of the potential source of change. As mentioned above, the movement adopted an acute mistrust of reform and discourses of political liberalization: reform, understood, as top-down effort and involving institutions and elections, was mostly written off by the activists as ineffective and pandering, and certainly unable to instigate deeper social, economic, and political changes. Indeed, the activists interviewed for this thesis attributed quite a negative connotation to the term "reform" (*iṣlāḥ*), and, in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising, would label political opponents *iṣlāḥīn* (reformers). For the movement, real change necessarily had to be bottom-up in order to be free from the personal weaknesses of individuals or the power grabs of the political elite – an interpretation that clearly reflects the collective understanding in differences in generational practice. This bottom-up change could only come about through a re-appropriation of the country by the people (GI8a), recognizing "this is our country" (I19). By re-appropriating Egypt – recognizing the country as a common good of the citizens and not the private domain of Mubarak-regime insiders – the people could effectively mobilize and collectively demand change. As interviewees state, "the real determinant will be the people" (I11) and "we had a message to the people: we are not afraid, the Mubarak regime is not very strong, we are the strongest, and we can get him out" (I5a). As will be shown in chapter five, this bottom-up approach to change would transform after the 2011 uprising into a much more developed understanding of the source and vector of revolution. By transforming the view of average Egyptians with regards to the state – that the state should be in the service of the citizens and not in the service of the regime (I14, GI6) – bottom-up change could occur without recourse to politicking or the political elite.

This effort at re-appropriation of Egypt figures in the external communications as well as narratives of the movement, specifically through repeated reference to love of country. The April 6th Youth Movement, for example, would graffiti various walls in Cairo with phrases such as "for you, Egypt", and made Facebook posts with statements such as, "all of us here, whether members of April 6th or just members of the Facebook page, we will try to cooperate and do something for our country" (April 6th Youth Movement, 11 December 2010). This appropriation of Egypt also figured heavily in the We Are All Khaled Said page, where phrases such as "for our

country to become ours again" (Ghonim, 2012:76-77) made explicit calls for the re-appropriation of Egypt. Such statements were a call for non-passivity, for action to mend the country from its broken system, and represent a critical understanding of youth community of practice vis-à-vis the achievement of radical change.

As will be shown in the next section, these various dimensions of the youth community of practice – the notion of a distinctive, generational form of activism and contestation; the goal of radical change and priority of dignity; the re-appropriation of Egypt as source of change – directly influenced the construction processes of the social movement. The desire for a non-ideological and non-hierarchical form of participation impacted the internal operational construction of the movement's constituent organizations as well as the perception of political opportunities and strategic alliances with other actors. The values of solidarity and non-violence, for their part, played important roles in the construction of shared emotions and collective identity. And the altruistic motivations and goals attributed to youth practice, and in particular the dignity narrative, influenced the construction of grievances and strategy, influencing the frames of the movement and its actual acts of mobilization. Finally, the belief in real change as a bottom-up endeavor had an important impact on the perception of political opportunity and the construction of the movement's strategies. It is these processes of construction, analyzed through the lens of youth community of practice, to which we now turn in the analysis of the revolutionary youth movement in the period of 2005-2010.

3.2 Manifesting Youth in Movement Construction

Turning attention now to the movement's internal dynamics, this second part of the chapter seeks to unravel how youth community of practice informed the construction processes underlying grievances, emotions, resources, collective identity, political opportunity, and strategy. Three main themes are explored. First, with regards to the individual actor dimension of the social movement, I consider not only the content of grievance and emotion construction but also the space in which such processes took place. Here, my focus is on social media as a micromobilization venue, where personal grievances were shared and where collective emotions were proffered.

Second, in my discussion of the intra-movement dimension, my analysis looks at the tensions between the ideals of youth practice and the practical dimensions of resource acquisition and collective identity formation. I bring up the fact that, while the movement strove to manifest youth in its construction processes at this dimension, the practical constraints to organizational development and the overlapping membership and friendship structures between the movement's constituent groups exerted important influence on internal dynamics. Third, the discussion of the extra-movement dimension focuses in particular on the impact of non-ideological affiliation and the identification of the masses as the source of change in the perception of opportunities and choice of strategy. This includes a discussion of the movement's frame bridging process, linking socio-economic claims of the poor with the youth-specific goal of radical change.

3.2.1 Exchanges in Social Media

In analyzing the processes by which individuals come to view themselves as part of the revolutionary youth movement through the alignment of grievances and the experience of shared emotions, the analysis focuses on social media as sites of micromobilization: venues of construction processes where debate, negotiation and attribution of meaning takes place. The movement's activists during this period stemmed largely from the urban, educated middle-class and represented a mixture of students, young professionals, and employment seekers. Nonetheless, personal narratives gathered from interviewees attest to diverse political backgrounds and levels of civic engagement: some hailed from political families in the leftist-liberal tradition; others were raised in the fold of the Muslim Brotherhood; others still had never been politically active or even interested in politics prior to their first foray into activism. Activists represented both the Muslim and Coptic communities and harbored varying degrees of piety and religious practice, although all shared a commitment to the notion of a civic state (Onodera, 2009:48). I argue that, despite these heterogeneous biographies, individual alignment with the collective was able to occur through exchanges in social media, where movement-specific grievances where co-constructed, based largely around experiential knowledge, and where positive emotions could be encouraged. A key part of this process was the transformation of the mediascape in Egypt during the last decade of Mubarak's rule, which saw a

sharp decline in the regime's stranglehold over information through the diversification of news outlets as well as the introduction of internet-based communication tools. This "de-monopolization" of the media (Ben Néfissa, 2010) included the introduction of independent television channels and the explosion in politically charged talk shows; the expansion of the printed press to include private and independent journals; and the development of online communication platforms such as blogs and YouTube, allowing for the rise of the citizen journalist and a significant change in the content of public discourse (Radsch, 2007, 2008; Sakr, 2013). In this context, I posit that the role of social media in the movement's development was less important in the domain of communications and the logistics of assembly than it was at the ideational level. More specifically, social media provided a space where individual grievance could be reinterpreted as part of a broader collective struggle and where the barrier of fear and apathy could be vanquished.

Grievance and Expectation Gap

In the period 2005-2010, the movement's construction of grievances was directly related to the goal of radical change that comprised the joint enterprise of the youth community of practice. In this sense, the ideational content of the movement's grievances highlighted both the distributive and procedural injustices of the Mubarak regime, which essentially pointed to the gap in political expectations: while the activists' notion of fairness was concerned with the state's role in providing for and protecting citizens, social reality under Mubarak fell far short. This depiction of the expectations gap and the revealing of injustices of the Mubarak regime took place in social media, where personal experiences of injustice could be aired and, in turn, converted into collective grievances through a process of exchange. Indeed, this process of airing-and-sharing personal grievances over social media allowed the experiential knowledge of individual activists to form the basis of constructed grievances, thereby rendering them highly salient and easily adopted (see also Bennett and Segerberg, 2012 and their theory of "connective action").

In the case of the revolutionary youth movement, the utilization of social media tools, including blogs and websites in the period of 2005-2007 and Facebook as of 2008, allowed for individuals to share their own direct or indirect experience of injustice at the hands of the regime. This allowed for a de-sequestering of the personal element of these encounters, placing them instead within a broader context of shared experience across the movement's

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nascent groups. Blogs of groups such Youth for Change became repositories for personal testimonies, which contributed to awareness of shared problems. For example, one activist with the Revolutionary Socialists who entered activism through online forums describes how blogging influenced his thinking, stating,

> We started criticizing police brutality in Egypt through the blogs. The blogosphere in Egypt was amazing back then. I mean we did not have newspapers or private media that showed really what is happening… So this is exactly how I got into politics. The blogosphere actually did have a great impact on how I think politically (I16).

These acts of testimony allowed for individual encounters to be interpreted as part of a shared, collective experience, and, hence, converted into collective grievances. In this way, an individual experience of humiliation at the hands of the police was placed within a larger framework of systemic abuse as practiced by the police on all citizens; likewise, the individual experience of bribery in order to facilitate administrative tasks was interpreted as part of a much broader problem of corruption. The exchange of personal injustices across social media allowed individuals to see their own experience as part of a much larger systemic problem. This process of exchange allowed for the construction of three primary grievances from the period 2005-2010: corruption, referring to its ubiquitous practice by the Mubarak regime in its management of Egypt; disregard, referring to the absence of the government in overseeing the well-being of average Egyptians; and police abuse, referring specifically to the brutal practices of the police.

Corruption
While the tendency in much of the academic literature as well as popular science commentary has been to underline the democratically-minded nature of the revolutionary youth's pre-uprising organizations (see for example El-Mahdi, 2009; Cole, 2014), and thus identify as the basic grievance the lack of democratic process, I argue that for the activists the key grievance with respect to the Mubarak regime was not the lack of participatory politics but rather the rampant practice of corruption. Corruption was present at all levels and dictated how politics and business functioned, including how elections were managed and how economic and financial benefits were distributed. Bureaucrats and parliamentarians, for example, were granted not only social status and power but also received lucrative state contracts and other forms of

monetary benefit; moreover, they were by law unable to be prosecuted for corruption, a status that allowed for its unhindered expansion (Blaydes, 2011:22). Likewise, elections were engineered to ensure victories of the National Democratic Party – a necessity given that the president until 2005 was essentially elected by the parliament through a plebiscite every six years (Brownlee, 2002:12). Opposition parties, hampered by surveillance as well as restrictive legislation, were granted only the guise of participation as creative electoral arrangements prevented any significant parliamentary presence (Ben Néfissa, 1996; Albrecht, 2005:383-384; Ottoway, 2010), while an array of tools for election rigging, fraud, and legalized unfairness were regularly and universally employed. The proliferation of corruption extended to all branches of the state bureaucracy, thereby having a direct effect on the daily lives of Egyptians. To this point, corruption had an insidious effect on the citizenry: it became standard practice, a necessary evil in order to carry out any administrative process. For the revolutionary youth movement, the almost single-minded interest in Mubarak as the target for change underscores his role as the lynchpin in the broader system of corruption in place.

The problem of corruption in its various manifestations is frequently mentioned in the battle and motivational narratives of the movement. The major protest of Youth for Change with the Judges Club in 2006, for example, was underpinned by the grievance of corruption: the activists were protesting against the fraudulent parliamentary elections and the lack of judiciary independence, both the result of corruption. The April 6th Youth Movement, in its slogans and press releases for the 6 April 2009 protest, speaks of the "corrupted regime of Mubarak's family" (April 6th Youth Movement, 5 April 2009) and refers to "party men, politicians, and businessmen" as "thieves" (Al-Din, 2009). This theme of corruption continues to pop up on its Facebook page. For example, in response to the rigged parliamentary elections in 2010, the group makes numerous posts referring to electoral fraud (April 6th Youth Movement, 9 December 2010; April 6th Youth Movement, 12 December 2010). The common grievance of corruption is also reiterated numerous times in the interviews with activists from this first phase of the movement's development (I6b, GI6, GI8). One activist from the April 6th Youth Movement affirms the centrality of corruption in the movement's grievances, stating, "it is very known that we all faced this problem, the system of Mubarak's regime… is corrupted. So you live your whole life knowing you're not going to get your rights in a

normal way" (GI4b). During a group interview with two activists from Masry Hor, the topic of corruption is also expounded upon, with the activists citing it as the basic grievance influencing their own decision to mobilize with the movement,

> GI5a: No, it is also about pride and corruption that was going everywhere and every place and it was driving me crazy. Like I used to read the news and being extremely angry, every single day.

> GI5b: You know, every single one at that point knew that the government was corrupt, knew that Mubarak was going to hand over the authority to his son… If you go into a police station you are treated differently according to where you come from, according to who you know. If you go to job hiring, there is nepotism, there is all sorts of corruption... You're not respected, except if you know somebody or you can pay a bribe of some sort" (GI5).

These various statements regarding the grievance of corruption, along with its various explanations and elaborations, highlight the principle of procedural injustice as perceived by the activists. The system of bribes, nepotism, and *wāsṭa* – all dimensions of corruption – created differences in how Egyptians were treated and what they could hope to receive and achieve. These statements reveal why the construction of a grievance based on corruption was so effective in bringing individuals into the movement: it was the personal experience of corruption that everyone had lived that rendered it so salient. In other words, it was the experiential knowledge of corruption and the palpability of procedural injustice that it produced that allowed individuals to identify with the larger grievance of societal-level corruption as embodied in the persona of Mubarak.

Disregard

A second major grievance constructed by the movement in the period of 2005-2010 concerned the treatment of the country's poor and working class. Among the radical change goals of the movement, and particularly of the April 6th Youth Movement and the Revolutionary Socialists, was the improvement of working conditions and salaries, as well as the lowering of prices and cost of living. Running through these various socio-economic demands was the common grievance of the state's disregard for society's underprivileged and precarious classes. The problem as understood here was not the poor economy or questionable business practices of private firms *per se*, but rather the absence of the state in protecting workers and the poor (I11,

I12, I16, I27a, GI6). In this vein, one interviewee explains, "we want people who are ruling us to care for us, to care about our problems" (GI4a) while another summarizes, "the Mubarak policy is to smash the poor people" (I9). Likewise, one co-founder of April 6th makes references to this grievance of disregard in explaining the foundation of the group, stating, "we established this mainly to defend the workers' rights and the grassroots' rights because here in Egypt they don't receive adequate salary" (I7). Here, the utilization of the term "rights" implicitly makes reference to the state, which should act as guarantor of these rights. Their absence is at its base a problem with the regime and not with the economy. This grievance of disregard of the country's poor is also visible in the slogans proffered by April 6th for the 2009 strike: on flyers and in chants, the activists would proclaim "we want a minimum wage… we want an education for our children" as well as "they raised the price of sugar and oil, tomorrow we sell the furniture" (Saoud, 2009). The desire for a minimum wage or an education for "our" children does not represent the personal socio-economic demands of the activists themselves (who were either students or who were in professions with relatively decent wages, and who in their majority did not have children) but rather symbolized a collective demand made to the government for provision of protection and services. Likewise, the expression "they raised the price of sugar and oil, tomorrow we sell the furniture" (an expression in Egyptian Arabic) refers specifically to the state rendering the citizens poorer through the absence or withdrawal of protections.

Examples of the state's absence in the protection of the downtrodden were frequently cited in interviews as reasons behind participation in the movement. Here, many interviewees referred to major accidents or gross instances of criminal negligence as incidents sparking their participation in the movement. One activist, for example, who was part of April 6th and a key player in the organization of the 25 January 2011 protests, remembers, "people living in Moqattam [an area of Cairo] had a [boulder] fall on them, and they were dead. The government didn't do anything" (I11). Likewise, another interviewee recounts how she interpreted nightly news reporting on accidents as implicitly the fault of the regime and its failure to protect citizens, "I was watching the news and reading it and that's why I was angry about the different accidents… they were not really talking about it as Mubarak's fault or Mubarak's regime's fault, but everybody understood" (GI5a).

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These statements reflect an important dimension to the formation of this grievance from the side of the individual: the disregard of the regime (as personified by Mubarak) of the poor was not personally felt by the activists; rather, they developed this grievance from media discourse. The de-monopolization of the media sector as described earlier directly contributed to awareness of state lacunae with regards to protection and the well-being of the citizenry. This individual awareness from media discourse was transformed into a collective grievance by the movement, with the implication of distributive injustice. The construction of this grievance based on disregard of the state towards its citizens reflects the motivations established by the youth community of practice, and specifically the interpretation that action should be motivated by altruism and commitment to the greater good. As will be shown in the following chapter, this grievance – still somewhat underdeveloped at this stage – would amplify significantly in the lead-up to and unfolding of the 2011 uprising.

Police Abuse
As mentioned in the first part of this chapter, one of the main objectives of the revolutionary youth and its joint enterprise of radical change in the period of 2005-2010 was the achievement of dignity, which included an end to the practice of torture and humiliation, the application of accountability and punishment to perpetrators of such acts, and the fulfillment of justice for their victims. Within this overarching dignity narrative put forth by the movement is a particular grievance that greatly aided in bringing individuals to see themselves as part of the collective: police abuse. Activists recount the "bad relation and potential of bad relation between the state and citizen" resulting from police brutality (I12) and that "the brutality of the police was growing bigger and bigger and people were starting to fear that they were in danger because of the police" (I4). Through the dignity narrative, the movement constructed a grievance that specifically related to the police and their acts of abuse, whether torture, humiliation, sexual assault, or other.

As their narrative relates, the relationship between the activists and the police during the period of 2005-2010 was contentious and generally marked by hostility and, at times, violence (I14, I18, I24, I27a, GI8). As recounted during interviews and group discussions, numerous activists revealed their physical experience of beatings during street protests and, in many cases, jail sentences – all of which contributed to a specific grudge by the activists towards the police. Indeed, the movement began to see itself in a specific

battle with the police, playing cat-and-mouse games in order to conduct street action while evading repression (I5a, I11). In the construction of the collective grievance, the movement took pains to specifically mention the police and place them squarely in the center of the diagnosed problem. An administrator from We Are All Khaled Said, explains, "the incident of Khaled Said, and marketing it very well [through Facebook] made the other classes aware of something called police brutality and that it is entering their class, even though they are far from the poor" (I4). As this statement reveals, the brilliance in the grievance of police abuse as constructed by the movement was its potential universality: everyone was a potential victim. For numerous persons interviewed, this notion of police abuse as a collective grievance rang true because of the vast experiential knowledge of the phenomenon. The majority of interviewees cite either a personal encounter with police repression or the witnessing of it as a factor in their decision to become an activist. One activist from the Revolutionary Socialists recalls his experience of police abuse,

> There were various instances with police. Once I was almost detained, but my father helped me with his connections and such, so I was not detained. Actually you know, your personal experience plays an important role in shaping your political view, not just the things you read, you know. I might have read a lot of books, but I would not know if I did not actually see what's happening myself and actually be part of this… so this was a really important factor making me go [into the movement] (I16).

Likewise, one of the co-founders of the Maspero Youth Union relates his experience of police abuse as a member of Egypt's Coptic minority, making a clear tie between the personal experience of police-related abuse (and specifically the Neg Hammadi massacre targeting Christians in 2010) to the collective grievance, stating, "I don't know Khaled Said personally, but [Neg Hammadi] was from the police and what happened to Khaled Said is from the police. So I thought at the time, this is something I share in that accident, on this attack" (I18).

As opposed to the grievances of corruption and disregard, the grievance of police abuse does not repose on a comparative injustice with regards to another group or with regards to outcomes, but rather with regards to an ideal of what "ought" to be, of what can be accepted. This moral dimension of the grievance was a powerful force in bringing individuals to see themselves as part of the collective.

Collective Emotion and Solidarity Practice

With regards to emotions, the analysis explores how the movement was able to counter the dominant feelings of fear and apathy in order to encourage mobilization. Recruitment to opposition movements, especially those involving direct contestation of Mubarak and street action, faced two major obstacles in the period of 2005-2010: the barrier of fear, a pillar of the authoritarian structure that quite effectively kept potential adherents as bystanders; and the prevalent and deep-seated belief in the inevitability of the status quo, which inspired apathy and the phenomenon of the *ḥizb al-kanaba*, the "sofa party" that watched politics on television but refused to take an active role itself.[10] Given this, part of the process of moving individuals into the fold of the revolutionary youth movement involved the construction of outwardly projected emotions that countered this negativity and that inspired, instead, collective sentiments of hope and optimism. As I argue here, social media played a twofold role in this process. First, the crumbling of the fear barrier was achieved for many activists via the actual act of contestation itself. Social media provided a means for a cautious and gradual entrance into activism: potential adherents were able to confront their fear barriers in manners less overtly threatening than street action; this led in turn to a gradual increase in participation and the jump from online into physical space. Second, constructed emotions that the movement sought to project amongst its constituents were transmitted over social media in order to be collectively shared, the most important being hope. A critical element in the construction of emotions was the invocation of solidarity, the manifestation of a key value of youth practice. In this sense, while social media was a space where emotions were constructed, it was the youth practice of solidarity upon which they were founded.

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[10] Over thirty years of semi-authoritarianism created a depoliticization of Egyptian society and a movement of political participation away from the formal, institutional arena and towards local strategies of distribution (see for example Singerman, 1996). Institutionalized politics were widely viewed as corrupt, which translated to very low levels of interest in parties and elections (Al Ahram Weekly, 1994; Stacher, 2001:88-89; United Nations Development Programme, 2010). With the exception of Muslim Brotherhood voters, participation in elections was determined by clientelist relations and vote purchasing rather than ideological conviction (Blaydes, 2011).

Constructing Courage

The State of Emergency under which Egypt was placed during the entire duration of Mubarak's presidency had profound effects on social control and the relationship between state and society. The use of torture and humiliation on the part of security and intelligence personnel became so standard that many spoke of a shared and transmitted "culture of abuse" that no longer applied to special cases but rather represented routine practice (El-Dawla, 2009:122). One notable effect was the environment of fear that permeated Egyptian society, marked by the extreme distrust (or even hatred) of the police and the Ministry of Interior. Fully aware of the emergency law and the utilization of torture, extended detention, and even disappearance in response to protest and contestation, people living under the Mubarak regime were in many cases too scared to join opposition groups or movements (Kassem, 2004:39-42). The barrier of fear inside individuals was not only strong but also commonly recognized: this was not an individual sentiment that was hidden or something to be ashamed of, but rather par-for-the-course during the Mubarak years. As such, the necessity of overcoming the barrier of fear in order to spur opposition and mobilization was something actively discussed, not only by the revolutionary youth movement but by other opposition forces as well (I5a, I7, I11, I24) The deconstruction of the barrier of fear – and the construction of a shared feeling of courage with regards to activism and in the face of repression – proved to be crucial in the individual actor dimension of the construction of the revolutionary youth movement.

As mentioned in chapter two, the relationship between repression and mobilization is not by any means straightforward or proportionate, and empirical studies on this topic have often produced mixed or even contradictory conclusions (see Lichbach, 1987; Johnston, 2011). For a small cadre of activists involved in street protest from the earliest period of the movement's existence, the application of repression seems to have had the opposite effect than the one desired by the regime: instead of increasing the feeling of fear and thus dissuading participation, it galvanized them. For the movement's most historical members, especially those who took to street action in the period of 2005-2008, the feeling of fear seems to have been either absent or, at the very least, not an obstacle to mobilization. One co-founder of April 6th Youth Movement, for example, states that she simply was not scared, although cannot explain why (I6a). This is echoed by another co-founder of the group, who revealed, "before the revolution everyone knew

that he would be arrested. So we have never ever had a member leave the group because he was scared" (I8).

As indicated here, the near-certainty of repression in some form acted as a form of natural selection in the early days of street action, pushing only the bravest to mobilize. Indeed, repression acted to strengthen the resolve of the earliest activists. As one member, who was arrested four times prior to the 2011 uprising, explains, "no, the idea of change, we were believing in it... Surely if we go to prison, if they kill us, my life for Egypt! But the idea itself will not die" (GI8b). Another interviewee also confirms this effect on the consolidation of resolve, stating,

> (*laughing*) I was sacred…You know, it's our country. And it's very hard to see your country going down and down and down. And you can't stay with this. You can't see this and say, "Oh Egypt my love what can I do for you"? You can't do this. You have to make something. You have to make something. So you have to pay for this. You may pay from your days in prison, you may pay with your life (I19).

For many who joined the movement in the period of 2005-2010, though, fear was a barrier and had to be overcome in order to move from passive individual to active collective. This process of overcoming fear did not take place in a vacuum; on the contrary, many activists interviewed here note that their own personal fear barriers only crumbled once they took the active decision to manifest their contention and participate (GI5). They speak of the fear barrier becoming diminished "gradually… time after time" (I9). In this sense, the de-construction of the fear barrier was necessarily a collective process by which the act of participation replaced individual fear with a collective sentiment of courage. This de-construction of fear and collective construction of courage was able to occur as a result of the gradual process of participation and street mobilization that the movement undertook.

The heavy reliance of the movement on social media as a space of activism in the period of 2005-2010 was one important manner by which individual fear was overcome through this gradual process of participation. For those afraid to take to the streets, social media allowed for the possibility of anonymous and/or more limited opposition that seemed somehow safer or less prone to repression (I16, I21); nonetheless, by participating in Facebook groups such as April 6th and We Are All Khaled Said, individuals took their first step into participation, which would gradually lead to more. One interviewee, for example, describes how his fear barrier prevented him from

participating in the period of 2005-2007, but that the utilization of Facebook by April 6th in 2008 allowed him to commence participation, which eventually led to greater street activism (I9). The We Are All Khaled Said page was able to reduce fear and eventually move activism from the virtual space to the physical one by commencing with silent protests that were non-violent and relatively apolitical (expressing sadness and disapproval as opposed to direct contestation of the regime), which "made it more safe for the youth to participate and express anger without being unsafe" (I4). Such action eventually evolved into more demonstrative acts, including co-mobilization in street action with more overtly oppositional groups. This gradual participation as contributing to the de-construction of fear and construction of shared courage was also promoted by April 6th in its utilization of "flashmob protests." One of the group's co-founders, for example, describes the organization of rapid-fire protests specifically designed to subvert the police, "we would get the members and go to places and do demonstrations… just for half an hour or 10 minutes, so the police couldn't get there" (I5a). Such actions provided members with the capacity to make the move to street action in a manner that was considered less risky or threatening; more importantly, by having taken the active step of participation, fear would begin to disappear.[11] Yet beyond the role of social media and innovative protest tactics in the breaking down of individual fear barriers was the youth practice of solidarity. A key value of the community of practice and inherently linked to the activists' understanding of themselves as a separate political generation, the manifestation of solidarity – especially during times of crisis or hardship – was an important dimension of youth practice. The act of collective risk-taking was interpreted as solidarity, and was promoted to reduce the feeling of fear (I4, I19). As related here, the practice of solidarity reduced fear by providing a sentiment of "safety in numbers" via a mutualizing of risk. More importantly, by promoting solidarity as a key youth value, the movement was able to push the demobilized into participation. Activists describe being keenly aware of the

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[11] The value of these sorts of tactics in breaking down fear barriers in authoritarian regimes was not unique to Egypt or the revolutionary youth but in fact has been demonstrated in other cases (Johnston, 2011).

risks others were taking for the collective good and the desire to honor others by also participating. One interviewee explains, "you feel safe with other people. All the glory to the first protesters. Once others are in the marches, you are encouraged to go down. You feel safe, feeling that you must go and help" (I4) while another admits "of course I was afraid but when… people are working with you, you feel the adrenaline push and, ok. It's ok" (GI1b).

As will be shown in the following chapters, this practice of solidarity, especially in times of hardship, would amplify over the course of the movement's development, becoming intimately intertwined with a strong sense of duty and fraternity, and the development of collective identity borders.

Hope as Motivating Participation
Hand-in-hand with the de-construction of fear, the revolutionary youth movement also constructed a collective feeling of hope and the belief that, through action, the status quo could change. This second emotion proved just as critical to mobilization as the first, as getting past fear would not suffice without the optimism that something positive could occur. Interviewees state, "we have a mentality of no hope, no change. So [we] make people believe they can change. That's one thing" (GI4b) and "people needed hope" (I11) in order to fight the tendency of apathy and passivity that was so prevalent. The construction of hope was cultivated in the exchanges and interactions between activists, as can be seen on Facebook pages. April 6th, for example, posted encouraging words such as "youth…. we can" and "tag your friends and share hope" and even more directly, "I am very optimistic, and there is a great hope, any of you is optimistic like me?", a comment that received 48 "likes" (11 December 2010). One activist from the group goes as far as to state that the "yes we can" was the group's internal motto in 2010 (GI8b). This was complimented by the use of levity – jokes, caricatures, humorous videos, among others – in order to maintain a light-hearted atmosphere within the group as well as to render Mubarak and his regime the subject of a joke and ridicule.

April 6th Youth Movement Facebook page, 9 December 2010
Video description: A sarcastic video – adaptation of a scene from the film *Downfall* – showing Hitler talking as if he were Mubarak, blaming his assistants for their botched electoral fraud that created a parliament without almost no opposition. Text reads, "And then the president protested against electoral fraud saying… You kept telling me 'New Thought,' while the 'Old Thought' was working so well, you bunch of idiots!"

In addition, the manner in which the group spoke about its instances of collective action always qualified them as assured successes. This comes across on the Facebook page and even more so in interviews. The battle narratives of the group's mobilization efforts from this period are depicted as a series of constant successes, demonstrating an outwardly projected optimism and belief in the possibility of change. For example, in recounting the 6 April 2009 strike, one interviewee states, "all over Egypt, no one [went] to work. All over Egypt… there was no people in the street. So we start to believe that people want to change" (I8). This is accompanied by criticism of the regime's ineptitude, with interviewees stating for example, "Mubarak's regime was a very foolish regime" (I19). The construction of hope and the collective feeling of optimism was also aided by the distinct crossover in the

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friendship networks and life of activism for members of the movement. The revolutionary youth – and here I refer to those that were mobilized on the streets, not just those following Facebook pages – did not differentiate their lives as activists from their personal lives (I19, GI8). As mentioned previously, activists were also personal friends, and would regularly meet with each other in the evenings in order to socialize. This crossover between activist life and personal life cast a positive shadow over their activism as the feelings of amity intermingled with the feelings towards activism. It was only natural that feelings of hope, positivity, and optimism would emerge when activist-friends would partake in communal leisure activities they enjoyed. In this sense, the construction of hope as a collective emotion was both the result of directed action but also of the natural exchanges that took place during instances of amicable gathering.

3.2.2 Youth Governance and Co-Mobilization

At the intra-movement dimension, the activists' shared practice of youth and joint enterprise of radical change exerted strong – though uneven – influence over both organizational and ideational processes of construction. In this vein, the dimensions of youth practice and the specific goals of the movement served to stimulate organizational ideal-types to which the activists aspired and provided a set of shared values and objectives upon which collective identity was based; nonetheless, a certain gap between the ideals of the community of practice and the practicalities of management and mobilization emerged. In organizational terms, the movement in the period of 2005-2010 saw a proliferation of groups in both the virtual and non-virtual spaces, especially as of summer 2010 (I19, GI8a). These groups strove to express youth practice through their organizational models, yet faced important constraints as a result of the necessities of secrecy and efficiency, leading to intra-movement tensions (I11, I12, I15). At the ideational level, the values associated with youth practice along with the goals of radical change would serve as underlying bases upon which mutual recognition of shared identity was based; nonetheless, actual acts of co-mobilization were often based on personal friendships and overlapping membership structures (I4, I6b, I19, GI8) rather than the affirmation of ideational alignment. In this way, identity borders were more porous than would be the case in later periods (as will be shown in the following chapters). Youth practice at the intra-

movement dimension of analysis thus only played a partial role in the construction of resources and collective identity.

Practicing Youth in Organizations

The revolutionary youth movement saw an increase in the number and type of constituent parts during the period of 2005-2010: the rise and fall of Youth for Change in 2005-2006, the integration of the Revolutionary Socialists (which had existed since 1991) shortly thereafter, the foundation of the April 6th Youth Movement in 2008, and the creation of purely online networks such as We Are All Khaled Said as well as more traditional social movement organizations such as Gabha Hora and the Justice and Freedom Movement in 2010 (among others). An important dimension of this movement expansion was the definition of organizational structures and the assembly of resources. It is in this domain where youth practice makes its most obvious influence on movement construction processes, but also where the tensions between ideals and practical constraints are most clear.

Youth Practice in Governance
Given the frustrations with organizational models and operational procedures in both Kifāya and the traditional opposition political parties, the activists placed important emphasis on the application of participatory politics, power-sharing, and consensus decision-making within the constituent organizations they were constructing. Indeed, the most important dimension of organizational construction in this period involved the development of governance models and operational procedures that reflected youth practices of consensus and non-hierarchical structure. However, this was neither obvious nor easily accomplishable, in large part because of the difficulty in balancing immediate needs and objectives with loftier ideals. The attempt to develop youth practice within governance was subject to intensive debates and negotiations, and provoked schisms within the movement's various constituent groups (I6b, I7, I8, I12, I15, GI8).

From the outset, Youth for Change sought to create an organizational model perceived as more "democratic" than that proposed by Kifāya. In this vein, the group developed specific power-sharing arrangements and attempted to generate active participation of all members, with the objective of rendering everyone responsible for the group's management while at the same time preventing the emergence of a leader who would personify the group or become overly interested in the maintenance of power. To

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accomplish this, Youth for Change created numerous different internal committees that members could join at will and that were responsible for various activities and dimensions of management, including for example a political action committee, a governorates committee, an information committee, etc… (Hassabo, 2009:248). Decision-making was in the hands of a coordination committee, which was subject to elections every six to eight weeks in order to guarantee the turnover of leadership. The coordination committee's power was further limited by the need to obtain consensus from the general assembly in order to validate decisions (Hassabo, 2009:248). Such a structure, while theoretically designed to place authority in the hands of all members in a near-simultaneous manner, proved largely insufficient given the supervision and interference on the part of Kifāya's elders (Hassabo, 2009:249).

The organizational model proposed by the Revolutionary Socialists attempted to maintain the principles of participation and consensus decision-making while also correcting this problem of outside interference. One interviewee from the Revolutionary Socialists explains that the group began holding internal elections as early as 2003 to elect leaders on a semi-regular, though ad-hoc, basis (I15). These elected leaders were not solely responsible for decision-making: during routine periods or moments of low activity, decisions were instead taken by consensus at the level of the general assembly. Elected leaders were only responsible for decision-making during times of crisis or when rapid decisions were necessary; however, despite these formalities, democratic governance was somewhat absent as a result of the highly secretive nature of the group, understood as a necessity given security concerns. As he describes, "they were very confidential meetings… no one from outside the organization knew about the time or place" (I15). He goes on to explain that this lack of transparency with regards to decision-making was viewed by non-core members as well as interested outsiders (especially April 6th and its members) as a sign of non-democratic procedure harkening back to the opaque methods of decision-making utilized by older political generations. To this activist, the difficulty in balancing a perceived need for utter secrecy against the desire to practice a different form of politics rendered the Revolutionary Socialists a less appealing option for new recruits to the movement. Such a dynamic was also visible within the online network We Are All Khaled Said. The administrators of the Facebook group sought to promote participatory politics and democratic governance by placing decision-making, especially with regards to ground mobilization, to member

votes (I4); however, the fact that the administrators remained completely anonymous and went to great lengths to hide their true identity was problematic for some members who questioned the motives and nature of the page (Ghonim, 2012:92).

For April 6th, the difficulty in developing an internal organizational model that reflected youth practice did not stem from a need for secrecy; contrary to the Revolutionary Socialists, April 6th was a fully public group whose leaders were known and relatively well mediatized, in particular the group's figurehead, Ahmed Maher. Instead, the desire to achieve the broad objectives of change were viewed by the group's co-founders as more pressing than the development of internal democratic governance. One co-founder explains the piecemeal process by which the group formalized its flow-chart and internal operations, based less on an attempt to fulfill notions of youth practice than basic necessity, stating, "at first, it wasn't organized… after two months, we were like 12, so someone must lead. Then someone must take the money and collect the money, so we invent the position of financial [officer]…when we began events we want someone to call all the people so we make this position" (I8). Another co-founder of the group explains that the organizational structure was also based on geographic area as opposed to hierarchy, stating, "we organized it geographically, and only by areas. Before the revolution… we had such simple ideas and rules and just that" (I6b). For the group, however, power of decision and the core task of planning mobilization remained in the hands of the co-founders. The implementation of internal elections or a more consensus-based manner of decision-making was viewed as a longer-term project to be undertaken once the goals of change were achieved, that decision-making in the meantime should remain "closed to be strong enough to stand against authoritarianism" (I9); however, the lack of internal elections as well as the concentration of power in the hands of a select few became an important source of internal strife within the group, which would lead to its rupture after the 2011 uprising (I9, I11, I12, GI8).

Despite these various problems associated with disorganization and complaint about internal governance, the movement was nonetheless able to maintain its course throughout the period, and indeed significantly picked up momentum by 2010 (I5a). The problematic internal procedures of the movement's constituent groups could be glossed over, thanks to the mostly informal and fluid nature of membership in this period. However, as will be shown in the following chapters, the demands for organizational models

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respecting youth practice would become far greater in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising, causing the movement's various groups to take a fumbling, trial-and-error approach to governance. This friction over pragmatic organizational structure and governance coherent with the notion of youth would serve as one of the largest fault lines within the movement.

Student Recruitment and Self-Produced Materials
Just as important to the movement's expansion was the acquisition of other organizational resources – namely human and material. As with governance models, tensions existed between the desire to manifest youth and the practicality of resource acquisition; in this sense, the movement's acquisition and self-generation of resources was often guided by necessity and pragmatism rather than ideals. What is significant, however, is how these resources were interpreted: while the activists readily admit the limitations they faced, they nonetheless interpret and indeed attribute to their human and material resources a manifestation of youth practice. This interpretation of resource acquisition is, as such, a clear example of the collective attribution of meaning by the community of practice.

In the period 2005-2010, the natural recruitment ground for organizations such as the Revolutionary Socialists and April 6th were the various public and private universities, especially in and around Cairo. While this may seem obvious given the repeated proclamations of youth identity and consciousness, such recruitment efforts had less to do with a desire for younger cohorts than certain practicalities. Because the movement's notion of "youth" was detached from age, recruitment did not necessitate age limits, and indeed many of the movement's most prominent members were well past their student years. Rather, the focus on universities was in part the result of failures to reach out adequately to other sectors. As one co-founder of April 6th explains, "we tried to mobilize [workers and farmers] and support them to get their rights. But we failed… We didn't have the experience… so we started to work with students" (I5a).

In contrast, the movement had recruitment networks within universities, thanks to the outreach previously established by Kifāya and its various spin-offs. One interviewee explains the further value of recruiting from pools of students, stating that April 6th saw this as a strategic decision whereby middle class students would make the most active and dedicated members given "our parent[s] pay for our school, our university… we weren't working, we didn't have any responsibilities" (I8). An activist from the Revolutionary Socialists

also comments on this recruitment through universities and the absence of establishing connections with organized labor,

> With the nature of the student body, it's always easier for students to adapt with the new tools of social media and everything, and this… increases their awareness and opens up their minds to new ideas… However, this doesn't mean that we didn't have the chance to expand within labor movements. That wasn't very correct. We should have actually expanded and widened our circle within labor movements and empowered them.

> *Why didn't you?*

> We were mostly limited by the number, the small number of members, and also most of the members [were] already students. So even when we attempted and we tried to expand and collaborate with the labor movements, by the time the academic year starts everyone goes back to their studies (I15).

As the above demonstrates, the movement's focus on students was less an interpretation of themselves as youth than a practicality. This was reinforced by the process of training of members, which was based less on the transmission of youth practice than mobilization tactics more generally. Training differed between those in leadership positions and regular, rank-and-file members. For movement leaders, training often stemmed from external and international sources, allowing the movement to build off experiences by activists in other contexts (I5a). Certain activists from April 6th, for instance, travelled to Serbia in 2009 to train with Otpor! on strategies for non-violent revolution. While it would be wrong to exaggerate the importance of this training to the success of mobilization in the 2011 revolution (and indeed activists reflect on this experience as a mistake, stating that it rendered them vulnerable to accusations of external infiltration), it nonetheless demonstrated the de-sequestering of the Egyptian activist experience. Likewise, the Revolutionary Socialists were able to benefit in terms of knowledge exchange and the transfer of expertise between the Egyptian branch and the global International Socialist Tendency. The group would host international figures for internal conferences and would send members to external events in order to exchange ideas regarding Marxism, resisting imperialism, and other relevant topics linked to their overarching ideology (I15).

For regular members, however, internal trainings were provided on a relatively ad-hoc basis and largely restricted to tips and advice on resisting police repression. In this vein, activists received information on what to wear

to protests, how to behave when confronted with riot police, as well as the slogans to be used and the means of communicating with bystanders (I6b). Beyond this, the Revolutionary Socialists also held internal activities to educate members about their political ideology (GI1). Such trainings were able to help streamline the tactical approach of the movement and its constituent groups; however, they were not based within a larger framework of expressing youth practice. This focus on transmitting youth values through human resource development would only emerge after the 2011 uprising, as the movement's organizational development came to be much more predominantly an expression of youth practice, as will be shown in chapter five.

With regards to tangible as well as monetary resources, the movement at this time was rather limited. Groups did not have offices or headquarters, choosing instead to meet in various undisclosed locations. This was both a product of practicality (a means of evading security) as well as necessity (lack of sufficient funds). When material resources were necessary, for example with the printing of flyers for a protest, the groups generally relied on their members to either produce in-kind or small financial donations (I5a, I7, I19). Although the cash-poor nature and reliance on the self-production of material and financial resources could be read as a sign of the movement's lack of status or inefficiency, for the activists it was instead a source of pride and a manner of exerting independence. As the interviewees expressed, the movement's various constituent groups staunchly refused to be associated with any political parties or other oppositional forces, and were willing to suffer financial consequences in order to maintain their organizational autonomy, stating for example "we guide ourselves, nobody guides us or imposes anything on us" (I6b). In this sense, the reliance on self-produced materials and funds, though undertaken largely out of necessity, was reinterpreted as youth organizational independence.

Likewise, the use of social media and new telephone technologies by the movement as both an internal and external communications tool were not initially sought because of their quality as "youth" tools but rather for their practicality. As with financial and other material resources, social media (Facebook groups, websites, Twitter feeds) was self-produced and contributed to autonomy by allowing the movement to transmit information in a means relatively free of censorship (I5a, I16). This included information about protests or other public activities, as well as the publication of news items or testimonies. Technologies such as Twitter and SMS also provided

activists with the possibility for live updates and up-to-the-minute information, features which would assist in the organization of street action and the evasion of police and security forces (I5a, I9, I11). As communications resources, these tools did provide the movement with the possibility for speedier and less obstructed communication. One activist affirms, "we used to collect the Egyptian people in SMS, Facebook, Twitter. All of these mechanisms helps us a lot to reach the Egyptian people" (GI8a). It is important to point out, however, that the role of social media and new technologies in the activists' narrative of their movement is rather limited. Though they do come to acknowledge these tools as pertaining to their political generation (GI8), they do not attribute the movement's successes to the existence of Facebook or the use of Twitter. These are instead viewed as an available set of tools rather than explanations for mobilization. For the activists, the success of their activism is the result of much more traditional street action and strategy (I5a, I9, I11) along with the salience of their message and their desire to fight for change on behalf of the greater good, as will be discussed in the last part of this section. Material resources, thus, were not acquired as deliberate expression of youth practice; nonetheless, their interpretation was assessed as expression of generational differences.

Co-Mobilization and Identity Construction

As covered in the previous section, the various groups constituting the broader social movement in the period of 2005-2010 had a sense of their like-mindedness and a notion of their distinction as a different type of actor in the field of anti-Mubarak contestation. This sentiment of similarity was based on the recognition of similar tactics and approaches with regards to contestation, the shared value and practice of non-ideological affiliation, and ultimately the common goal of far-reaching change viewed as separate from the more "political" goals of the traditional opposition forces. In this sense – and in-line with Wenger's concept of community of practice – collective identity of the revolutionary youth movement in the period 2005-2010 had its basis in the shared understandings and practices of the activists as denoted by the term youth. The mutual recognition of themselves as forming a collective of groups different from other political forces is visible in interviews, in which the various groups speak about their habit of co-mobilization and the support given to one another's instances of street action (I4, I5a, I19, GI8). I posit that this process of co-mobilization served to build the identity borders of inclusion and exclusion and announce publicly the existence of a collective.

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However, though the basis of collective identity in the values and practices of youth was beginning to emerge, co-mobilization was more the result of membership crossover, in particular between the online networks and the more traditional SMOs, and the fact that the various leaders of the movement at this time were in familiar and informal contact with one another. In this sense, while the shared notion of youth played a primary role in sentiment of collective identity, the actual process of identity border construction was derived from other motivations for co-mobilization.

Bases of Collective Identity

The types of tactics and approaches to protest against Mubarak that were utilized by the various groups of the revolutionary youth movement in the period 2005-2010 were understood by the activists as both innovative as well as unique unto them. The prevalence of street action and the tendency to carry out protests and demonstrations in non-traditional places, for example, were viewed as a distinctive feature common to the youth groups that set them apart from the more traditional opposition as well as older generation of activists (I5a, I11). Indeed, the mere fact that the activists were willing to go into the streets, repeatedly, despite security threats was understood as a defining feature of their activism (I7). Included within this belief in tactical distinctiveness was the deep commitment to non-violence underlying their action. Non-violence – a dimension of youth practice – was understood by the activists as a necessary component of their mobilization, and in particular in their street action (I4, I6b). Refusing to meet police violence with violence was both a means of taking the moral high ground and thus further delegitimizing the regime's brutality as well as offering some form of protection to members. The importance of non-violence to the movement's cause can be seen in the guidelines issued to activists in the lead-up to major protests. We Are All Khaled Said posted for example, "the protests are peaceful… we must discipline ourselves and refrain from foolishness or any violations of the law, and we must not endanger any person's life or cause harm to any public or private property" (Ghonim, 2012:140). One co-founder from April 6th also speaks of non-violence as a guiding principle of the group and a foundation of its protest tactics, stating "we don't attack anybody, we don't take anybody's sides, we are neutral" (I6b). This commonality of non-violence as fundamental value in protest was mutually recognized across the various groups and was cited in numerous interviews.

Likewise, the shared value of non-ideological affiliation formed a major basis of the various groups' sense of appertaining to a larger collective. Indeed, the importance of this as a component of the movement's collective identity cannot be overemphasized: parties were associated with ideologies, thus with an older generational political practice that was associated with deal-making and clientelism, personification and elitism, and commitment to oneself over commitment to broader goals. Ideologies were also seen as divisive fracture lines and, thus, harmful to achieving the goal of change writ large (I8, I19, I24). This non-ideological character of groups such as Youth for Change, April 6th, We Are All Khaled Said, amongst others, became a defining feature of the revolutionary youth movement. One activist from April 6th explains the importance of this value, stating, "we only side with justice and, you know, the welfare of the human beings. Only this, the thing that guides us. We don't follow any parties, we don't follow any ideologies, we don't follow anything" (I6b).

This is not to say, however, that individual members do not have their own personal political preferences. Another activist clarifies this, stating, "if you ask anyone of the member of April 6th, he would say we have no ideology; everyone has his own ideology but the movement has no ideology" (I8). The individual profiles of different members of April 6th attest to this: the group was populated by staunch liberals as well as Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers, even within its leadership structure. Within the context of the group, however, these affiliations were placed aside for the purpose of unified contestation in order to achieve the change-related goals. The value of non-ideology as basis for group formation and contestation was also present in We Are All Khaled Said. One administrator argues that this non-ideological affiliation reinforced the collective by eliminating conflicts between members, stating, "the main problem with the opposition in the past was that it was always turning into personal conflicts and people between each other" (I4).

There is of course one notable exception to the shared value of non-ideology, the Revolutionary Socialists. This group is based entirely on a political ideology, and in this sense represents one of the most significant departures from the movement's staunchly upheld commitment to non-ideological leaning or affiliation. The existence of an ideology within the Revolutionary Socialists was viewed as problematic by the group, who had trouble reconciling its dedication to youth practice and its belief in Marxist social theory (a trend that would continue and indeed increase, as the

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following chapters will show). As one activist from the group explains, "it was a problem for us before the revolution, especially with the movements like April 6th, who didn't have an ideology… because [they] were more attractive to youth" (I15). Interestingly, though, the problem of holding ideological affiliation was largely confined within the Revolutionary Socialists; for the other constituent organizations of the social movement, the group's ideology did not present a barrier to mutual recognition as forming part of the collective. For the movement, the commitment to the shared goals of change, and the fact that the Revolutionary Socialists' ideology was detached from personal political aspirations or efforts to advance the group itself, constituted the basis for inclusion in collective identity. In this sense, joint enterprise trumped this particular problem of non-youth practice. Indeed, in parsing the interviews and other empirical materials, the most important marker of collective identity, and the largest basis on which mutual recognition of belonging was based, involved this commitment to the change-related goals and, crucially, non-political aspirations for self or party. Altruistic motivation as foundation of collective identity would become further emphasized in 2013, in the aftermath of the military coup and with the rise of the Tamarod group, as will be shown in chapter five.

Constructing Identity Borders
The existence of shared tactics, values, and goals was not enough in itself to create collective identity; crucial in this process was the manifested recognition of the commonality through the display of inclusion/exclusion. The construction of identity borders benefitted from the relatively small and informal nature of the movement at this time, in which "everybody knows everybody, everybody works with everybody" (I19). As of 2010, the various constituent groups of the revolutionary youth movement would regularly co-mobilize at each other's events (I4, I5a, I11), demonstrating mutual recognition of their common cause and goal and, perhaps more importantly, signaling publicly the existence of a broader collective. This co-mobilization was able to take place in part because of membership crossover between the various groups, but also due to the friendly and familial nature of the movement at this time. Membership overlap was most obvious between the online networks and the more traditional groups involved in street action: many members of groups such as April 6th and the Revolutionary Socialists also followed the activities of the online networks, or indeed were the administrators or founders of such virtual groups (I11). This allowed for co-

mobilization to occur without requiring formal alliance or coalition, or even special overtures to be made from one group to another. In addition, given that the leaders of the various groups were all in close contact with one another, and most were either friends or in the very least had some sort of sense of camaraderie, co-mobilization could be organized, planned, and agreed rather informally, via the exchange of text messages for example (I4). By relying on friendship networks as opposed to purely professional ones, the movement was able to establish co-mobilization across its constituent parts even without the necessity of negotiating commonality. In this sense, while the dimensions of youth practice and existence of joint enterprise were the bases on which collective identity was founded, the actual process of construction stemmed from the facility and practicality of co-mobilization.

3.2.3 The Practice of Inclusiveness

In the period prior to the 2011 uprising, the revolutionary youth movement's construction processes at the extra-movement dimension demonstrated an important degree of inclusiveness with the perspective of meeting change oriented goals, and in particular the target of Mubarak and the *niẓām.* Both the manner in which the movement perceived of political opportunities as well as the types of strategies that were enacted derived from youth practice, the joint enterprise of radical change, and the collective understanding of bottom-up vectors for the achievement of objectives. With regard to political opportunity, the movement's perception of an enlarged opportunity was greatly influenced by the emphasis placed on change as a grassroots endeavor. In this vein, the movement's perception of a positive opportunity for action was closely linked to the perception of a large audience. Similarly, with regard to allies/opponents, the movement's calculation of other players in the political arena was influenced by the practice of youth; in this way, the activists were willing to work with whatever group, regardless of ideology or belief, so long as they shared a common base goal. The construction of allies, hence, was deliberately not concerned with specific long-term goals but rather short-term ones that disregarded differences in ideological position. Similarly, with regards to strategy, the revolutionary youth movement in the period of 2005-2010 undertook the construction of broadly inclusive frames and strategic actions that could affectively assemble as a wide a population as possible, with the objective of promoting bottom-up change. Here, my

analysis places emphasis on the movement's utilization of frame bridging and the diversification of language and space as a means of establishing inclusiveness. As is argued, the movement's strategy during the years 2005-2010 was rather short-term and iterative in nature; however, it permitted the activists to acquire important experience in field tactics and mobilization strategy that would prove invaluable during the 2011 uprising.

Extending Political Opportunity

The manner in which the revolutionary youth movement understood and calculated the possibilities and constraints to action, the perception of allies and opponents, and the view towards its potential audience reflect the movement's change-related goals of improving the lot of Egypt and Egyptians as a whole, as well as its shared understanding of the masses as source of change. In this way, the perception of political opportunity was directly influenced by the collective meanings and interpretations of youth community of practice. Within these calculations of the political arena, the year 2010 marks a watershed in the movement's perception of political opportunities: in their narrative, 2010 was viewed as the ripe moment for action, when real change could be possible, thanks to the momentum of various strains of contestation against the regime (I5a, I24, GI8b).[12] In this vein, the various constituent organizations took to increasing their street action and generating their own occasions for mobilization.

In the years prior, the movement's perception of opportunity for protest often stemmed from outside its organizational ranks. Youth for Change's protest in solidarity with the Judge's Club in 2006, April 6th's call for a general strike in support of the Maḥala textile workers, and the renewed call for a strike in 2009 all reflect dates and tactical approaches not entirely originating in the movement. This perception of externally-generated opportunity is somewhat explained by the movement's desire for broad change and its support to any and all groups working in this vein. However,

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[12] The last decade of Mubarak's rule saw a multiplication of fissures on the regime's authoritarian façade, and certain Egyptian political scientists and commentators had in fact predicated that something was bound to happen (see for example El-Mahdi and Marfleet, 2009; Bayat, 2010; and the documentary film *We Are Egypt* filmed in 2010). In particular, the years 2000-2010 saw the re-invigoration of protest movements and the explosion in workers strikes that greatly expanded the citizenry's ability to put pressure on the state.

by 2010 something had shifted in the perception of the political arena and the possibilities for action. In interviews, for example, the movement's historical members speak of 2010 as a critical year, in which their level of activity was dramatically intensified and that ended, inevitably, in the 2011 uprising. One activist recalls, "we started saying at the end of 2009 that 2010 will be the fight… The fight with Mubarak's Egypt" (I5a) while another states, "from 2003-2009 we used to make the same case demonstrations against the regime. But in 2010 after the [return] of ElBaradei… it helped us to reach more Egyptian normal people" (GI8b).

As mentioned here, this perception of 2010 as presenting an unprecedented opportunity for action was initially linked to an external event, namely the return of ElBaradei to Egypt and the launch of the National Association for Change. Most interviewees cite this as critical to creating a new opportunity by energizing the opposition around the message of "change" and by launching the signature campaign that was able to gather interest and attention to the opposition's cause (I4, I9, I14, I19, GI4). Beyond this, however, the perception of political opportunities in 2010 came largely from the movement itself and its own organization of activities. Two important attributes influenced this perception of 2010 as enlarged opportunity: the positive discursive arena and the huge number of potential allies.

The Perception of an Audience
One important dimension in the movement's perception of political opportunity was its belief in the existence of a very broad audience of potential sympathizers to its message, especially in the period from 2008-2010. In the shared interpretation of the activists, widespread anger and frustration towards Mubarak and his regime was prevalent amongst average Egyptians, resulting from an increasing awareness of police brutality and cases of blatant corruption, as well the deteriorating socio-economic conditions and intensification of vulnerability. Interviewees state, for example, "Mubarak was a totalitarian regime, it was an oppressing regime to all kinds of citizens in the country, so this made a special anger to every group as well as a common anger" (I4) and "the [then] current social and political situation in Egypt helped the people to come out" (I11). The movement believed that knowledge of the regime's abuses was widely held (GI8), and that the masses understood the link between their own hardships and the state's socio-economic management (GI5). In other words, the

movement believed that the Egyptian people had identified the source of the problem, and that Mubarak had been delegitimized in their eyes, rendering them susceptible to calls for broad change that pinpointed the president and his system as the source of malaise (I5a, I11).

Given this, the revolutionary youth movement in the period of 2005-2010, and especially in the period of 2008-2010, perceived of a positive discursive arena for the broadcasting and reception of its message. Here, the movement perceived that its overarching objective of broad change as opposed to more precise political goals was far more appealing to the masses, who were not interested in politics generally and failed to see the connection between their personal situation and the type of demands that political parties were making (I4, I11, GI8). One interviewee explains that the poor living conditions and awareness of regime abuses could act favorably as a mobilizing factor for the movement, stating, "this is what will mobilize people, because if I call to them with emergency law, they don't know the emergency law… The social needs will mobilize people" (I12). This belief in the salience of a socio-economic message as opposed to the overtly political ones of the traditional opposition is reiterated across the interviews. The perception of a positive discursive arena for the dissemination of the movement's message was reinforced by the lack of a meaningful counter-narrative on the part of either the regime or other political players. This is not to say that the movement did not face repression or hindrance on the part of the police and state security; however, the type of crackdown was limited to the physical obstruction of street action. As will be shown next, this perception of a positive discursive arena, along with the perception of an audience more receptive to socio-economic questions than political ones, would greatly influence strategies with regards to the content of slogans and messages as well as the places where mobilization would take place.

Inclusiveness in the Perception of Allies
An important dimension of the movement's perception of the political arena and opportunities for action during the period of 2005-2010 was its willingness to work with virtually any political actor, oppositional force, or indeed social group or other collectivity who shared in the very basic objective of removing Mubarak from office (I4, I5a, I11, I19). As mentioned previously in the chapter, the movement's goals in the period of 2005-2010 were generally vague and centered on the person of Mubarak, with fewer notions regarding the precise nature of changes to be implemented or future

vision for the Egyptian polity's functioning (with the exception of dignity). Given this lack of attention paid to the "after-Mubarak" scenario, the movement's perception of allies was in fact far larger, being as such limited to the sharing of an immediate goal as opposed to a long-term vision. For example, in a statement to al-Shorūq newspaper on 6 April 2009, the leader of the April 6th Youth Movement affirmed the need for a national coalition to fight the Mubarak regime that would include both the Muslim Brotherhood and the secular and liberal forces, as well as the capacity of April 6th to work with any political faction, in contrast to parties who refused to join ranks out of ideological difference. This sentiment was repeated by another co-founder of the group, stating,

> We started working in 2010, in January 2010. We mobilize with other groups like al-Gabha party, and the ElBaradei campaign, and we started working with them. In 2010, we had just one mission: how to mobilize all people, how to mobilize all parties, how to coordinate between all parties, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Socialists, etc… to make something against Mubarak… We said that if we want to get Mubarak out, all groups must be united and must be working together. And we succeeded on that (I5a).

The movement leaders interviewed here make a special point to discuss their willingness to work with the Muslim Brotherhood in the years leading up to the 2011 uprising – something which would starkly change by 2012 following the election of Mohamed Morsy. For the movement at this period, the Brotherhood's Islamist vision for the state was considered unproblematic, given the urgency attributed to the removal of Mubarak from power (I19). Another long-time activist and co-founder of Masry Hor recounts the participation of the revolutionary youth movement in planning meetings uniting all opposition forces in Egypt in 2010, and in particular following the parliamentary elections, with the objective of collaboration in order to remove Mubarak from power (I24). The perception of potential allies, especially by 2010, was thus based far less on the details of political program or even personal judgments or predilections than priority given to its goal. This inclusiveness is an important reflection as well of the commitment to non-ideological affiliation as part of youth practice as well as the priority of radical change. Part-and-parcel with this inclusiveness towards the perception of allies was the quite limited perception of opponents. For the movement, the only meaningful opponent to its action was the police and the Ministry of the Interior more generally, which represented less a constraint to action than a roadblock that needed to be surmounted. This prioritizing of immediate

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goals as opposed to long-term objectives in its calculation of political opportunities and ally/opponent configurations would surface again in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising, as will be shown in chapter five.

Frame Bridging Strategy

Hand-in-hand with these perceived opportunities and allies, the strategy as utilized by the various constituent groups of the revolutionary youth movement in its pre-2011 years was not developed as a long-term plan for the achievement of goals; rather, strategic choices and decisions about external activities were made somewhat spur of the moment, as members would make suggestions to the group who would then jointly develop the idea and mobilize within days (I5a, I19). A co-founder of the April 6th Youth Movement explains this process, stating, "we used to meet every two or three days and make short term plans, it was day by day plans. We tried of course to make long-term plans but it didn't work because every day something happened, every day something changed" (I6a).

This negotiation of short-term strategy with the objective of rapid mobilization as opposed to long-term strategic planning was in part a reflection of the movement's sense that it was creating a new tradition of protest. The members discuss, both in the press and in my interviews, the absence of a strong culture of mobilization in Egypt, including a lack of understanding of the differences between different types of demonstrations (vigils, marches, sit-ins, etc…) as well as the misdirected importance given to number of attendees at an event versus the more relevant issue of an event's message (Saoud, 2009, I5a). The activists consider themselves to have authored a new tradition of protest as of 2005, emphasizing the learning process and importance of tactical innovation embedded therein. One interviewee, for example, states they were learning "how to make a demonstration [to] have an effect on the regime… we make use of these mistakes [of the previous political generation] to have an effect on the regime" (GI8a). As can be seen in this statement, the desire to build a new type of protest repertoire is also a reflection of the movement's image of itself as a different political generation: the movement sought a strategy that would reflect its non-elitist quality and that would distinguish its practice in the field of activism and contestation. This lack of a tradition upon which to rely as well as the perception of generational practice pushed this process of short-term planning and constant reinvention of the movement's strategic choices.

Beneath this process, however, were the change related goals the movement sought to achieve; in this vein, the strategies implemented were designed to induce mass mobilization as the source of change. This included the utilization of language and symbols distanced from that of the political elite, the reconfiguration of spaces of protest, and the creation of a message that represented the plight of average Egyptians (I4, I5a, I11, GI8). While such a strategy seems obvious with hindsight, the process of its construction reveals the somewhat ad-hoc and trial-and-error nature by which the movement settled upon its slogans and repertoires. The end result of this iterative process was the acquisition of important knowledge regarding street action and mass mobilization.

Bridging Socio-Economics and Politics
Over the period of 2005-2010, the revolutionary youth movement undertook a gradual process of frame bridging (Snow et al., 1986:467) as a crucial element in its mobilization strategy, in which it deliberately attempted to link the amelioration of socio-economic conditions with more political goals. This frame bridging was specifically concerned with mobilization of the country's poor and working classes, who were seen as a potentially huge audience for the movement's message and who, if mobilized, could lead to the kind of mass change envisioned. This process of frame bridging commenced in earnest with the April 6th Youth Movement and its attempt to draw forth mass anti-Mubarak action by targeting in particular factory workers and unskilled labor. One activist from the group, for example, explains the reasoning behind this,

> We thought that if we ask the people to demonstrate for reforming of the constitution, nobody will care. But if we tell them that we make a protest demanding increased salaries, everybody will be engaged. So we try to link the social demand with the political demand, to illustrate and educate people during the online forums and Facebook pages that if you want to receive a higher salary, you have to change the government, you have to oppose the government, you have to guarantee this right in the constitution so you have to change the constitution, for example. So it was very important and necessary to bind or link the social demands with the political ones (I7).

Frame bridging was achieved through the personalizing of discourse in order to resonate with the daily lives of average Egyptians. Interviewees speak of the importance "to get to people, to touch their problems, to talk to them about problems that really touch them" including "the poverty, that people

are getting killed, that you might get killed like them, you might not be able to eat or feed your children soon" (I6b). Another activist from the group confirms this point, stating, "people saw them [political parties] in the media but they didn't participate because they were a little bit isolated from them. They didn't talk about the real problems of people, related to poverty and unemployment. Most of the strikes were related to freedoms. What mattered to people more [was] related to the economic situation, and food and bread for the people" (I11). In this way, a key element of the movement's mobilization strategy at the discursive level was to directly address the daily problems of average citizens without referencing specific political issues, which the activists saw as less salient given that the "percentage of ignorance is very high in Egypt, and the political ignorance is more" (I6b). The above statements reveal an important dimension of this frame bridging process: the movement was not relinquishing its own interests in political change in favor of the quality-of-life demands of the poor and workers, but rather saw its frame bridging as a form of education for the apolitical masses, explaining that political change was necessary to ameliorate socio-economic conditions.

As part of this strategy of frame bridging, the movement sought to position itself along equal footing with the lower classes, rather than maintain the loftier position of political elites. Here, the activists viewed themselves as playing a specific role "to do the connection between... the freedom and the political rights with the economic and social rights" (I11), thereby bridging the ranks of the political elite and educated upper classes with the lower and working classes. To accomplish this, the activists attempted to convey the impression that their struggle was the same as that of the average citizen. One interviewee explains this strategy, stating, "we made them feel that we are members of the Egyptian people, we are not activists. We are normal Egyptian people: you have a problem against the regime and we do too. So we are a whole family" (GI8b). This specific strategy of downplaying the "political activist" profile and instead attempting to focus on shared socio-economic grievances was a further element in the bridging process: by eliminating the perception of difference between activists and non-activists, the movement was emphasizing the connection between the political element of their message and the socio-economic demands of the people. This deliberate effort to distance themselves from the categorization of "political activist" also reflects the movement's animosity towards the traditional political opposition and its manner of contestation. The frame bridging

strategy corresponded with the movement's perception of itself as a distinct political generation with regards to practice.

Language and Locations

The translation of this frame bridging process into strategic action involved the utilization of everyday language and codes, as well as the relocation of protests to poor neighborhoods – in a very literal sense, bringing the action directly to the people. In linguistic terms, the movement made the strategic choice to convey its message in colloquial Egyptian Arabic as opposed to the much formal Modern Standard Arabic (*fuṣha*) that was favored by the political elite. In his memoir, Ghonim explains this strategic choice to convey the message of We Are All Khaled Said exclusively in the local dialect, writing, "by using colloquial Egyptian, I aimed to overcome any barriers between supporters of the cause and myself. I also deliberately avoided expressions that were not commonly used by the average Egyptian… I was keen to convey to page members the sense that I was one of them, that I was not different in any way" (2012:57). Likewise, the movement relied on symbols and codes based in popular culture as opposed to the importation of foreign discourse or models. For example, the Youth for Change protest at Sayidda Zaynab mosque relied on folkloric imagery for the transmission of its message (Khatib, 2012:128). More importantly, perhaps, was the reconfiguration of spaces of protest. The movement in this period began to organize demonstrations in Cairo's poor neighborhoods, such as Shubrā and Imbāba, among others (I11). One co-founder of April 6th explains this relocation of protest action,

> We change techniques, we will not make any demonstrations downtown. All demonstrations will be held in poor areas, in different places all over Cairo and all over Egypt. We will not go to simple places like syndicates but to poor areas… Because we need to move the fight in each street… The people will not know your news if you are going to make a demonstration downtown, but they will know your news if you make a demonstration in front of their houses (I5a).

The protests that took place in such neighborhoods varied from marches through alleyways and side streets to larger gatherings in public squares. This is not to say that the movement gave up on organizing or participating in street action in more high profile places; on the contrary, demonstrations in front of government buildings such as the Ministry of the Interior and the parliament continued to take place (I5a, I24). However, the strategic decision

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also to mobilize in poor areas was viewed as a critical means by which to build interest in the movement's cause and successfully develop support among average Egyptians largely indifferent to politics (I11). The knowledge of mobilization acquired from this strategy of moving the location of protests to poor neighborhoods and bridging socio-economic demands with political ones would come to fruition with the organization of the 25 January protest day in 2011.

Concluding Remarks

In considering the period of 2005-2010, this chapter puts forth a genealogical tracing of the social movement and youth community of practice. In the last years of Mubarak's presidency, the various constituent organizations that comprised the fledgling social movement developed a shared consciousness of themselves as a distinctive collective actor based precisely on their perception of political generation. In this vein, a collective notion of youth emerged from the generational encounter that occurred between the 1970s generation of political elites in Kifāya and the new generation of activists within Youth for Change. Critically, this understanding of youth reflects both action and intention: youth practice represents not only a different manner of doing of activism but also a different set of underlying motivations and values associated therein. As will be shown in chapter five, this multifaceted understanding of youth would further develop into a concept of generational battle and the dichotomizing of politics and revolution in the post-Mubarak era.

One of the primary conclusions of this chapter concerns the development of joint enterprise of the community of practice, and in particular the dignity narrative that so heavily permeates the revolutionary youth. This issue of dignity – the struggle against abuse and the culture of impunity, the demand for accountability and justice – emerged during the period of 2005-2010 as perhaps the most important goal of the revolutionary youth, and indeed would remain at the fore even after the ouster of Mubarak. The dignity narrative heavily influenced movement construction processes, and in particular the construction of collective grievances. Another major conclusion of this chapter concerns the role of social media in the mobilization processes of the revolutionary youth. Here, I conceptualize social media as a space of micromobilization where the construction of meaning and the alignment of understanding transpire. The chapter has demonstrated how this virtual space contributed to the construction of

grievances and collective emotions that served to bring individuals into the collective.

In returning to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, the analysis has revealed how the multi-faceted understanding of youth informed emotions, the perception of political opportunities, and the definition of strategies. Here, solidarity as a dimension of youth practice was demonstrated to be a key component in the construction of courage and collective hope, while the promotion of non-ideological contestation was critical to the perception of allies and the movement's willingness to work with different political actors for the purpose of contesting the Mubarak regime. In terms of strategy, the activists' self-understanding as a distinct political generation translated into the development of tactical repertoires that represented the autonomous position of youth as well as the altruism underlying youth practice, notably through the extension of the political battle to include the socio-economic one. The chapter has also shown, however, the tensions between the ideals of youth practice and the organizational elements of movement construction, particularly with regards to the construction of resources, where happenstance and pragmatism at times came at the expense of the values of the community of practice. These tensions would re-emerge in the aftermath of Mubarak's ouster, as will be further explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 4: Tahrir Square and the Revolutionary Ideal

> Approaching Tahrir Square, and that's when the feeling of belonging started to come back because I felt that this land was mine… That's when I enjoyed this role of the revolution, this unity…. the feeling of belonging and the nation, the ability to communicate with others, that was something so precious to me (I22b).

From 25 January–11 February 2011, Egypt's various cities and governorates played host to the most important continuous mass protests in the country's history, concluding in the removal of Hosni Mubarak from office and the transfer of power to interim military rule. These 18 days of uprising, politically and spiritually centered on Cairo's Tahrir Square, radically altered the course of Egyptian politics and profoundly reinvigorated the sense of citizenship, civic life, and interest in politics among the Egyptian people. This chapter seeks to explore the relationship between this historical moment and the revolutionary youth: how did the activists collectively interpret the 18 days, and what was the impact of these interpretations on social movement construction? In exploring these questions, the first half of the chapter analyzes the evolutions within the community of practice. Here, emphasis is placed on how the dynamics of the mass uprising fueled the activists' attribution of meaning to the concept of revolution and the definition of a set of revolutionary ideals. In this vein, the first section places emphasis on the occupation of Tahrir Square as the key free space whereupon prefigurative revolutionary practice emerged. It was the re-configuration of social and political relations within the autonomous space of the "Republic of Tahrir" that was collectively interpreted by the activists as the revolutionary ideal.

The second half of the chapter then analyzes how these evolutions at the level of meaning and practice played out in the various construction processes of the social movement over the course of the mass uprising. Of particular importance here is how the activists' self-perception as

"revolutionaries" influenced the organizational and strategic developments of the movement. It is above all the re-interpretation of themselves in light of the revolutionary moment that most directly influenced social movement construction processes, and in particular the establishment of the movement's coalition and organizational formalization, as well as strategic positioning within the Egyptian political arena.

4.1 The "Republic of Tahrir" and Prefigurative Practice

The 2011 uprising was a messy, unruly, and highly contingent event. The protests and tactics of contestation took many shapes and forms that varied dramatically based on geographic and social location, and many of the characteristics commonly attributed to this historical event in shorter accounts – that protesters practiced non-violence even when faced with life-or-death situations; that modern and globalized youth spearheaded the mass movement with the aim of democratization; that new internet and communication technologies were the critical difference in allowing this effort to succeed where previous ones had failed – have proven either sins of omission for the sake of good story telling or, worse, a form of neo-orientalism which serve to maintain the notion of Arab exceptionalism (El-Mahdi, 2011). The millions of individuals who participated in the mass protests represented vastly different social and political forces, with quite different objectives and reasons motivating their participation, as evidenced by the bitter contests over social and political policy since Mubarak's ouster.

The widely accepted narrative of the 18 days of mass mobilization divides the event into three distinct sequences, each with its own set of political stakes and mobilization dynamics (see also El Chazli, 2012; El Chazli and Hassabo, 2013). The first sequence, comprising the initial three days of mobilization (25-27 January) was marked by the dominance of the revolutionary youth in the organization and strategic planning of the first day of protest, as well as a continuous series of small-scale battles with the police to establish physical control over key spaces and maintain protester

momentum. The second sequence of the uprising (28 January–2 February, or what are more commonly referred to as the "Day of Rage"[13] and the "Battle of the Camel"[14]) saw the sudden adhesion of multiple different groups to the mobilization against Mubarak as well as the participation of hundreds of thousands of apolitical bystanders. The nationwide protests were marked by a downplaying of ideological affiliations and factional divides, instead seeing hundreds of thousands rally around a set of broad yet highly imprecise slogans: *ʿaīsh, ḥuriyya, al-ʿadāla al-igtimāʿiyya* (bread, freedom, social justice); *al-shʿab yurīd isqāt al-niẓām* (the people want the downfall of the regime); and *irḥal* (leave, get out). This cohesiveness with regards to protester slogans provided an image of unity of purpose that belied fundamental differences in strategic goals that would come forth only in the aftermath of Mubarak's departure. The third sequence of the 18 days (3 February–11 February) saw the continuous expansion of the protest movement, notably with the mass strike of workers groups and newly formed unions across the country on 9 February, bringing Egypt's economy to a near standstill. After failing to acquiesce to demands for his departure, Mubarak was removed from power by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) on 11 February and interim military rule was inaugurated.

These 18 days of mass uprising represent a true critical juncture in the history of the country as well as the Middle East more generally. The outcomes of the protest movement, both in terms of the immediate success of ousting Mubarak from power and the much longer-term effects with regards to internal politics and regional dynamics, are numerous and endlessly possible to debate. For the *shabāb al-thawra*, however, the importance of these 18 days is less related to outcomes or measures of success than to the experience itself. For the activists, the mass protest of early 2011 was a transformative experience that came to define the meaning of revolution and the ideals of a post-revolutionary society. In essence, it was the experience of the uprising and the collective naming of the revolutionary moment that

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[13] The Day of Rage saw marches emanate from mosques and churches across the country, with those in Cairo converging on Tahrir Square.

[14] The Battle of the Camel marks the bloodiest day in the 2011 uprising. Regime *balṭagiyya* (hired thugs), mounted on horses and camels, tore through Tahrir Square in an open battle that lasted 15 hours, in which control of the square became synonymous with control of the mass movement (Fathi, 2012).

reified for the activists the concept of revolution. This section explores the extension of the youth community of practice to include shared meanings of revolution and a repertoire of revolutionary practice, here conceived as prefiguration. This includes an assessment of the social and political dynamics during the 18 days that were collectively interpreted as revolutionary ideals by the *shabāb al-thawra*.

I posit that the critical factor in this extension of the youth community of practice was the experience of free space. By far the most important aspect of the uprising for the revolutionary youth was the continuous occupation of Tahrir Square by hundreds of thousands of protesters, in which the square became an autonomous and self-sufficient city-within-a-city. As will be shown, the shared meanings of revolution and the codification of prefigurative practice was the result of this experience of free space and in particular the practices of equality, tolerance, and co-habitation, along with the realization of social justice and transferred sovereignty, that were entailed therein. It is these various dimensions of the lived experience on Tahrir Square that comprise the activists' understanding of revolution and that inform prefigurative practice – and, hence, the re-defining of joint enterprise and their particular role therein – that would become quintessential to the revolutionary youth movement.

4.1.1 Free Space and the Occupation of Tahrir Square

The occupation of Tahrir Square has become the iconic image of the 2011 uprising, entering into the collective memory of Egyptians as a utopic moment of social harmony and diffusing worldwide in movements such as Occupy Wall Street and Los Indignados (Kerton, 2012; van Stekelenburg, 2012). As a free space outside the control of the authorities, the square became a site where the normal social and political order of the Mubarak regime was radically altered and where an idealized version of Egyptian society could flourish. Tahrir Square was simultaneously a protest tactic as well as the embodiment of claims on the state, acting both to contest the regime's control of physical space and imposition of order via the emergency law as well as depict the polity to which the protesters aspired (van de Sande, 2013). In this sense, Tahrir was not simply a site of demonstration or a point of assembly; rather, it was a contestation of the imposed spatial, social, and political controls that illuminated in stark relief the injustices of the Mubarak

regime. Through the self-governance that the free space permitted, occupiers were able to put forth a utopic Egyptian polity where social and political relations were based on tolerance and equality and in which daily order was constituted around principles of fairness and universal civic participation. In this way, the occupation of Tahrir was a transformative political and social experience arising from the conjuncture of bodies in reclaimed and idealized space (Gregory, 2013:242-244). The quotidian life on the square, mythologized in the minds of the activists as the "Republic of Tahrir," symbolized for them the realization of the revolutionary ideal, the definition of prefigured revolution. In other words, the manner in which the activists collectively interpreted the lived experience of the square's occupation came to define revolutionary prefigurative practice.

Contesting Order

The physical and spiritual convergence of the 2011 uprising on Tahrir Square was the natural outpouring of the site's historical role in contestation, its routine importance as a central thoroughfare, and its symbolic currency of both regime malfunction and Egyptian glory. The square has been a traditional location of mass protest movements since at least the 1952 revolution, when President ʿAbd al-Nasir commemorated the end of British imperialism by re-baptizing it from Ismailia to Tahrir (*liberation*) Square; since then, it has played host to the 1977 Bread Riots as well as the protests regarding the Palestinian and Iraqi cases in the early 2000s (Cook, 2012). As confirmed across my interviews, Tahrir became an habitual gathering spot during the decade prior to the uprising for various protest activities, and as such was an almost foregone conclusion as the assembly point for protests on 25 January 2011 (I9, I24). Yet Tahrir Square is not a square at all, at least not in the nomenclature of urban planning. It is a massive and chaotic roundabout, connecting the western districts of Giza with the downtown area, where the majority of administrative buildings are located, and serving as the estuary for Qasr al-Aini street, one of the most important south-north roads. It is difficult to bypass Tahrir Square when traversing from one area of Cairo to another, and as such gives to protesters a high potential for visibility as well as the possibility to shut down the normal flow of traffic. Indeed, shutting down Tahrir Square greatly breaks down the spatial order of the city itself.

Tahrir Square is also the location of several buildings that symbolized the organs of power of the Mubarak regime and its abject failure to properly serve the Egyptian people. The building of the National Democratic Party –

set ablaze during the 18 days and still standing as a hollow, burned-out memento – lies just off the square, while the Mugamaʿa, the labyrinthine administrative complex where Egyptians spend countless lost hours of bureaucratic inefficiency to file administrative papers such as birth certificates and passports, lies directly on Tahrir. Yet the square also hosts several buildings attesting to the country's importance in the region and its contribution to civilization. The Arab League building is located on Tahrir, demonstrating Egypt's uncontested role as hegemon of the Arab countries, as are the American University of Cairo's historical campus, as well as the Egyptian Museum that houses an impossible wealth of Pharaonic art, representing Egypt's past glories and faded modernity. The occupation of Tahrir Square, thus, was not just a convenient or strategic location to disrupt the daily order of life but was also a highly symbolic location capturing the regime's deterioration of the country itself. The importance of control of Tahrir Square to the success of the 2011 mass protest movement is paramount, as Tawil-Souri (2012:89) explains,

> What became clear in the days leading up to Mubarak's downfall was that presence in and taking over of physical (and in this case urban) space was crucial to the success and continuity of the uprising. Tahrir Square was and represented one of the 'placed' means of citizens staging their right to public assembly. The transformation was a physical, territorial and embodied manifestation of democratic possibility.

What rendered the space of Tahrir Square so unique during the 18 days of revolution, however, was not simply the mass protests that took place thereupon but the act of occupation, the construction of an autonomous city – complete with its own infrastructure and the provision of services – and the disappearance of zoning restrictions and an imposed outside order. Many protesters continuously lived on Tahrir during the entire 18 days, going home only sporadically to change clothes and shower (I8, GI5); others made a stop at the square in mornings or evenings, taking part in the daily life of the occupation during normal leisure hours (I22b, D8). The square had dedicated areas for speech making and stages for concerts, an internet café, a field clinic where doctors and nurses dispensed care for free, a wall for posting images of those killed in protest, childcare services, food and water stations, toilets, checkpoints ringing the square's entrances in order to prevent infiltration or the importing of weapons, and a central island where tents were erected for overnight sleeping (Ramadan, 2012:146-147). Garbage was

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collected and disposed of properly, lines for access to electricity outlets were patiently and jovially respected, and occupiers readily volunteered for various duties. As a city unto itself, Tahrir functioned far more efficiently and effectively than any other place in Egypt. The act of occupation was accompanied by a sense of ownership and an associated desire to contribute and ameliorate. As Tawil-Souri (2012:90) states, Tahrir was "the very architecture and embodiment of civicness."

In addition, Tahrir was also a space of intense political activity and debate. Throughout the square, groups exchanged information regarding political programs and ideologies, constitutions and reforms and systems, and the type of state that would be desirable along with potential future leaders. As many of my interviewees recount when describing their experiences on the square, the political conversations exchanged during the occupation were an enormous educational experience, a veritable crash course in civics and political science (I22b, GI1, GI5). As one activist who only mobilized for the first time during the 18 days states, "when the revolution started I wasn't all for it because I didn't really understand what was going on… so I decided to go to Tahrir… and of course I realized what was going on meeting people there and what we used to talk about" (I25b). These exchanges also served to build the common belief in the revolutionary moment, the self-awareness of living and enacting the revolution. One activist explains this process of collective identification of the moment, stating,

> At first it was like an eruption against the Interior Ministry, it wasn't about Mubarak or something. So we didn't know what to hope for, we didn't know how long will this last, how long will they let us?... And every day our hopes grew. Everyday we felt we were more capable. We're staying here because we can stay here, not because they let us stay here (GI5a).

In his ethnographic account from Tahrir Square and the 18 days, El Chazli also recounts the sudden addition of the adjective "revolutionary" into mundane activities: "hey guys, are we going to have a revolutionary meal?"; "I am revolutionarily starving"; "where did our revolutionary comrade go off to? He's off revolutionizing somewhere" (2012:863). As El Chazli argues, the exchange of political ideas and the common affirmation of the revolutionary moment served to formulate the shared understandings of the collective: the political order of the Republic of Tahrir came to represent the ideal of a post-revolutionary order. The act of communally contesting Mubarak's order on Tahrir Square thus went beyond the calls for his

departure, becoming a vehicle for political change itself by illuminating the model to be achieved (Ramadan, 2012:146).

Reconstituting Social and Political Relations

Through the autonomy of the free space, the occupation of Tahrir Square saw the transformation of social and, by extension, political relations. The physical process of communal living that the occupation of Tahrir provided allowed for new social relations to arise and a renewed sentiment of community. Life on the square was marked by a facility in social mixing that was by and large unknown in Egypt (van de Sande, 2013:233-237). Different social classes as well as social groups found themselves in a situation of close physical proximity and communion, providing them with a degree of awareness and familiarity with others that was previously unknown. As the interviewees relate, the square brought together a broad cross section of Egyptian society who took part in each other's daily existence: sharing tea, exchanging jokes, praying together, and simply participating in the minutia of each other's daily existence (I8, GI4, GI5). One Salafi activist, newly mobilized during the 18 days, relates, "when I approached [Tahrir] I find people who used to feel scared from me from different ideologies, leftists, liberals, you know, Christians, everybody. We were there, living together, singing, it was lovely" (I22b). Much of the time spent on the square was in fact dedicated to socializing, and through this creating a new socialization of Egyptians in which the normal distinctions and barriers of class, religion, race, and socio-political inclination no longer applied. With regards to social relations, what transpired on the square is akin to what Turner (1969) refers to as "communitas," a moment of deep social unity, equality, and solidarity that emerges from the liminal condition that transition imposes. During moments of transition, as for example during rites of passage or from one political order to another, the social structure temporarily ceases to exist and a situation of anti-structure is produced.[15] The moment of communitas is

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[15] Normal social rules, norms, and logics are thus suspended, where individuals find themselves in a free-floating instance of interconnection. Communitas is "a 'moment in and out of time'… which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties" (1969:96). It "breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality…It is almost everywhere held as sacred or 'holy', possibly because it transgresses or dissolves norms that govern structured and

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accompanied by the strong sentiment of creative potential and effervescence, and creates new social norms and values that are not based on differentiation or hierarchy but rather inherent shared humanity. The social order that emerged on Tahrir manifested this togetherness and mutual recognition of the intrinsic. One interviewee explains, "the Christians guarding or protecting the Muslims, the girl without *hijāb* [head scarf] with the girl with *hijāb*, the Salafists with secular… Tahrir Square was utopia" (I7). The division of tasks was not based on any sort of differentiation of class, age, wealth, gender, or religion (I8); the gathering into camps and discussion groups did not pay attention to normal social logics of separation and propriety (GI1). The social relations on the square signaled both a rejection of societal differentiation and the proposal of a new model based on principles of equality and tolerance of difference.

Hand-in-hand with this reconfiguration of social relations was the reconstitution of political ones. The congregation of a broad cross-section of society on Tahrir Square and the act of self-governance was essentially the creation of a new body politic, in which sovereignty was transferred from the organs of the state to the protesters themselves. The management of the square was organic and communal, with everyone pitching in when and where needed (GI8). This self-governing also produced a polity in which services were adequately provided and no distinction between haves/have-nots could be discerned (GI5). This transferred sovereignty, thus, subverted the logic of survival strategies as well as the injustices inherent in the state-society relations of the Mubarak regime; in its place were political relations founded in principles of solidarity and equality. As one interviewee states, "when we were attacked by anyone from any street… everyone was defending the man standing beside him" (I8). Fundamental to these new political relations was an experience of equal and full citizenship based on participation and predicated not on one's own interests but rather those of the polity itself. It was these reconstituted relations – between Egyptians, and vis-à-vis the polity – that emerged within the free space of the Republic of Tahrir that represent prefiguration of the activists' revolutionary ideal.

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institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency" (1969:128).

4.1.2 The Shared Meaning of Revolution

For the revolutionary youth, the defining of revolution stems from the collective interpretation of the lived experience on Tahrir Square: what the activists felt, what they witnessed, what they participated in, both as individuals and as a collective. It was this transformative moment in the experience of their personal lives and their society that brought forth the concept, and not vice versa. In other words, the definition of revolution is a product of the activists' collectively naming of the revolutionary moment; in this sense, the 2011 uprising was not the outcome of revolutionary thought but rather the reverse. Parsing out the revolutionary ideals as derived from this lived experience, as the activists relate them in interviews and movement narratives, reveals three broad themes: state-society relations and the social contract; relations between citizens and the governance of minorities; and the transfer of political power to the people. It was these three aspects of the collective understanding of revolution that became inherently incorporated into the community of practice's shared meaning and, in turn, meaningful actions via prefiguration. In addition, as will be shown in the second half of the chapter, these understandings and revolutionary prefigurative practice would influence social movement construction processes in important ways, and in particular in the formalization and strategic positioning of the revolutionary youth.

The Social Justice Narrative

Within the community of practice, one of the most important shared meanings attributed to revolution is formulated in what I identify as the social justice ideal narrative, the second touchstone of the *shabāb al-thawra* that combines specific ideas regarding the social contract, the distribution of social welfare services, and the configuration of state-society relations. The social justice narrative asserts a vision of the state in the service of the people and not the private domain of the elite – something that was directly experienced on Tahrir Square and that starkly contrasted Mubarak's socio-economic order. The social system that organically arose during the 18 days was oriented around mutual protection and redistribution of goods and services, creating a self-sustaining community in which ensuring individual well-being became a collective goal. This experience of protection and redistribution contrasted with the socio-economic policies of the Mubarak regime, which saw increasing precariousness alongside decreasing state

subsidies and assistance programs. Mubarak's social and economic policies represented an exacerbation of neoliberal reforms put into place under the Sadat presidency.

In the 1970s, Egypt was facing severe economic stagnation, soaring debt, rising unemployment, and deteriorating quality of life. Cornered by IMF- and World Bank-sponsored economic restructuring programs aimed at economic liberalization, the Egyptian government was forced to abandon much of its socialist economic policy in favor of neoliberalism. In 1974, Sadat introduced a new economic model for the country, *infitāḥ* (open door), which included reducing taxes and import tariffs for foreign investors, exempting foreign companies from key labor legislation, and other efforts to introduce the country to the global market (El-Sayed El-Naggar, 2009:34). This policy was further advanced and solidified by Mubarak, resulting in a wide chasm in wealth and income distribution. As part of the country's neoliberal entrenchment, Mubarak continued to reduce the state's weight in and control of the economy, including further cuts to subsidies, a partial end to price controls, foreign trade liberalization, further privatization of public sector companies, and the practical end of government guaranteed jobs for graduates, among other measures (Blaydes, 2011:43). Alongside these reforms was the development of tripartite clientele relationships between the regime and Egypt's business, bureaucratic, and military classes (Henry and Springborg, 2001:155) and the fostering of market-based rents for these new clients (El-Sayed El-Naggar, 2009:36). In designing policies for the benefit of its clients, the regime implemented taxation laws designed to favor big businesses and the wealthiest despite blatant problems of fairness, enacted tariff policies that directly benefited importers, and turned a blind eye to corrupt business practices (El-Sayed El-Naggar, 2009:38-40). As a result of the state's decreasing social and economic protections, the country's lower classes turned to a variety of survival tactics, which included the acquisition and sharing of goods and public services at the level of kinship or neighborhood (Singerman, 1996), as well as the forms of charity that emanated from Islamist and humanitarian organizations.

On Tahrir Square, however, the acts of protection and redistribution spanned the entire community without discrimination; in effect, the community itself became the purveyor of protection and redistribution, acting in the service of the square's individuals. This translated into a revolutionary ideal of state-society relations, in which the state would become the guarantor of the individual. Another activist explains this, stating, "the values of the

revolution are humanitarian values that will be implemented on the ground. Dignity is protected, your country will take care of you. Your country will not abandon you" (I7). This revolutionary ideal of state protection was repeated in numerous interviews. In a group interview with activists from Salafyo Costa (GI3), for example, an extensive discussion concerning state protection as revolutionary objective took place, touching on everything from the subsidizing of bread and the raising of salaries to the amelioration of schools and healthcare. In these discussions, the link between this reconfiguration of state-society relations and the dignity narrative is quite clear, as one fundamental component of state protection relates to bodily harm and abuse. Added to this, however, is the notion of the social contract, and specifically the state's duty to provide services to the people. In speaking of this duty of the state to provide for the people, one activist explains, "human dignity, this will only come from a state that recognizes that it came to rule from the people and because of the people and the people can take it out" (GI5b).

This understanding of the social contract, upon which the social justice narrative is based, draws on cultural norms regarding the redistribution the wealth and the duties of the state. Indeed, it is this anchoring of social justice within a larger socio-cultural meta-narrative that renders the revolutionary youth's ideal narrative so powerful. The conception of social justice in the Arab world today finds its origins in Arab-Islamic culture, and particularly in Islam and the Qur'anic norms and rules that are outlined for the construction of what can be termed the "moral economy" (Kuran, 1989), the principles of which concern how wealth is distributed in society and how the most vulnerable of its members are treated. The Qur'an stipulates a requirement to protect and assist those most in need, such as the poor, children, etc… Assistance is the duty of those in well-off or comfortable situations: members of the community have a moral imperative to provide aid (financial or otherwise) to the vulnerable. Protection, for its part, is derived from the establishment of specific rules and guidelines related to how the economy should function, focusing in particular on preventing exploitation. The Qur'an elaborates these requirements through extensive passages about communal obligations to the poor and vulnerable as well as numerous rules regarding how the economy should be structured, including the imposition of a special tax, *zakāt*, on the rich for redistribution to those in need, protection from usury and exploitation, and the right to work, amongst many others. These various principles and rules behind the moral economy constitute the

understanding of social justice in the Islamic context, which comprises a communitarian ideal of redistributive social welfare.

This vision of social justice and how it is achieved has had a profound impact on how Arab states, in both classical and modern times, have been structured. As argued by Ismael and Ismael (2008:25-26, 28) in an article on social policy and social justice in the Arab world,

> Social justice in this context refers to a culturally legitimated normative orientation towards what is considered a fair distribution of wealth in society; and social policy relates to that part of public policy concerned with establishing guidelines for changing, maintaining or creating a basic standard of social welfare… What this signifies about Islam as a cultural force is that it represents a powerful normative orientation in the Muslim world regarding the role and responsibility of government for the social welfare of its citizens.

As the authors put forth, the importance of this communitarian and redistributive notion of welfare in Muslim society, and in particular its relationship to the ruling authority, was elaborated during the golden age of Arab civilization by numerous jurists, who identified the duty of the government or ruler to guarantee the achievement of social justice. This indeed became a key norm regarding government's role with respect to society and served as the basis for the social contract and legitimacy, and has translated in the modern period into a deeply rooted norm regarding what social justice looks like and who should be responsible for its achievement.

This ideal of redistributive social welfare has shaped social policy and state-society relations in Egypt since the national liberation movement of the 1950s until the present day. Egypt's first post-independence president, the charismatic Gamal ʿAbd al-Nasir, placed socialist economic policy at the heart of his construction of the modern republic. This included the provision of jobs, access to healthcare and education, and the subsidizing of basic items, thereby establishing a system of quiescent loyalty between the regime and the lower classes (Sadiki, 2000). The policies of *infitāḥ* and Mubarak's neoliberal reforms as such instigated a loss of legitimacy resulting from the broken social pact. Despite the regime's attempts to reorient the economy towards market values, and to implement stop-gap measures to ease the bleeding, the expectations of redistributive social justice and equity as specifically a responsibility of the government or a right of the people has never waned amongst Egyptians.

The revolutionary youth movement's social justice narrative, which came into force during the 18 days, draws upon the cultural norm regarding

both the content of redistribution (i.e. what provisions should be included) as well as the state-society relations it entails (the social contract). In interviews, the activists repeatedly cite that revolutionary goals include adequate food for the poor, better salaries for the lowest paid and pay-caps for the highest, access to healthcare and education, and overall improved standards of living for the poor (I11, I12, I16, I18, GI7). Just as importantly, interviewees make explicit that this is a duty of the state to the people, that a post-revolution state would oversee such a system (I7, I20, I21, GI5). As one interviewee explains, "we believe that the state should be responsible for the base line for the good life of the people" (I9). The exact details of this redistributive social justice, however, are notably absent: what type of socio-economic system should be created does not figure into the movement's understanding of "revolutionary" and "revolution." For example, in a discussion with one activist, diverse political possibilities for the achievement of social justice are evoked, "capitalism but controlled capitalism…others [say that] to have social justice you must establish socialism" (I11).

This detachment of the revolutionary objective and vision for state-society relations from a political program is reflective of the movement's non-ideological stance in its youth practice. Indeed, this is representative of the movement's collective understanding much more broadly: the conceptualization of revolution is not associated with specific political models or normative ideologies, including democracy. To this point: the term "democracy" only rarely came up during interviews, and does not figure heavily on either the Facebook pages or the statements to the press reviewed here. I do not wish to imply that the activists do not prefer or seek a democratic model, but rather that the term is infrequent when describing their objectives and collective notion of "revolution."

As will be shown in the second half of the chapter and the assessment of movement construction processes and strategic construction in particular, the transmission of this social justice narrative would come to the fore in the movement's most significant protest slogan, *ʿaīsh, ḥuriyya, al-ʿadāla al-igtimāʿiyya* (bread, freedom, social justice). Developed specifically for the 25 January 2011 protest, this slogan would become synonymous with the *shabāb al-thawra* in the post-Mubarak period. As will be shown in the discussion on strategy in the chapter's second section, this slogan brought together the movement's dignity and social justice narratives while drawing upon the tradition of mass protest through a symbolically powerful and highly evocative chant that could be adopted by millions.

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Citizenship and Revolutionary Values

Alongside the vision of state-society relations envisioned for a post-revolution Egypt was the goal of expanded citizenship. The experience of social unification and de-complexification that abounded on Tahrir Square imbued a profound sense of belonging to the movement's activists, and especially those stemming from a social minority (I18, I22b, GI2, GI3). Social relations under Mubarak were governed by various forms of discrimination and segregation, creating intense animosities along with various forms of injustice and unequal treatment between different groups (Mohieddin, 2013:8-15). Many were treated as second-class citizens, felt that they "don't have rights" (GI2a), while others were excluded from incorporation into the identity of the nation-state (I18). Their sense of belonging to Egypt, both as citizens and as nationals, was hence truncated by their minority status. As one interviewee states, minorities in Egypt faced "discrimination, jail, injustice in every details in our life" (GI33b). This discrimination and segregation, moreover, was not just the result of state policy but indeed trickled into everyday social interactions. An intolerance of difference overshadowed social relations, driving processes of self-segregation into separate physical and social communities (GI3). On Tahrir Square, however, individuals were recognized as Egyptians and not Copts, Nubians, Salafis, or women *per se*, and were granted equal access and right to all common goods and spaces on the square (I22b). The capacity for co-habitation and the erasure of normal social discriminations that were on display on the square and that guided social relations during the 18 days translated into the values of tolerance and non-discrimination that would become pillars of the movement's shared meaning of revolution. A critical component of this entails the transformation of social relations in order to permit this form of co-habitation and the acceptance of religious, racial, ideological, or gender difference (albeit with limitations, as will be further explored in the following chapter). As another activist elaborates, "what happened in the 18 days was everybody forgot all the difference between each other… there is no dichotomy, classification of people, no supervision on things and belief" (I11).

These values were also captured in the specific objective of enlarged citizenship that would become a major component of the movement's shared meaning of revolution. One Coptic activist explains, "it's about equal rights… we're calling for citizenship" (I18). In their conceptualization, the goal of the revolution is not to extend special guarantees or protections to

minorities, nor to create separate legal statuses or laws, but rather to transform the management of minorities into equal citizenship. One Coptic activist explains this point, stating, "the issue about Christians… it's not the rights of a minority… we are just citizens in this country" (GI2a). This promulgation of tolerance and non-discrimination at the social level is thus equated with citizenship at the civic level. The revolutionary ideal, as such, is for the recognition, acknowledgement, and treatment of Egyptians as equal citizens endowed with the same rights and free of prejudice or bias.

Transferring Sovereignty

Though the revolutionary youth movement's vision for the post-revolution state does not specify a political model, it nonetheless does include strong ideas regarding the sources of power and the role of the citizens in issuing legitimacy and the processes of decision-making. Indeed, a critical dimension of revolution as understood by the *shabāb al-thawra* is the relocation of political power in the hands of the people; however – and this is critical – this revolutionary ideal is not associated with reforming institutions of state, refining legal cadres, or increasing participation in electoral instances (GI6). Rather, the focus is on the authority of the people to exercise political power, to grant and withdraw legitimacy, and to impose their collective will – outside of formal and institutional contexts. The experience of autonomy on Tahrir Square, the ability of the people to organize themselves into an efficient and harmonious ecosystem without government intervention or presence of the state bureaucracy, reaffirmed for the activists the power of the masses and the capacity for self-governance. As one activist explains,

> I think the main idea of the Egyptian revolution was exchanging the relation between the citizen and state… In Tahrir Square, eight million people were demonstrating against Mubarak. Eight million people organized themselves, took political decisions, lived together, made their forces for them. I think decentralization, was the hidden demand of this revolution, and changing the relationship with the state. The state in Egypt should go out and stay away from organizing Egyptians (I27a).

What the interviewee is pinpointing here, and what comes up in multiple interviews, is the right to express political demands and to impose collective will on the regime through assembly and self-organization (I13, I16, I30, GI6). For the activists, the legitimacy of the ruling authority and the power to govern is not a function of elections and laws but rather the will of the

people, which should take precedence over political formalities. As such, the power to govern can be withdrawn if the collective will of the people so demands. In the activists' conceptualization of a post-revolution state, the right to assembly and public protest is of utmost importance, as this serves as the ultimate source of decision-making and legitimacy to which the ruling regime must acquiesce. In essence, the power of the street is viewed as superior and must be guaranteed through the transfer of sovereignty in order to ensure the revolutionary ideal.

As will be shown in the second half of the chapter, as well as in chapter five, these key elements of the collective understanding of "revolution" – social justice and the renewed social contract; equal citizenship and societal togetherness; and the relocation of power into the hands of the people – would all influence the construction processes of the social movement, and in particular organizational and strategic construction. This includes the internal training and human resource development as well as the development of collective action frames and street tactics.

4.1.3 Joint Enterprise of Revolutionary Practice

The naming the revolutionary moment and the interpreting of the experience on Tahrir Square as a set of revolutionary ideals was accompanied by the development of distinct practice associated with the achievement of revolution. For the *shabāb al-thawra*, revolution is not simply an objective to be achieved but is also a distinct way of acting and of being that is itself informed by the revolutionary ideals. Indeed, for the activists, it is action that renders one a revolutionary (I4, I11, I14, I19, I29): in the shared understanding of the *shabāb al-thawra,* revolutionary subjectivity is not dependent upon participation in the 2011 uprising but instead adherence to the movement's interpretation of the revolutionary ideals and the struggle for their realization. In this sense, revolutionary subjectivity as understood by the activists hinges on two points: harboring the same interpretation of the 2011 uprising, a point which was reiterated in nearly every interview as well as in statements to the press; and directed action that works for the achievement of the revolutionary ideals. This action, upon which revolutionary subjectivity is based, is in essence prefigurative practice. It is both the enactment of the values of the revolution in the present, and the struggle to achieve the revolution for the future. In this sense, the appellation "revolutionary" as

used by the activists is inherently linked to prefigurative practice. Given this, the evolution of the community of practice during the 2011 uprising also involved the definition of a new joint enterprise: the practicing of revolution. Here, joint enterprise (in the sense of goals and priorities) and practice become equivalent.

(Re)Enacting the Revolution

The prefigurative character of revolutionary practice for the *shabāb al-thawra* is dual in nature. It entails both performing in the present the various social and political dynamics on display in Tahrir Square and acting in accordance with the revolutionary values, as well as specific types of action that aim to achieve the revolution, or what can essentially be understood as the reproduction of the Republic of Tahrir. As one interviewee explains, "the square makes you [a revolutionary]. I don't mean Tahrir Square... All revolutionary work in the street, we call it the 'revolutionary square.' So the square, believing in the revolutionary values" (I12). As explained here, the revolutionary should practice the values of tolerance, equality, and co-habitation that comprise the ideal of social relations; yet in addition, the revolutionary should also work for the achievement of social justice and the transfer of sovereignty upon which the post-revolution state will be founded. As another activist states, the real revolutionary is "someone who has great faith and belief in the principles and causes that he or she is fighting for" and "who [is] genuinely working for the objectives of the revolution… not seeking any personal gain" (I25). Revolutionary practice is, as such, the embodiment of the spirit of Tahrir in the present and, critically, the effort to reproduce what transpired during the 18 days.

For the activists, who saw in the free space of Tahrir Square the achievement of a revolutionary ideal, it is via the promotion of street action and mass uprising that revolution can occur. Revolutionary practice thus seeks to "empower people" (GI6b), and includes efforts to provoke mass protests, strikes, and other forms of "people power." This involves various grassroots efforts and bottom-up approaches both to disseminate revolutionary values (I22b, GI3, GI6) while at the same time utilizing the tactics of the street to "ensure that the current regime… will respect the people's needs" (I17). Prefiguration is thus the performance of values and the efforts to provoke a reconstitution of the figurative square at the level of the masses. Embedded within this understanding of revolutionary practice is the activists' identification of how revolution can be realized. In essence, the

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activists see the multiplication of their own subjectivity and the proliferation of revolutionary practice across the polity as the vector for achieving the ideals of revolution. One interviewee talks about this process, stating, "we're approaching workers, we're approaching students, we're approaching intellectuals, we're approaching everyone that's saying the revolutionary movement should continue" (16). Likewise, another activist states, "revolutionary work starts when people are distributed geographically and demographically with the goals of the revolution… Our goal is to mobilize… with the goals of the revolution" (I29). Given this, the activists attribute to themselves the essential role in provoking the achievement of revolution. This definition of revolutionary prefigurative practice and the understanding of how revolutionary change can occur would greatly influence movement construction at the extra-movement dimension, as will be explored in the second half of the chapter as well as in chapter five.

The Shabāb al-Thawra as Vanguard

An essential dimension of the community of practice's extension of its joint enterprise involves the activists' self-appointment of the role of revolutionary vanguard in the Egyptian political arena (see also Khosrokhavar, 2012). In their common narrative of the uprising, or what they refer to as the 25 January Revolution, it is the revolutionary youth who hold guardianship over the event and its "true" meaning, and the purpose of their activism is to promote revolution through practice. This sense of ownership and appropriation of the 18 days stems in part from the very real role the movement played in the organization of the first day of protest. The initial mobilization planned for 25 January – Police Day, a public holiday – was almost entirely the result of strategic planning by the revolutionary youth movement, and namely April 6th, We Are All Khaled Said, the Revolutionary Socialists, and the Justice and Freedom Movement (I4, I5a, I11, I19, I24). The conception and organization of the first protest drew largely on the ideational and strategic content that the movement had developed, particularly in 2010. Indeed, even the decision to protest against brutality and injustice on Police Day was based on the movement's historical tradition of protest every 25 January (I5a, I11). The fact that the mass mobilization grew out of their efforts greatly contributed to the activists' sense of ownership over the uprising.

Just as importantly, the activists' belief in their role as vanguard of the revolution was influenced by their shared interpretation that the mass

uprising was a unified movement. In the narrative of the revolutionary youth, the difference between 25 January and 28 January is paramount; the fact that the masses of bystanders and, especially, political forces joined the protests three days after they began serves as justification for the movement's appropriation of the uprising and its "true" meaning (I11). As the organizers of the Police Day protest, both with regards to tactics and venues of demonstration and the definition of slogans and demands, the activists place huge emphasis on their role in defining the modes and messages of the uprising. The fact that they acted relatively alone on 25 January, that other political forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood had expressly refused to co-mobilize on that day (I4, I22b, I30), is crucial in their sense of ownership over the event. The activists attribute to themselves a fundamental role as the "spark" behind the mass movement (I11), as the ones who lit the flame across Egypt (I12; Saoud, 2011a). One activist even goes as far as to state, "in my opinion, during the 18 days, the youth were leading the whole state. Even the army and the government, the regime. The youth were controlling the square, and the square was controlling the country" (I7).

In the movement's reading of the uprising, 28 January is not understood as a categorically different event from the 25 January protest but rather a direct outpouring from it, a scaling up of what the activists and their constituent groups had collectively launched as opposed to a more complex political phenomenon representing heterogeneous purposes and interpretations (I9, I24). One interviewee describes this, stating, "on the 27th and 28th, people saw the non-ideologized youth beaten and killed… this got the sympathy of the people, who thought that these people were fighting for them. So the millions and millions on the 28th… people felt that these were poor guys who don't deserve what is happening to them and other classes said that they should participate so that it doesn't happen to them" (I4). In its role as originator of the protests, the *shabāb al-thawra* believe that they set the tone and put forth the model that allowed the uprising to take place (I24). In interviews, the activists express their view that the 18 days of mass mobilization were the triumph of youth practice and proof positive of its superior capacity to produce real change. As explored in the previous chapter, the notion of youth practice includes the emphasis on non-ideological affiliation and the non-personalization of politics, the values of solidarity and non-violence, and altruism with regards to political motivation. These dimensions were largely on display during the 18 days; as such, the movement interpreted the achievement of the uprising to the propagation of

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its generational form of activism and contestation across the polity (I4, I9, I11).

Finally, the movement's self-conception as revolutionary vanguard stems from the external recognition granted to the activists by the general public and media at large, as well as their aspirations to represent the masses. As anyone who took an even passing interest in the 2011 Egyptian uprising will remember, the story of the country's "Facebook youth" and their "digital revolution" became the dominant international narrative of the event – a myth reinforced both in the international press (El-Ghobashy, 2011) and to some extent by the activists themselves (see in particular Ghonim's memoir, 2012). The activists, and especially the leaders from April 6th and We Are All Khaled Said, were subject to intense media coverage both within Egypt as well in the international press (El-Mahdi, 2011). For example, al-Shorūq newspaper dedicated multiple articles over the span of the 18 days to identifying and providing information on the groups behind the 25 January protest. Likewise, Wael Ghonim, co-administrator of the We Are All Khaled Said page, who was arrested and held in secret for a portion of the 18 days, was granted an exclusive interview on Egyptian television on 8 February – a widely viewed media event that brought significant attention to the existence of the movement. This narrative adopted in the press amalgamated the mass mobilization of millions and the participation of vastly different sectors with the initial efforts of the youth activists, contributing to the perception of a unified movement rather than acknowledging its heterogeneous nature (see Dobry, 1983, 1986; Vannetzel, 2011 for alternative explanations of mass mobilization). This external attention placed on the activists contributed to their self-perception as "owners" of the revolutionary moment. Furthermore, the movement was also recognized by Egypt's political forces. The country's political elite, for example, acknowledged the youth groups as a separate entity who had achieved more than their predecessors (I1), and the regime itself offered to bring the activists to the negotiating table on par with traditional and institutionalized political forces such as the country's parties (I4, I6b, I9, GI6a). In this sense, the revolutionary youth during the 18 days became recognized both at home and abroad as a distinct political actor – one who had significant clout and who held popular legitimacy on the Egyptian "street." It was this combination of factors that fueled the activists' collective definition of themselves as carriers of the revolution, to be achieved through revolutionary prefigurative practice.

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In the second part of the chapter, it is this evolving community of practice in terms of its shared meanings of revolution and its joint enterprise of revolutionary prefiguration that impacts the construction processes of the movement at this historical moment. More precisely, the analysis explores how the rapidly developing interpretation of the revolutionary moment, along with the identification of itself as vanguard, influenced the movement along organizational, ideational, and strategic lines over the course of the 18 days. In this sense, my emphasis is on the reification of meaning with regards to the uprising and the activists' role therein, and how these are reflected in construction processes during the time period under consideration in this chapter. In order to gain analytical leverage, I make the decision to open the time frame ever so slightly; here, I commence my analysis slightly before the 25 January protest in order to capture crucial processes related to grievance and emotion construction, the perception of opportunities, and strategic planning that lay behind the movement's initial mobilization effort.

4.2 Constructing the Distinct Political Actor

The analysis along the three dimensions of social movement construction conducted here takes into consideration the period of 14 January–24 January in addition to the 18 days. The date of 14 January is not chosen at random: it represents a juncture in the course of regional politics and had a profound impact on the Egyptian political scene in particular. On 14 January, following a month of sustained countrywide protest, President Ben Ali of Tunisia boarded a plane to Saudi Arabia and abandoned his iron rule over the small North African country. As one of the harshest and most entrenched authoritarian systems in the Arab world, this sudden crumbling of the Ben Ali regime came as a shocking development that sent a tidal wave across the region. In Egypt, the Tunisian uprising was keenly followed by the movement's activists as well as the apolitical masses, and played an important role in shaping emotions, perceptions of opportunity, and strategies surrounding the 18 days. For this reason, any analysis of the construction processes of the *shabāb al-thawra* during the 2011 uprising must take into account Tunisia.

In light of the activists' emerging identification of the revolutionary moment and the link they establish between the achievement of the

revolutionary ideals and their inherent role therein, this section explores how these understandings pushed forward the establishment of the revolutionary youth as a distinct political actor in Egyptian politics. The analysis thus involves both understanding the role of youth practice in the construction processes of the movement during the 18 days and how this extension of the community of practice to include the interpretative framework of revolution interacted with youth practice. As will be shown here, the social movement's construction during the 18 days began to see this indelible merging of notions of political generation and notions of revolution as underlying movement dynamics, a phenomenon that will come into full force following Mubarak's departure from power.

4.2.1 Face-to-Face Encounters

At the first dimension of movement construction, whereby individuals come to associate themselves with the collective through alignment of grievances and the experience of shared emotion, the dynamics on display during the 18 days of the uprising demonstrate an important difference from those in the previous period of 2005-2010, specifically with regards to the space of micromobilization. Whereas the previous period saw social media and online forums as an important domain in the construction of grievances and emotions, the period of the 2011 uprising sees face-to-face encounters as exercising far more importance. One activist, a new recruit to the movement who joined Tahrir Square during the uprising, mentions the importance of these physical encounters, stating, "I had no political activity before that whatsoever… I went to Tahrir Squrare on and off during the 18 days, and I started going actually after the [Battle of the Camel]… Then I met a Revolutionary Socialist… we were basically on the same line" (GI1a). This sentiment is repeated by numerous other interviewees (I22b, I25), and in particular during group discussions (GI1, GI4, GI5).

These face-to-face encounters and physical (as opposed to virtual) participation reveal one of the novelties in the Egyptian uprising: many of those interviewed for this thesis did not decide to join the mass movement because of revolutionary conviction, but for secondary, and sometimes rather banal, reasons. Some came to witness a moment of history, others to check in on friends or family (I22b, GI5a). In many cases, the decision initially to join the protesters on the square or in the streets was not derived from sudden

adherence to the revolutionary youth movement but curiosity or a need for information (I25, GI1b). For this reason, many of those interviewed who were recruited into the movement during or after the uprising state they joined the 18 days only after the initial day of protest, once the process of mass mobilization and the collective interpretation of the revolutionary moment was evident. Yet it is here where the importance of face-to-face encounters is so obvious: it was the physical meeting of individuals in the protests, marches, and sit-ins of the uprising where personal grievances became aligned with those proffered by the movement and where shared emotions pushing the sentiment of the collective transpired.

The grievances and emotions constructed in these face-to-face encounters are by and large derived from those already constructed in the previous period, albeit with a certain degree of elaboration. In this sense, the primary grievances as put forth by the movement during the 18 days and as adopted by new recruits concerned corruption and police abuse; however, these two grievances were elaborated in order to become inherently interrelated (I16, GI6). Likewise, the constructed emotions during the uprising were once again based on the projection of hope and courage (I4, I5a, I7, I11); in this case, however, these emotions were magnified by the particular dynamics of the uprising. This elaboration and magnification of grievances and collective emotion represents the emerging shared interpretation of the revolutionary moment, and in this sense shows how the evolving community of practice informed construction processes at the individual actor dimension.

Elaborating Grievances of Abuse and Corruption

The grievances that drove millions of people into the streets during the 18 days of revolution in 2011 were, of course, quite varied, ranging from socio-economic issues such as unemployment and poor access to basic services to specific political issues regarding the absence of participatory politics or power sharing. For the revolutionary youth movement, however, the grievances that lay behind the decision to protest on 25 January, and those that led individuals to realign themselves with the collective, were more precise and restricted. The popular conception, at least initially, was that Egypt's youth were aggrieved by the lack of democracy in their country, that through social media and globalized popular culture they had become keenly aware of Egypt's political shortcomings and were demanding a political transition somewhere along the lines of Eastern Europe in the 1990s (El-

Mahdi, 2011). This analysis was couched in a broader theory of democratization and belief that a new wave of democratic transition had, finally, reached the southern shores of the Mediterranean. A second popular commentary was that socio-economic grievances were fueling activism, and in particular the lack of employment opportunities for university graduates. The figure of Mohamed Bouazizi – the street vendor whose self-immolation set the wheels of the Tunisian uprising in motion – effectively came to symbolize the plight of the region's educated yet future-less youth (see for example Knickmeyer, 2011). While I do not deny the salience of such issues or their role in mobilizing certain sectors against Mubarak, the narrative analysis conducted here leads me to identify instead corruption and police abuse as the primary collective grievances of the revolutionary youth during the 2011 uprising. To this point, it was the same grievances already collectively constructed by the movement during the period of 2005-2010 that were put forth for mobilization on 25 January 2011; what differed here, however, was the manner in which these grievances were elaborated upon in order to become inherently interrelated. This elaboration reflects the evolving understandings of the activists' with regards to their context and the naming of the revolution.

The popular belief that the absence of democracy and unemployment were the main grievances of the *shabāb al-thawra* derives, I believe, from the confusion of slogans and protest materials (strategic tools designed for interaction between the movement and external players) with grievances (collective interpretations of complaints and injustices). The slogans that the movement put forth during the 18 days did indeed place political and socio-economic demands in the spotlight. The revolutionary youth's iconic slogan, *ʿaīsh, ḥuriyya, al-ʿadāla al-igtimāʿiyya* (bread, freedom, social justice) seemed to encapsulate exactly the claims for democracy and improved socio-economic conditions; however, as will be shown in section 4.2.3, these slogans were designed with the specific strategic purpose of mass mobilization and assembly of different sectors by addressing a variety of demands and problems (I4, I5a, I11, I19). For the revolutionary youth movement, however, it was the dual grievances of police abuse and corruption that continued to be asserted and that moved individuals to realign themselves with the collective. As recounted in numerous interviews as well as in statements to the press and the Facebook pages analyzed here, the demands specific to the movement on 25 January concerned the suspension of the emergency law and the firing of the Minister of the Interior, and not

the broader demand for regime change. Interviewees in fact confirm that the initial protest did not have regime change in mind (I7, I9). In this sense, the initial grievances being proffered were the problem of brutality and lack of accountability - a continuation of those developed over the course of 2005-2010 and a part of the dignity narrative.

As the uprising evolved, however, and as the activists' interpretation of the context began to reflect an awareness of the revolutionary movement, these grievances were collectively elaborated upon, becoming intertwined. A group interview with two activists from Kazeboon reveals the duality of police abuse and corruption within their understanding of primary complaints,

> GI6b: It's not exactly police brutality. I mean, police brutality, of course it's important but I never saw it as just police brutality… What really go to me was getting away with it...

> GI6a: I wouldn't say police brutality as police brutality as well, I would see it as lack of accountability in general in every institution in Egypt. So more about general corruption of every institution, and lack of accountability and transparency, like it's just the whole Mubarak regime really (GI6).

This excerpt from the longer discussion provides an interesting glimpse into the collective process of grievance construction as undertaken by the movement's activists. Here, we see the two activists building upon the basic grievance of police brutality and linking it first to the issue of accountability and then to the broader problem of corruption altogether under Mubarak's *niẓām*. In this grievance construction, the activists identify a symptom (police abuse), the underlying problem (lack of accountability,) and the source (corruption in the Mubarak regime). This identification of corruption within the authoritarian system as the basic source of the problem in fact became a hallmark of the movement's grievance construction process during the 18 days (I23a). The movement's demands as such jumped from focus on the Ministry of the Interior to the regime itself, which was not exclusive to the person of Mubarak but rather to the entire underlying system of corruption on which it was built. On interviewee explains, "we used to ask for the Minister [of the Interior] to leave, for example, the Attorney General, whatever. Now we ask for a whole regime to leave" (I6b) while another states, "we were calling for a new regime and toppling down of the current regime of Mubarak" (I4). As the movement's activists shouted *al-shʿab yurīd isqāt al-niẓām* (the people want the downfall of the regime) alongside millions of

others during the 18 days, their collective attributed meaning was concerned not just with the ouster of Mubarak but with a much deeper change to the manner of function of the bureaucracy altogether (GI6). Grievance elaboration, hence, began to reflect the collective identification of revolution and was scaled up accordingly.

From the angle of new recruits who only came to join the movement during (or after) the 18 days, the role of grievances in this realignment of the individual to the collective is obvious in interviews. As stated above, many of those who had never previously participated in political action joined the mass protests for reasons secondary to the claims being issued in the street and on the square. Yet while admitting that their initial participation was not necessarily politically driven, they retrospectively identify the shared grievances as proffered by the movement. Indeed, new recruits to the movement – who admit that their initial participation was driven by secondary reasons – readily adopt the terminology and explication of injustice that is put forth by the movement. For example, one interviewee, who initially joined the protest in order to keep an eye on his younger brother, states, "we did not do the revolution to have a parliament, or to have a president or to have a constitution. We did the revolution because we have issues with the police department. We did the revolution to have dignity, for justice" (I22b). Likewise, another new recruit to the movement also reiterates the movement's projected construction of the problem of police brutality and lack of justice, although her initial decision to join was based on curiosity rather than political conviction. She retrospectively explains her motivation for participation, stating, "rights on every level were violated. Especially human rights and how police treated people" (GI1a). For the new members, this process of identifying their personal situation with the collective grievances of the movement seems to have resulted from the face-to-face encounters gained from participation in Tahrir Square. The sudden proximity with movement members and the direct exchanges regarding grievances and injustice provided these soon-to-be members with an interpretive framework for their own experience and observations during the 18 days. This includes witnessing the repression of protesters and, subsequently, experiencing it themselves. In seeing on television the protesters take beatings from the police, in collectively experiencing regime repression (or in the very least the threat of it) during the Battle of the Camel, they came to adopt abuse and the lack of accountability as primary complaints (this is very present in group interview discussions, such as GI4, GI5). This alignment of experiential

knowledge with the movement's constructed grievance would come to fruition as individuals would formally join one of the constituent groups.

Vanquishing Fear through Non-Violence

In the lead-up to the 25 January protest, the most important collective emotions that were actively put forth by the revolutionary youth movement were hope and the belief in change, along with the replacement of fear with courage. In this sense, the content of these projected emotions was a natural outpouring of that already constructed in the period of 2005-2010; what changed during the uprising, however, was the event in Tunisia, which allowed the movement to greatly reinforce its construction process through the use of symbolism and concrete example. Indeed, Tunisia played a critical role in the movement's transmission of a belief that change was possible. The We Are All Khaled Said page, for example, made numerous posts in the lead up to 25 January that explicitly referenced Tunisia and the possibility of achieving the same in Egypt, as did the April 6th Youth Movement's Facebook page, which displayed of the flag of Tunisia, its national anthem, and references to the shared destinies of the two countries. Indeed, as early as 28 December 2010, April 6th posted, "from Cairo to Tunisia, the same youth, united and dreaming of bread and liberty, they dream that their country will be for them. A thousand greetings from Cairo to Tunisia. The liberty and change virus has begun to spread." The importance of Tunisia to imbuing a collective sentiment of hope is equally cited across interviews, with interviewees stating, "hope came from Tunisia, we can do change or revolution" (I11) and "the revolution of Tunisia helps us to encourage people to come with us and share in the revolution" (GI8a).

At the same time, the movement actively sought to reduce the fear barrier by specifically promoting non-violence as a protest tactic. As mentioned in the previous chapter, non-violence was understood by the activists as a marker of youth practice and as such formed an important part of the activists' manner of conducting contestation. The active pursuit of non-violence during the 18 days was a manifestation of their generational practice. Yet beyond this, the focus on non-violence and peaceful protest was utilized to shape the emotions of those newly mobilized and especially of potential recruits: the practice of non-violence was specifically aimed at instilling courage (a common theme across the interviews). In the lead-up to the 25 January protest, guidelines to members were posted online as well as

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in published pamphlets that stressed this point. For example, April 6th published on its Facebook page on 23 January,

> Each one going to protest on 25 January for the sake of Egypt is a peaceful citizen taking to the street to demand his own rights and those of his fellow citizens. Any assault against us is not acceptable and it is our right to defend ourselves and all the protesters. Maybe it will be the first time to happen in Egypt, but there will be shields to protect the protesters in case the police try to attack and beat us… we will not respond violently to any assault by the police... try not to forget that (April 6th Youth Movement, 23 January 2011).

Likewise, We Are All Khaled Said posted as series of guidelines for the 25 January protest, listing as the first priority the practice of non-violence (Ghonim, 2012:139-141). During the actual protest itself, and indeed throughout the 18 days of the uprising, this transmission of non-violence as a means of reducing fear was maintained through the protesters' repeated chants of *silmiyya* (peaceful) when confronted with potential violence or repression on the part of the police or army. Here, I see the proclamation of *silmiyya* during moments of potential violence not simply as a manner of affecting group behavior but also a process of construction of collective courage. This incantation of non-violence assuaged sentiments of fear and tension by reinforcing the resolve of protesters while denouncing the methods of the regime (see also Butler, 2011). For the activists, the insistence on non-violence was also a manner of maintaining the social harmony that reigned on Tahrir Square.

For the new adherents to the revolutionary youth movement, those that mobilized for the first time during the 18 days and who would then go on to officially join or found a constituent organization of the movement, the experience on the square seems to have definitively broken the fear barrier. If during the period 2005-2010 fear was replaced with courage through a gradual process of increased mobilization, the face-to-face encounters of the 18 days was a true trial-by-fire. New recruits state for example, "in the beginning, yeah I had [fear] but honestly it's just being there with the people, it's like you know screw it, whatever happens, happens" (I25) and "we had hope from Tunisia, we had hope when these little numbers increased, even a little bit. Just the thought that this number increased after the police tried to use force. So we all felt it's not that hard and we're going to be all out and you can't do anything to us" (GI4b). In essence, the hope that the new activists felt from Tunisia and from the effervescence emanating on the square, along with the life-or-death consequences of potential repression, had

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the effect of amplifying collective emotion. In being confronted with the possibility of grave bodily harm, and in witnessing collective displays of courage, the activists conquered their own fear. This confidence that stemmed from the persistence of the protesters and the ever-increasing size of demonstrations is confirmed by two other new recruits from Masry Hor (GI5), who state that the "growing numbers" of protesters and the fact that they "didn't die in the first battle" helped them to overcome fear. As they explain, the threat of death no longer acted as a barrier to participation. On the contrary, the sense of duty and solidarity that the activists' interpreted as fundamental to the Republic of Tahrir, the urgency to protect the living and to honor the dead by continuing the struggle, became a profound emotional experience of the uprising that drove individuals to align with the movement.

4.2.2 The Revolutionary Youth Coalition

At the second dimension of analysis, which concerns the movement's internal organizational and identity-related construction, the most important process undertaken by the activists was the creation of the Revolutionary Youth Coalition, an umbrella group representing the various constituent parts of the social movement. A direct outpouring of the activists' self-appointment as vanguard of the 2011 uprising, the establishment of the Revolutionary Youth Coalition served to formalize the movement as a collective actor and develop a forum for cooperation across the constituent groups as well as determine a set of criteria for inclusion within identity borders. This formal grouping of the various constituents under one coalition was internally recognized as a coordination mechanism and externally represented the movement's unified voice, thus signifying an important dimension in the movement's construction of itself as a collective political actor. Likewise, the establishment of the coalition included implicit understanding of criteria for inclusion: shared interpretations of youth values and revolutionary objectives. In this sense, the founding of the coalition also served to delineate the identity borders as directly related to the shared understandings and attributed meanings. The establishment of the coalition was as such directly related to both processes of resource and collective identity construction.

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Organizational Formalization

The establishment of the coalition represents a direct manifestation of the activists' naming of the revolutionary moment, and in particular their self-appointment as vanguard. Indeed, the creation of the coalition was a vector for the *shabāb al-thawra* to appropriate the uprising. In the lead-up to the 25 January protest, intra-movement collaboration was fairly informal. The various constituent organizations of the movement coordinated under a tacit principle of resource-outsourcing: each group took charge of the organizational details with which it was most familiar and had the greatest degree of competency, and deferred to others for the rest. In this way, the April 6th Youth Movement, who had accumulated several years' experience of ground action in a variety of different neighborhoods and locations, took charge of designating points of assembly and the routes of marches (I5a, I11). The We Are All Khaled Said page, for its part, took charge of online communication of the event, contacting other networks in order to promote the 25 January protest day, and centralized information regarding the various marches and instructions for participants (I4). This resource-outsourcing also extended past the constituent groups in the movement: in an effort to counter the anticipated repression, the movement contacted the Ultras, the fervent clubs of supporters of local football teams, who they assumed would be only too eager to confront the police (I24). As in the previous period, intra-movement collaboration was based more on personal contact and overlaps in friendship and activist networks rather than formal mechanisms. Given this, the coordination between groups in the lead-up to the uprising was somewhat haphazard in nature and seemed to lack a greater strategy. One interviewee who played an important logistic role explains, "the revolution, we cannot describe that there was organization behind it or something. It has been built on a very big, loose network with different points, different nodes, some of them are big, some of them are small. I was coordinating with most of them" (I9).

In the days following the 25 January protest, however, and with the phenomenon of mass uprising and its dynamics surpassing the initiative of the movement, the activists formed their first – and, to a certain extent, last – umbrella organization, the Revolutionary Youth Coalition (*al-itilāf shabāb al-thawra)*. The coalition was created to act as the official representative of the revolutionary youth to the media, to serve as key intermediary between the "people" and the regime, and to guarantee internal cohesion with regards to claims and goals (I9), or as one activist states, "to talk with the voice of

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Tahrir Square against Mubarak" (I5a). The Revolutionary Youth Coalition, who in its initial iteration comprised representatives from the various constituent groups of the movement (GI6a), solidified not only the activists' sense of proprietorship over the uprising but also their formal recognition as a distinct political actor known as the *shabāb al-thawra*. It was as such the first overt signal that the movement saw itself as a collective, as many groups working towards the same goals and coordinating with one another (I5a), and that it sought to interact in the political arena in a manner distinct from that of political parties and the traditional opposition.

The coalition was formed in many ways as a defensive mechanism in order to enhance the movement's status in the political arena and ensure that its interpretation of revolutionary ideals remained in the fore (Revolutionary Youth Coalition, Facebook). While admitting that the uprising had taken its own path, the activists also considered themselves the spokesman of public opinion and demands, and saw their interpretation of grievances and revolutionary ideals as representative of those of the Egyptian people at large (Shukrallah, 2011b). Because the national uprising grew out of the movement's Police Day protest, the activists considered their articulation of demands and their vision of post-revolution Egypt as the one with the strongest currency amongst the Egyptian masses. In interviews with the press, coalition members state for example,

> We have seen a trend of groups who do not represent public opinion trying to speak on our behalf. But these opposition groups do not represent the public, we do, our demands are their demands… The people who were capable of achieving this revolution can prevent it from being stolen. Influence is proportional to power on the streets, and I think that the people are more powerful than the political parties... The opposition can appear on TV and discuss details of negotiations, but people will not respond to them like they do to us (Hill, 2011).

The first person plural in the statement above signifies the coalition, which is clearly juxtaposed with the political parties and traditional political elites. These statements reveal the activists' belief that the political parties not only do not represent the people's will, but more pointedly do not represent the demands of the revolution. Such a statement reflects the activists' understanding of generational practice and the difference in motivation therein: as discussed in the previous chapter, their interpretation posits that parties work for their own benefit while the movement works for the good of the people. The establishment of the coalition, thus, was designed to prevent

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the political parties from overtaking the revolutionary process and thereby imposing their own objectives over those of the people (I5a, I9). In this way, it is a reflection both of youth practice and the assumed position of revolutionary vanguard. The activists viewed the coalition as a movement-wide organization that would act as an alternative political force, articulating what it considered was the true meaning of the revolution through youth practice.

During the 18 days, the coalition served as an important resource in the movement's transmission of its message and solidification of its image as a unified collective actor. The coalition acquired prime realty on Tahrir Square, building a stage in front of the Mugamaʿa, and was regularly sought for interviews and contacted by the various political forces as well as the regime. Yet despite the intentions to solidify the collective and represent a united front in the political arena, the coalition's internal functioning failed to contribute adequately to the movement's coordination capacity or its ability to effectively interact externally (I9, I28, GI6a). The coalition's make-up represented the non-ideological form of practice that is a marker of the movement's interpretation of political generation: members stemmed from a variety of different organizations as well as political parties, including activists with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, the ElBaradei campaign, and the al-Ghad party, in addition to the dominant constituent groups of the revolutionary youth movement. Yet despite the emphasis on non-ideological contestation, the coalition was subject to "internal clashes" (I5a), exacerbated by the fact that decision-making procedures were not streamlined (I29). Though representatives of the various constituent organizations, coalition members were not delegated the authority to speak on behalf of their groups. Discussions within the coalition were instead taken back to each of the constituent groups, who then held internal debates and referendums (I27a). The laboriousness of these procedures hampered the effectiveness of the coalition and, along with the lack of longer-term goals, would prove highly detrimental to the coalition's viability, as will be shown in the next chapter.

Demarcating Identity Borders

As stated before, the effect of intense social solidarity and the erasure of normal distinctions during the 18 days of uprising served to reduce demarcations of identity, bringing forth instead the intrinsic universal qualities and the common collective identity of "Egyptian." Nonetheless, the revolutionary youth movement during the 18 days did see itself as a distinct

actor, as demonstrated by the establishment of the coalition and its assumption of role as intermediary of the people. Here, the basis of the movement's collective identity as developed during the heady days of the uprising can be gleaned from analysis of the bases of inclusion in the coalition. I argue here that the establishment of the coalition served to delineate a collective identity and a border of inclusion/exclusion that separated the *shabāb al-thawra* from both other political actors as well as the Egyptian masses. Deciding who would be included in the coalition – and the criteria on which such a decision is based – is in essence a process of collective identity construction. Establishing a coalition, thus, served not only to build a common organizational resource at the intra-movement level but to reassert the foundations on which the movement's collective identity was founded.

The common analysis of the coalition, which can be seen in press reports, is that the various members shared the same demands and preconditions regarding the resolution of the revolution, and that these shared demands bridged ideological divides (see for example Hill, 2011). I take this one step further, and argue that the basis for inclusion in the coalition went beyond common demands and was dependent upon the movement's broader interpretation of revolutionary ideals. The demands put forth by the coalition during the 18 days were relatively straightforward: the immediate departure of Mubarak from power; the dissolving of both houses of parliament; the amendment of the constitution, and specifically the articles pertaining to elections; the rescinding of the State of Emergency; and justice for those killed in the uprising (Revolutionary Youth Coalition, Facebook). What is striking about these demands is their relative short-sightedness and backward-looking quality: the coalition's demands did not promulgate a vision of what type of political system should emerge or who should manage the transitional period, nor did they touch upon key socio-economic demands, which were a dominant theme of the uprising. Looking beyond the surface-level of these demands, however, reveals revolutionary goals and an understanding of the nature of the Egyptian political system that is endemic to the assumptive schemes of the *shabāb al-thawra*.

In this vein, the demands of the coalition demonstrate the evolving priorities and goals of the community of practice. As explained in the first part of this chapter, for the activists, the revolutionary goals are not limited to political changes or the instillation of specific political programs but involve a re-casting of state-society relations and social interactions. To achieve this,

however, the movement expresses the need for a total remodeling of the political system. In their interpretation, any attempt at reform or comprise with the current regime or its vestiges will be unable to achieve the goals of the revolution, given the problem of corruption (I27b, GI6). Corruption, as they see it, exerts non-transparency, non-accountability, and injustice across the entire political system that prevents the renewal of the social contract or the protection of citizens. To achieve these revolutionary goals, therefore, requires a complete dismantling of the bureaucracy – to "cut the roots" (I6b) of the system in order to achieve radical change. It is thus not the demand for Mubarak's departure and the dissolution of the legislature that forms the basis of the coalition's collective identity, but this understanding of the need to attack the system at all levels. Such an interpretation demonstrates the evolving shared understandings that link youth joint enterprise with revolutionary ideals. Likewise, the second set of demands expressed by the coalition strike at the heart of the movement's dignity narrative, and its particular grievance regarding abuse and torture along with its demand for accountability and justice for victims. As shown in the previous chapter, the dignity narrative was a major dimension of the movement's collective identity in the period of 2005-2010; in reasserting it through the demands of the coalition, the movement is establishing the quest for dignity as one of the predominant characteristics defining the collective identity of the *shabāb al-thawra*. The coalition's demands demonstrate that the movement's struggle on behalf of revolution incorporates key elements of their sense of political generation. The importance of these two markers of movement identity – the blending of youth values and revolutionary ideals – would become even more dominant in the movement's identity construction in the post-Mubarak period, as will be shown in the following chapter.

4.2.3 Positioning the Movement in the Political Arena

At the third dimension of analysis, concerning the perception of opportunities, the assessment of other players in the public sphere, and the various strategies put forth for the achievement of goals, the movement's construction processes demonstrate the influence of the activists' shared understandings of revolutionary ideals and the source of radical change, along with their sense of political generation. With regards to political opportunity, the movement's collective perception of a ripe moment

demonstrates the underlying understanding of the source of change and the possibility of revolution, and, namely, the assembly of the masses and the shift in the balance of power. In this discussion, two key dimensions of opportunity are highlighted: the role of the Tunisian uprising and changes in the repression-mobilization dynamic, both of which shaped the activists' perception of an enlarged opportunity. These perceptions of enlarged opportunity, in turn, had a direct impact on the movement's strategies and strategic positioning. The movement developed strategies to assemble the greatest numbers possible on the streets and to carve out a specific strategic position for the revolutionary youth in the political arena. These processes of strategic construction would serve to reify understandings of political generation and the link to revolutionary ideals.

Perceiving Opportunity through Revolutionary Lenses

The perception of an enlarged political opportunity – that the moment for radical change was within grasp – played a significant role in shaping the various strategies associated with the organization of the 25 January protest as well as the position that the movement adopted vis-à-vis the regime and other political forces as the 18 days unfolded. This perception of a positive opportunity was the result of two very different dynamics. Externally, the Tunisia uprising served to reinforce the motivation of the revolutionary youth activists and to reimagine the scope of their 25 January event; internally, the changes in repression over the course of the 18 days, and notably the army's siding with the people, as well as its perceived impact on mobilization levels, translated into a belief in the supremacy of the street. The construction of such opportunity derived from the activists' collective understanding of the source of radical change and revolution.

With regard to the external opportunity, although planning for the Police Day protest had been underway as early as November 2010 (I5a, I24), the events in Tunisia had a hugely important impact on the movement's perception of its own capacities and the possibility for achieving mass mobilization in Egypt. As conveyed in nearly every interview specifically concerned with the 25 January mobilization efforts, the success of the Tunisian people in toppling a long-standing and highly repressive autocrat through sustained, non-violent, mass demonstrations served to increase the motivation of the activists and allowed them to reconceive the potential scale for their own protest. Here, I am not purporting a process of diffusion: I do not see an importation of the Tunisian model by the Egyptian activists

through a process of transmission between emitters and adopters, nor do I see the Tunisian event as the causal instigator of the Egyptian revolution. Rather, I argue that Tunisia played an important role in influencing how the activists conceived of their own abilities with regard to mobilization and the possibility for a similar event to take place in Egypt. In this sense, it is how the collective understanding of Tunisia affected the perception of ability and possibility that encompasses the enlarged political opportunity.

Tunisia is a member of the imagined Arab nation[16] and as such, a sense of fraternity exists between the Tunisian and Egyptian people. Yet, in the collective Egyptian imagination of the Arab world, it is Egypt the great nation and leader; Tunisia is a small and peripheral country, largely off the radar of regional political developments. The success of the Tunisian revolution led many of the movement's activists interviewed here to question their own shortcomings and to insist on the possibility for Egypt to achieve the same. As displayed in my discussions, a subtle thread of chauvinism runs through this perception of the Tunisian event: if the small and unimportant country of Tunisia could achieve a revolution through mass protest, certainly the mighty civilization of Egypt could achieve the same? One co-founder of April 6th, for example, hints at this belief in Egypt's capacity to emulate the Tunisian model based on its superior status, stating, "there is an idea inside each Egyptian that we are - and that's true - we are a great nation. So when we are seeing Tunisia, the small country, with a revolution and toppling their dictator everyone in Egypt… asked himself, 'Why don't we do like Tunisia did?'" (I7). This sentiment is reiterated by another interviewee who played an active role in the organization of 25 January stating, "shame on us, really, shame on us. Tunisia has a movement and has a revolution, and we have the same people and many reasons that force us to make a revolution and we haven't made it yet. So we made a link between us and them" (GI8b). The example of Tunisia served to instigate a political opportunity by influencing the perception of Egyptian ability and the role of the movement therein: by influencing the activists' belief in their own capacity to lead Egypt down a similar path, the movement in turn perceived of the possibility for mass mobilization to overthrow Mubarak (I5a, I11).

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[16] Here, I am using the term "imagined" in the sense of Anderson (1983).

The above discussion also hints at how this perception of enlarged opportunity was constructed by the movement. The interpretation of the Tunisian uprising as revelatory of Egyptian capacity was not universal across the movement, at least not initially. The collective perception of this political opportunity, however, was constructed in micromobilization contexts in the lead-up to 25 January (I4). Just as the revolutionary youth utilized Tunisia to transmit the shared emotion of hope and belief in the possibility of change to bring individuals into the collective, the activists also sought to draw parallels between Egypt and Tunisia in order to increase the perception of their own capacities and the possibilities for the country. One activist, who mobilized for the first time during the 18 days, relates how he came to see the political opportunity through discussions in social media, "I remember this guy was writing on Facebook, then we talked about [it on] social media of course, like a month before the revolution, that today Tunisia, Egypt is next. And it gives you the thought, can it happen in Egypt?" (GI4b).

In this vein, the movement's internal discussions in the lead-up to the Police Day protest actively sought to make references to Tunisia. As mentioned above in the discussion on constructed emotions, this included the organization of minor demonstrations and protest events in honor of Tunisia, such as vigils at the embassy. It was these conversations and direct references to Tunisia that allowed for the common interpretation of political opportunity. In essence, the perception of a political opportunity was entirely self-generated. It was not the external event or a change in structural dimensions that opened a political opportunity, but rather the movement's deliberate efforts to influence the perception of itself and its abilities through directly referencing Tunisia.

The second major political opportunity perceived by the movement during the 18 days concerned the question of repression and its influence on mobilization. The regime's use of repression during the several weeks of mass uprising was lopsided and poorly conceived. While initially relying heavily on the police and other branches of the security sector, along with their habitual tools of riot management and fear mongering, this eventually transformed into the deployment of hired thugs and the attempt to generate chaos, as the Battle of the Camel so shockingly demonstrated. Alongside these changes in patterns of repression was the decision of the army not to act at the behest of the regime but instead position itself as a neutral guard of sorts, standing passively on the sidelines of the protesters' demonstrations and sit-ins. Concomitant with these changes in the nature and degree of

repression was the ever-increasing mobilization of the Egyptian masses, the daily growth in the number of protesters and the diversity of sectors involved. The activists perceived this shift in the repression-mobilization dynamic as a sign of a shift in the balance of power (GI4): power was moving from the hands of the regime to the hands of the people (I11), while the location of power was moving from instruments of the *niẓām* to the street (I19). Thus it was not just that the regime was losing its repressive mechanism, or that the mass mobilization was picking up pace; it was this critical shift in the balance and location of power that marked the movement's interpretation of the repression-mobilization dynamic during the 18 days. This perception coincided with the movement's emerging revolutionary ideal regarding the transfer of sovereignty from the institutions of state to the people and their assembly en masse, as well as their understanding that the source of change is located in bottom-up processes (see previous chapter). This interpretation of the shift in balance and location of power signified an enlarged political opportunity for the movement as it responded to underlying understandings developed by the community of practice regarding power, change, and revolution. As will be shown next, these perceptions of political opportunity influenced the movement's ground strategies during the uprising, and notably its extension tactics as well as its intransigence with regards to negotiation.

Youth Strategic Positioning

These perceptions of an enlarged political opportunity to achieve mass mobilization and the ouster of Mubarak had a direct impact on how the revolutionary youth movement tailored its strategies and external interactions in the political arena. In the lead-up to the 25 January protest, as the activists came to believe in the possibility of replicating the Tunisian mobilization efforts, the movement conceived of various strategies designed specifically to boost outreach and attract as broad a cross-section of the population as possible. The activists put into place field tactics to "gather" (I5a) protesters and convert bystanders, along with the development of highly inclusive and culturally evocative slogans (I4, I11). Once the 18 days were in full motion, however, and with the establishment of the coalition, the movement assumed a new position in the political arena, acting on par with political parties and the traditional opposition forces but assuming a strategy of non-negotiation and non-compromise (I7, I11) – two policies which, in the post-Mubarak period, would become hallmarks of their understanding of generational activism and contestation. This strategic position placed the movement in a

unique niche within the political arena, serving to carve out further the distinction between youth practice and that of the previous generation.

Gathering Marches and Frame Amplification

The initial conception of the Police Day protest was rather limited in scope (I9, I24, GI4): the movement saw 25 January as a smallish event, one in a series of planned protests throughout 2011, designed to address the particular grievance of police brutality and serving to build pressure on the regime in advance of the scheduled presidential elections in November 2011. As one April 6th co-founder explains, "it was a plan not just for 25 January. Our first step would be held in December [2010] after the fraudulent elections, the second step would be 25 January, the third step would be on 6 April 2011, and the last step would be in November 2011" (I5a). From its side, We Are All Khaled Said also considered the possibility of a Police Day protest, and in this vein contacted April 6th in order to jointly plan such an event (I4). With the perception of an enlarged political opportunity that the uprising in Tunisia triggered, however, the movement made the strategic choice to extend the event's scope in order to assemble the largest number of people possible in the hopes of instigating a mass popular uprising. Several weeks of planning between the activists, and notably the leadership structures of the various constituent groups, went into developing the extension strategy adopted, which was geared specifically towards the working class and poor (I11, I24). As one major dimension in this extension, the activists put into place "gathering marches" (I5a): various marches departing from different parts of Cairo that would intentionally wind through different neighborhoods in order to gather as many bystanders as possible. Throughout the length of these marches, protesters would make direct appeals to the neighborhood denizens, entreating them to join the demonstration and focusing specifically on their socio-economic problems as opposed to the movement's political demands. One activist who played a significant role in the planning of 25 January explains this strategy, stating,

> We started from poor areas and used slogans… that were related to the economic problems and not the political situation and freedoms. It was strategic, it was deliberate… And the major strategy was to pass through the major populous areas, because all of the people who were in the buildings have the same concerns and problems. But also they have the fears of the Egyptians. When they see people moving in the streets, [their] rebellious side is encouraged and will kill their fears… We tried to pass through many streets

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in order to increase the snowball, so that when we meet the security forces we will be stronger and they will not be able to stop us. And this exactly what happened on the ground (I11).

The marches would then converge on Tahrir Square, on the condition of having achieved enough numbers to face the security forces that would be waiting (I9). As the interviewee above explains, the process of gathering protesters and picking up bystanders was also a means of diminishing individual fears, as safety in numbers would act to reduce the threat of individual harm. By marching through multiple neighborhoods, the protesters were able to gain in numbers throughout the length of the marches while dispersing the police across the city (I24, D8). This gathering tactic was repeated on the second major day of protest, 28 January, this time with marches emanating from mosques following Friday prayers. In interviews, these marches are conveyed as largely successful in the recruitment of bystanders from areas where activism was generally low.

The importance of focusing on socio-economic demands as opposed to political ones was considered a key element in the extension of the 25 January event. The experience gained in protesting over the years 2005-2010 had demonstrated to the activists the importance of specifically addressing social demands in addition to their own particular grievances related to corruption and police abuse in order for the messages to have salience or resonance with apolitical populations (I12). In this vein, the We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page titled the protest: "January 25: Revolution Against Torture, Poverty, Corruption and Unemployment" and listed as demands increased wages, improved access to healthcare and quality education, unemployment benefits, the end to the emergency law, the firing of the Minister of the Interior, and the limitation of the presidency to two terms (Ghonim, 2012:139-141). In this sense, the claims encompassed in the 25 January protest included both the socio-economic issues that could attract average Egyptians as well as the movement's specific political demands. This decision resulted from extensive discussions between activists, and specifically between the leaders of the different constituent groups, who sought to make explicit the link between the demand for political rights and socio-economic ones (I4, I5a, I6b). Indeed, interviewees repeatedly state that the movement's role was to proffer this link between socio-economic problems and political demands (I11).

A pillar in the extension of the event and this attempt to combine the socio-economic problems of the country's disadvantaged with political

demands was the development of a slogan that would become emblematic not only of the uprising but indeed of the revolutionary youth: *ʿaīsh, ḥuriyya, al-ʿadāla al-igtimāʿiyya* (bread, freedom, social justice). The manner by which the movement decided upon this slogan reflects the negotiations and attributions of shared meaning that I posit comprise the crux of social movement construction processes. The activists interviewed confirm that this slogan resulted from various discussions – essentially brainstorming sessions, though often conducted online – in which multiple ideas were put forth and debated between members and leaders until agreeing upon these four words. The activists enthusiastically concur that this slogan was "the perfect slogan because it covered the three major needs of the Egyptian people" (I7) and "was the thing that gathered all people through it" (I4). I argue, however, that the power in this slogan lay not in its simplicity as a snappy catch phrase (which lends itself to rhythmic chanting in Arabic) but its roots in historical traditions of claim-making and cultural norms.

As a collective action frame, "bread, freedom, social justice" reflects framing processes of bridging and amplification that underscore the genius of the slogan. As discussed in the previous chapter, frame bridging refers to the process by which ideologically cohesive but structurally unrelated frames come to be linked, either between a social movement and a thus far non-mobilized population or across a social movement network; frame amplification refers to the valorization, embellishment, or re-deployment of a pre-existing societal value or belief (Snow et al., 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000). In a revealing discussion, one activist explains the various dimensions of the slogan and what they each mean, making explicit references to the historical and cultural overtones that the terms "bread" and "freedom" both entail,

> These four words are talking about the Egyptians, are talking about our lives… First, bread is a main item on all the Egyptians' tables… it brings us to ʿAbd al-Nasir and maybe to King Fārūq, and all the time we have trouble in the production of bread or the distribution of bread… Freedom is everything. Freedom to let a Christian go to his church and be safe… to say the president is not good and to be safe… By the way, this is the case of all people in all countries, in all eras, freedom (I19).

Here, the interviewee highlights the historical value of the term "bread," which evokes a culturally specific notion of socio-economic rights as well as a tradition of protest surrounding it. In Egypt, political protest and mass mobilization has historically been linked to rising food prices and the cuts in

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subsidies, as the 1977 Bread Riots demonstrate. Indeed, the price of flour, sugar, and oil are highly sensitive politically precisely because of their ability to generate mass mobilization – which can quickly move from socio-economic claims to political ones (Sadiki, 2000). In utilizing the term "bread," the movement draws upon the historic tradition of protest, linking the 25 January protest with mass movements of the past. In essence, inclusion of the term "bread" is a form of frame bridging across time: it represents not only the grievances of the poor as of 2011 but the historical plight of the poor since the policy of *infitāḥ*. Moreover, the inclusion of the term "bread" acts as a bridge to the Tunisian revolution, where protesters not only utilized the Tunisian Arabic version of the word in their slogans but carried loaves of bread as a symbolic gesture of dissent. The term "bread" thus acts as a bridge across time and geographic space to other instances of mass mobilization where socio-economic demands were explicitly related to political calls for regime change.

Likewise, the use of the term "freedom," as the interviewee explains, makes reference to other revolutions, essentially bridging the 25 January protest to global movements and the idea of revolution against domination in an almost abstract manner. What is particularly interesting about the term "freedom," and what can be gleaned from the quote above, is its rather vague or ambiguous quality. In interviews, the activists have a difficult time defining what they mean by freedom, using tautologies such as "freedom is freedom" (I9) and "freedom is about [being] a free citizen" (I18), although in most cases the underlying grievance it signifies has to do with police abuse and torture. One co-founder of April 6th, for example, explains that freedom is, "living in a democratic country that provides all my rights and provides my humanity and saves my dignity and does not harm my life in any way and does not interfere in my life in any way" (I6b). In essence, the interviewee's definition of freedom corresponds with the movement's dignity narrative, something affirmed by others (I7, I13, I22b); however, the activists are aware that freedom can signify different grievances to different groups. One activist, for example, states, "the youth in the streets are not only talking about the freedom of speech and the freedom of expression in Egypt but also about the choice when it comes to international decisions in relation for example to the US or other allies" (I11). Others state that freedom can refer to more specific issues, such as freedom of faith or women's liberation (I25). As such, "freedom" in the movement's flagship slogan should not be understood through the lenses of the liberal-democratic paradigm; rather, it is

a blanket term for implying political demands to which different meanings can be attached.

Finally, the term "social justice" is a clear example of frame amplification, drawing upon the culturally specific notions of redistributive social welfare and the social contract, as already elaborated upon in the previous section. In making explicit reference to social justice, the movement is able to delegitimize the regime by referencing the broken social contract. And in amplifying an existing cultural norm, the movement's slogan is able to strike a chord even with those not suffering economic woes. The defining slogan of the 2011 uprising effectively incorporates both the movement's dignity and social justice narratives, while also making references to historical traditions of protest both within Egypt and abroad. It also builds in enough ambiguity and breadth to be adopted by different sectors with different demands and objectives, while specifically appealing to the socio-economic difficulties of average Egyptians.

The activists' adoption of the slogan represents one of the most important linguistic practices of the revolutionary youth, and indeed helped to reify collective understanding of revolutionary ideals and youth goals. Over the course of the 18 days and thereafter, the continuous utilization of this slogan by the movement served to fix the movement's priorities of dignity and social justice, which came to be understood as inherently interrelated and mutually dependent (GI1, GI6). The provision of redistributive social welfare signifies a state that acts in the service of the people; such a state will also end practice of abuse and torture. Likewise, ending corruption is also linked to the issue of accountability and transparency, which will guarantee dignity but which will also contribute to socio-economic improvement, a form of dignity itself. In this sense, the movement's construction of its slogan for the 25 January protest, and the way it came to be co-interpreted among the activists over time, came to reflect the broader revolutionary ideals regarding state-society relations that would form a basis of its notion of "revolution" as well as specific priorities as related to their political generation.

Staking a Position

In order to assess the movement's strategic positioning in the political arena during the 2011 uprising, it is worth pausing on the adhesion of different political forces to the mass protests and the movement's reaction. It is difficult to obtain via interviews what exactly went through the minds of the

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activists with respect to the adhesion of groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood or traditional political parties such as Tagammu to the mass protests, as my fieldwork took place well after the 18 days and in a context of increasing political crisis. Yet the various interviews with activists and discussions between them seem to indicate that the movement was not wary of the participation of other political forces. On the contrary, they welcomed as many participants as possible with the objective to place pressure on the regime and overthrow Mubarak (I4, I5a, I11, I19, I24). As recounted in numerous interviews, importance lay not in political differences *per se* but in political practices: as long as the different political forces did not advocate their own party programs or the advancement of their own political careers, they were welcomed as co-revolutionaries. Indeed, the tensions that arose between the movement and the other political forces during the 18 days were not over the vision of the post-Mubarak political order but rather the stance vis-à-vis the regime itself and specifically the willingness of certain parties to negotiate or compromise with the regime (I3, I9). In discussing the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 18 days, one activist recounts, "they were the only ones who went to negotiate with Mubarak in the moments of the birth of a new republic. They went to negotiate with a dictator" (I4). For the revolutionary youth, who refused any form of compromise, the willingness of the Muslim Brotherhood to negotiate with Mubarak or his new vice president was a far larger source of friction than the Islamist political ideology in itself. Likewise, another activist states, "the Muslim Brotherhood… tried to have the advantages of this revolution, but they are like the rest of the traditional political forces in Egypt. They have no trust, they have no belief in the people, that they can change. For that reason, they were trying to sit with [the vice-president] to reach a middle solution, a reform solution not a revolutionary solution" (I11).

In light of this disappointment with the "playing politics" (I3) with respect to the Mubarak regime, the revolutionary youth also employed a strategy of non-negotiation and non-compliance, carving out a unique position among the various political players active during the 18 days. In perceiving a shift in the balance of power, the movement (as represented by its coalition) made the explicit strategic decision to refuse any negotiation or compromise with the regime. Given their perception of the upper hand, and given their understanding of the depths of corruption and the necessity for a radical overhaul of the entire political system, they viewed attempts at negotiation as undertaken by traditional forces such as the Muslim

Brotherhood and Tagammu as useless (I7). In interviews to the press, for example, a coalition representative states, "we will not negotiate until [the vice-president] proves to us that he is serious about these reforms, which is not the case at the moment… What the opposition groups are doing is a waste of time" (Hill, 2011). Indeed, the activists interpreted the willingness of other opposition actors to negotiate with the regime as a form of betrayal (I4, I6b, I11). In their collective understanding, compromise with the regime would not only prevent the achievement of the revolution as they understood it, but would also dishonor the memory of the uprising's victims. The movement understood this attempt at negotiation by political parties, and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular, as an expression of the difference in generational practice, or what one interviewee describes as the "elders' way of thought" (I3). For the revolutionary youth, while the older generation was seeking to engineer a political resolution in its favor, the movement saw its strategic decision to refuse negotiation and compliance as representative of their more altruistic form of political practice (GI5). This strategy of non-negotiation set the movement apart within the political arena, and although willing to work with other political forces upon achieving Mubarak's ouster, the movement had made clear its strategic position of intransigence with regards to an unjust authority as both an expression of youth practice and vector for achieving revolutionary goals. This strategic position in the political arena would continue to be further entrenched after the end of the uprising, as will be shown in the next chapter.

Concluding Remarks

In examining the very restrained timeframe of the 2011 uprising, this chapter has assessed the fundamental importance of the 18 days to the development of the *shabāb al-thawra*, and in particular the extension of the community of practice. The chapter has placed particular emphasis on the free space of Tahrir Square and the prefiguration of a new social and political order that came to be collectively interpreted as the revolutionary ideal. One of the primary conclusions of this chapter is the importance of social justice to this collective understanding of revolution. Here, I posit that the ideal of social justice and the transformed social contract represents a fundamental component of the collective understanding of revolution. Part-and-parcel with this vision is the transfer of sovereignty to the masses: a critical component of the understanding of revolution involves the relocation of

power into the hands of the people and – importantly – outside of formal, institutional contexts.

As the chapter has shown, these interpretations of the historical-social moment and the attribution of meaning to the term "revolution" were accompanied by a notion of revolutionary subjectivity that is inherently based on prefigurative practice. This grounding of revolutionary subjectivity in prefigurative practice contributed to the extension of joint enterprise of the community of practice, and more precisely into the self-appointed role as revolutionary vanguard. In this manner, revolutionary prefigurative practice came to redefine the goals and purpose of the *shabāb al-thawra.* The chapter has thus explored the extension of the community of practice, in which notions of political generation and youth practice came to cohabitate with understandings of revolution and revolutionary practice.

With regards to the role of these practices in social movement construction, among the main findings of the chapter concerns the establishment of the Revolutionary Youth Coalition. The coalition not only manifested practices in its organizational dimension but served to carve identity borders through the formalization of the collective actor. This merging of youth practice and revolutionary practice also informed the construction of grievances and political opportunities, in particular through their scaling-up to reflect the perception of the revolutionary moment. Finally, the chapter has explored the role of practice in the construction of strategy, placing emphasis on the movement's strategic positioning within the political arena. It is the dual interpretation of political generation and revolutionary ideal, and their manifestation in practices, that would become the hallmark of social movement construction in the post-Mubarak period, to which we turn next.

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Chapter 5: The Clash of the Political and the Revolution

In the three years under analysis in this chapter, from February 2011-25 January 2014, Egypt has experienced three distinct phases of power, each marked by important social instability and the continuation of profound contestation. This has included the supposed phase of transition under interim military rule, spearheaded by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) (February 2011-June 2012); the phase of Muslim Brotherhood power under the erstwhile presidency of Mohamed Morsy (June 2012-June 2013); and the phase of the military coup and *de facto* rule by General (now president) ʿAbd al-Fatāḥ al-Sīsī (July 2013-present). Among the puzzling aspects of the post-Mubarak period have been the strategies and decisions of the *shabāb al-thawra*. While many expected the revolutionary youth to seize the opportunities afforded them in the wake of Mubarak's ouster to participate in Egypt's newly opened political life, the movement has instead placed emphasis on protests and the near-continual rejection of the authority in power. Perhaps even more puzzling has been the movement's seeming willingness to cozy up to decidedly illiberal policies.

This chapter assesses these moves on the part of the revolutionary youth through analysis of the community of practice during the post-Mubarak period, and in particular how the collective interpretations of historical-social context created a reification of meaning placing politics/the political at odds with revolutionary struggle/the revolution. Understood by the activists as the fundamental generational battle of the post-uprising era, these collective understandings, along with the practices of political generation and prefiguration, provide a great deal of insight to the dynamics of the revolutionary youth. These background understandings and their embodiment in practices were particularly influential in the strategic construction of the social movement. At the same time, however, inherent dilemmas and tensions arose between the activists' practice of revolutionary youth and their

struggle to achieve goals. This chapter also analyzes these embedded limitations and contradictions that have arisen in movement construction.

5.1 Revolutionary Youth Community of Practice

In the three years following the ouster of Mubarak, the revolutionary youth not only assumed the status of recognized political actor in the new Egyptian political arena but also underwent an important process of consolidation of the community of practice. The specific practices of political generation and prefiguration, identified by the activists as "youth" and "revolutionary" manner of action, became intertwined into an overarching understanding in which achievement of the revolutionary ideals could only be realized by the *shabāb al-thawra*. In this sense, it was the combination of youth practice (non-ideological and non-hierarchical structures; action based on altruism) and revolutionary practice (prefiguration of tolerance and equality; struggle to reconstitute the figurative square) that could achieve the revolution as they define it. In the post-Mubarak period, youth practice and revolutionary practice as explored in the previous two chapters did not take on different meanings; rather, they became the two indissociable components of the activists' joint enterprise. The revolutionary youth as community of practice hence comes into its full meaning in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising.

Yet although the practices and the background meanings invested in them do not transform, what does develop in the three years following Mubarak's departure is a far more comprehensive collective understanding of politics and, more abstractly, the political. The interpretations of the rapidly shifting political and social context by the revolutionary youth in these three years transformed the activists' understanding of what is meant by politics and what the political entails more broadly. This reification of understanding essentially pits politics and the political against revolution, where one necessarily works against the other. The result of these attributions of meaning to politics/the political created amongst the activists a distinct perception of generational battle, reinforced through the embodied, discursive, and spatial repertoires of the community of practice.

The first section of this chapter explores these developments within the community of practice, demonstrating how the assumptive schemes related to political generation and revolution transformed into the perception of

generational battle. The section presents how the revolutionary youth increasingly viewed themselves as a distinctly non-political actor, and came to eschew and withdraw from formalized politics. Nonetheless, within this reification of meaning and practice are hidden discrepancies. The section concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the revolutionary youth's ideals and the bounds of practice.

5.1.1 Collective Interpretations of the Post-Mubarak Period

In the aftermath of Mubarak's departure, the manner in which the revolutionary youth interpreted their historical-social context – including the nature of political battles, the other players in the political arena, and their own place therein – was underscored by their particular understandings of political generation and the meaning of revolution. In this sense, the practices of youth activism and revolutionary prefiguration endemic to the community of practice formed the bases of assumptive schemes through which context, actions, and interactions were interpreted. Assessing these interpretations and the assumptions upon which they are based is essential to grasping the reification of fundamental understandings as collectively developed and internalized by the community of practice.

In order to accomplish this, the section below presents the public narrative of the *shabāb al-thawra* in the period from Mubarak's departure to the third anniversary of the uprising. Of particular interest here are the narrative sequences: which events hallmark their narrative, how they are related to one another thematically, and the role of other actors within the narrative. This analysis not only draws forth the interpretations of context, but also how the practices of youth and revolution inform assumptions. I identify three sequences of the movement's narrative in this three year period: the initial sequence of expansion and consolidation, punctuated by the July 2011 sit-in on Tahrir Square and the personalization of the movement's struggle at the November 2011 Mohamed Mahmoud street battle; the sequence of crisis and strategic impasse, marked by the 2012 presidential election as well as the November 2012 political crisis and death of the activist Gika; and the sequence of usurpation and abeyance, whereby the *shabāb al-thawra* became eclipsed by the Tamarod initiative and the new order following the 3 July 2013 military coup.

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Consolidation of the Revolutionary Youth

The first narrative sequence roughly covers the period of rule by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, from the ouster of Mubarak in February 2011 until the presidential election and transition to civilian rule in June 2012. Marked by the sentiment of consolidation of the *shabāb al-thawra,* this narrative sequence emphasizes the vast expansion of the revolutionary youth in terms of number of adherents and constituent organizations, as well as the increasing sense of estrangement from other political actors, notably the Muslim Brotherhood and the military. In this sense, it was both the increase in the size of the revolutionary youth along with the deepening isolation in the political arena that served to consolidate the community of practice. These dynamics were driven by the feeling of urgency for generational activism and mounting frustration with differences in practice.

The first six months following the uprising witnessed what was undoubtedly the largest phase of expansion of the revolutionary youth in terms of number of members and establishment of new organizations/coalitions. In the aftermath of the uprising, literally thousands of new members – empowered by the success of the mass demonstrations and craving further participation in Egypt's political evolution – joined the revolutionary youth through either one or several organizations (I6b, I15, GI1, GI4, GI7). For many new recruits, the decision to adhere to a constituent organization was motivated by the desire for specifically youth practice of activism and contestation, and the express decision to avoid political parties or other civil society groups. For example, in one group interview with activists who joined the April 6th Youth Movement following the uprising, they explain,

> GI4b: I joined them [April 6th] afterwards. When we saw the change of political parties starting, some change in the political life. I went to many political parties to ask what they are going to do, what is the system, whatever. And I didn't feel that, as a youth – and this revolution is about youth – I felt I want to be in a youth thing. Youth movement.

> *Because you felt like the parties….*

> GI4b: Didn't represent me. It's just about elections and I want something that is really behind the goals of the revolution. So these guys are not into elections, it's not about politics as much as about change….

> *(To GI4a) And why did you, what made you go to April 6?*

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GI4a: … I became a 6th April movement [member] after the revolution. Why? Because first it is a youth movement. I have no ideology. I do not want to be in a party which has a special ideology. [April 6th], they are *Masryeen* [Egyptian]. They can make change (GI4).

As they explain, it was the elements of youth practice – the non-ideological component, the focus on broader change and not just elections and winning power – observed during the 18 days that drew new recruits in such large numbers. This sentiment is repeated in numerous interviews with new recruits, who state for example, "I took a conscience decision not to join any political party because I have zero faith in any of the political parties" (I25) and "I don't like belonging to movements or parties because ideologically we just sit there and talk and debate and do nothing" (GI6b). Underlying their assessments is the belief that political parties cannot effect real change. In interpreting the ouster of Mubarak as the fruit of youth practice in action, thousands eagerly wanted to continue in this manner, seeing youth practice as the only viable means of attaining their revolutionary objectives. They thus scrambled to join the movement, gravitating in particular to its flagship organization, April 6th, as well as the Revolutionary Socialists who had implantations in universities.

In general, these new recruits differed from those previously mobilized in their lack of experience in activism and their relative unawareness of politics (I6b, I16). Many of the new recruits interviewed for this research, for example, were quick to distinguish themselves from the original activists of the revolutionary youth, insisting on their gaps in political knowledge. One activist, for example, explains, "the reason I say I don't consider myself an activist is because I haven't been active before the revolution, that's one reason. The other is I'm not very politically savvy, so I don't think it's fair to call myself an activist" (I25). While interviewees insisted that, as new recruits, they were not treated differently from those mobilized before the revolution, they nonetheless affirmed an awareness of difference and a degree of deference paid to the movement's historic members (GI5). As will be shown in the second half of the chapter, this perception of a qualitatively different type of membership in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising would impact organizational construction with regard to human resources.

This expansion was accompanied by the establishment of dozens – or perhaps even hundreds – of new constituent organizations, founded with the intention of continuing the pursuit of revolutionary demands. Indeed, it is impossible to know exactly how many revolutionary youth groups and

coalitions emerged in the months following Mubarak's ouster, as many were short-lived, or extremely small in size, or carried out too few actions to become known (I26). While interviewees indicate the existence of several dozen organizations in operation in the months after the revolution, one press article cites as many as 200 separate groups comprising the "revolutionary youth" as of June 2011 (Afify, 2011). The massive extension in number of groups allowed for a diversification in the missions as well as demographic profiles of the revolutionary youth, with each group attempting to carve out its own particular niche. Many new organizations, in fact, were started with a specific set of objectives linked to the broader goals of the revolution, and a belief in the necessity of targeted action to achieve these goals. For example, new organizations operating as single-issue platforms emerged, such as the No to Military Trials campaign that specifically sought a moratorium on military tribunals for civilians. Likewise, new groups targeting specific demographics were also founded, most notably the Maspero Youth Union, who attracted almost entirely Coptic members and fought in particular for Christian rights (I18) and Salafyo Costa, who would emerge as the only predominantly Salafi organization in the revolutionary youth movement and whose mission was to promote tolerance and cohabitation through social welfare projects (I22b). These groups were able to target very specific types of members assembled around a clear mission and have proven durable and capable of weathering moments of contraction.

Nonetheless, a large portion of the new organizations founded in the months following Mubarak's ouster were difficult to distinguish from one another. A press release in April 2011, for example, in which 23 new groups formed in the aftermath of the uprising presented a few lines about themselves, demonstrates this surplus of carbon-copy groups, for example,

> **El-Lotus**… a group of civil society activists that seek to fight the counter-revolution through lobbying. The structure of the group changes according to the issue at hand.

> **El-Sahwa** (The Awakening)… a pressure group aiming to influence election results and defends proportional representation. It works through different committees of which each is responsible for a different task.

> **Masrena** (Our Egypt) a group gathered after the referendum with a belief that awareness was required to achieve greater political freedom. The group is working on raising awareness for the coming elections. They are active in different districts within Cairo.

Bedaya (A Start) has four goals. To raise awareness, fight corruption, promote development and provide social services. They have a Facebook page.

Awareness Association (Rabtet Waey), aims at raising awareness to achieve a civil state.

Mosharka (Participations)… a group which aims at promoting political awareness and lobbying people to remain active to defend the demands of the revolution.

Shababna (Our Youth) is a group of young Egyptians who aim to influence the elections and provide social services through grassroots committees (Shukrallah, 2011a).

Such groups tended to have very limited membership (sometimes consisting of only a handful of activists), were quite deficient in terms of organizational structure and strategy, and generally expired or ceased operation in short order (I9, I26).

Beyond individual organizations, the initial six months following the revolution also saw the emergence of alternative coalitions that rivaled the Revolutionary Youth Coalition for the role of spokesman of the *shabāb al-thawra*. These included the Alliance of Revolutionary Forces, itself made up of smaller coalitions, as well as the Youth of the Revolution Union, amongst numerous others (Afifiy, 2011). These new coalitions were established in order to increase representation: given the dramatic rise in number of revolutionary youth organizations, many of the new groups resented the monopoly of representation that the original coalition held in the media (I23b). These new coalitions were also founded to express different proposals for the achievement of revolutionary goals: the non-ideological nature of the movement and the lack of precise political demands translated to multiple different possibilities for their achievement. As stated by one member of the Alliance of Revolutionary Forces in a press interview, "the Revolutionary Youth Coalition shut down on itself and refused to let anybody else in... When we found that the [original] coalition was taking a path that is contradictory to the revolution, the other entities started to emerge" (Afify, 2011).

The statement above reflects a recurring theme in the revolutionary youth's public narrative, especially during this first sequence of consolidation: the existence of internal rivalries and power struggles, and notably within the April 6th Youth Movement (I5a, I11, GI8b) and the

Revolutionary Youth Coalition (I5a, GI6a). As gleaned from the interviews and press statements, these frictions were based not on the differences in underlying understanding of political generation or revolution, but on the deficiencies of practice. One activist, for example, cites the lack of democratic governance and the seeming compromise with the SCAF as the reason for the split within the April 6th Youth Movement (I12). In this sense, certain organizations were considered to be practicing youth insufficiently, or to be struggling for revolution in an incorrect manner.

Critically, these disagreements over the proper fulfillment of generational activism and revolutionary action did not rupture the community of practice; quite the contrary, they reinforced it. These proclamations of acting as youth and struggling for the revolution not only consolidated the collective understanding of these practices, but also solidified their manifestation by pushing the various constituent elements of the revolutionary youth to reassert their commitment to youth activism and revolutionary action. As will be shown in the second half of the chapter, this consolidation of the community of practice would have a significant impact on the organizational construction of the social movement, and in particular in the development of internal procedures and governance structures within the social movement organizations.

In addition to the dynamic of expansion, two events in particular during the period of SCAF rule contributed to the consolidation of the community of practice: the July 2011 sit-in and the November 2011 Mohamed Mahmoud street battle. These events, which form part of the movement's critical battle narratives, not only are interpreted by the activists as decisive ruptures with key political players but also as personalized struggles over their very right to exist. The July 2011 sit-in, in protest of the SCAF's delayed transition to civilian rule[17], lasted several weeks and saw the re-occupation of Tahrir

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[17] The military junta, composed of 19 high-ranking military officers, lacked any sort of concrete plan for management of the transitional period, undertaking a perplexing mixture of promoting political pluralism and soliciting consensus while simultaneously carrying out a far harsher crackdown on contestation than Mubarak ever dared (Albrecht and Bishara, 2011:20; Abul-Magd, 2012). As the months of SCAF rule dragged on, with repeated delays in the elections schedule and transfer of power to civilian rule, it became increasingly obvious that the military was seeking various means to protect its own status. This included electoral engineering to prevent the emergence of a political force capable of jeopardizing the military's position (Rougier, 2012:88).

Square by the revolutionary youth in a bid to re-assert the revolutionary process (I6b, I7). On 8 July, tens of thousands returned to Tahrir Square, as well as other major Egyptian city centers, chanting *yasquṭ ḥukm al-ʿaskar* (down with military rule). These weeks of protest represented the largest demonstrations undertaken by the revolutionary youth since the uprising, and the various constituent organizations and coalitions that had emerged in the previous months collaborated for the organization of action that involved a re-deployment of the frames and symbolic elements put forth during the 18 days. This event served to consolidate the community of practice by reinforcing the space of revolutionary youth action – the street, and especially Tahrir Square – and by assembling the various constituents around the same ideational content.

Importantly, the July 2011 sit-in also promoted the consolidation of the community of practice by highlighting rupture with the Muslim Brotherhood. While the revolutionary youth movement was putting forth its revolutionary slogans along with demands for dignity and social justice, the Muslim Brotherhood was declaring its own Islamist and electoral agenda (Rougier, 2012:89), voicing their own particular claims regarding the application of shariʿa law and their iconic refrain *al-Islām huwa al-ḥal* (Islam is the solution). As narrated by the activists, this event starkly delineated the differences between players with regard to the underlying meaning of revolution as well as practice and motivations: for the activists, the Brotherhood's actions were undertaken for the purposes of self-advancement and the attainment of power and not, decidedly, to achieve the revolution. One activist states, for example "I believe that the Muslim Brotherhood was very pragmatic, and unfortunately we were very idealistic, and that's why we lost everything… The Muslim Brotherhood was clever enough to make this huge protest while opening back negotiation channels with the SCAF" (I9). Such a view towards the Brotherhood's participation highlights the influence of practice in interpretation, and in particular the underlying notion of altruism and non-negotiation that is inherent to the community of practice.

Far more important to the revolutionary youth's public narrative, and to the process of consolidation of the community of practice, is the Mohamed Mahmoud street battle of November 2011. This battle, which essentially involved the direct confrontation of the *shabāb al-thawra* and the various repressive arms of the SCAF interim regime, is collectively interpreted by the activists as categorically different from other moments of mobilization, moving beyond the revolutionary struggle to the rights of the revolutionary

youth themselves. One of the hallmarks of SCAF rule was the brutality with which the military attempted to impose order and prevent any form of contestation or protest (see Said, 2012:415-425). The military's tenure in power saw the maintenance of the emergency law and the expansion of the country's security sector, along with the continuation of human rights abuses and an overwhelming increase in the military trial of civilians (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Among the worst acts of repression was the 9 October 2011 Maspero massacre, in which a group of Copts protesting the destruction of a church in Upper Egypt gathered in front of Cairo's Maspero building in a peaceful protest only to be met with heavy artillery. This incident left several hundred injured and 28 dead, including at least two who had been deliberately crushed to death by tanks charging the crowds. The Maspero massacre, in which the young activist Mina Daniel became its symbol, made clear to Egypt's minorities that they remained second-class citizens in the post-Mubarak order (Roberts, 2013). The following month, a new scene of violence played out, this time placing the *shabāb al-thawra* center stage in what can be described as street warfare. From 19-24 November 2011, battle was waged on downtown Cairo's Mohamed Mahmoud street, just off Tahrir Square. Protesters threw rocks, Molotov cocktails, and returned volleys of tear gas; they were met with live ammunition dispensed by snipers targeting their heads and eyes. 45 individuals – mostly representing the revolutionary youth – were killed, while the military refused to acknowledge its use of lethal weapons or excessive force.

The symbolic importance of the November 2011 battle on Mohamed Mahmoud for the revolutionary youth cannot be overestimated. In the aftermath of Mubarak's departure, the activists began increasingly to see themselves in a personal fight against the SCAF and the police (I23b, I24), which would fully materialize in bloody fashion during the pitched battles on Mohamed Mahmoud. As one activist recounts, "the police killed my friends, I see what the military [did] to our friends in Maspero, I see what the military and police [did] in Mohamed Mahmoud with my friends" (GI2c). This incident is interpreted by the activists as an outright attack on the part of the *niẓām* against the revolutionary youth, and not the revolutionary goals *per se* (I5b, I12, I16, GI2, GI6). Said differently, the activists' collective interpretation of the 2011 Mohamed Mahmoud battle does not concern the larger fight for dignity or social justice but rather the revolutionary youth's right to exist and to exert themselves in the political arena. While the 18 days were shared by all people and signify a collective struggle, Mohamed

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Mahmoud is truly specific to the revolutionary youth. One activist explains, "Mohamed Mahmoud is our place. I lost a lot of people on Mohamed Mahmoud, and this is the strongest maybe experience for me, more than Tahrir Square" (GI6a). A powerful battle narrative, the shared experience of Mohamed Mahmoud consolidated the community of practice by greatly reinforcing bonds and the sense of the collective between members, while also adding a new dimension to their joint enterprise: the right of the *shabāb al-thawra* to participate in the public sphere. These various interpretations of historical-social context, and in particular the interpretation of the Muslim Brotherhood's practices and the battle narrative of Mohamed Mahmoud, would significantly inform movement construction processes, as will be shown in the second half of the chapter. More precisely, these interpretations would influence the perception of political opportunities as well as the manner in which grievances and emotions were constructed.

Crises over Practice and Joint Enterprise

The second narrative sequence of the revolutionary youth's public narrative in the aftermath of Mubarak's ouster covers approximately the year of Muslim Brotherhood power and the presidency of Mohamed Morsy. The major themes of this sequence concern the internal crises that the revolutionary youth faced as well as their relative strategic impasse that ensued from the return to civilian rule – both provoked by the limitations of youth practice and the crumbling of joint enterprise. In this way, this second narrative sequence is revealing of inherent tensions within the community of practice between values and priorities and their translation into action. This narrative sequence is punctuated by two events: the 2012 presidential election itself, which the activists relate as the lowest point in their history, and the November 2012 political crisis.

Though the three years following Mubarak's departure see the revolutionary youth traverse multiple crises, the nadir occurred during the presidential election of June 2012 (I10, I26, I30, GI4, GI5). While the first round of voting proved encouraging to the activists, with some smaller political factions gaining an impressive percentage of the vote, it was the SCAF-backed candidate Ahmad Shafīq and the Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsy who advanced to the second round. In their first openly and freely contested presidential race, the Egyptian electorate found itself with the choice of the *feloul* (literally "remnants," meaning former Mubarak-regime insiders) or the country's historical political scarecrow, which was untested

in wielding actual political power and whose intentions were somewhat opaque (Abed-Kotob, 1995; Hamid, 2014:178-180). For the activists, this configuration in the run-off election was interpreted as a nightmarish choice: vote for a former regime insider and be complicit in the official reinstatement of Mubarak's *niẓām*; support the Muslim Brotherhood, a distrusted force who in their minds had betrayed the revolution and its goals for personal political gain; or boycott the election altogether and forego participation in the country's first free presidential election. While many interviewees explain that Shafīq's win would have been most disastrous (GI4), and that voting for Morsy was "critical in continuing revolution" (I10), no choice was good. The lack of unanimity in how to apprehend the election led to severe ruptures within the revolutionary youth community (I11, GI4, GI5). The various constituent groups each determined how it would vote or if it would boycott, generally determined by majority consensus (I8, I11, I16). As a result, numerous activists were faced with a situation where their organization was supporting a position they could not abide, leading many dissenting voices to leave the movement. As one activist explains,

> The second round of the presidential election, when we had two choices only, between Ahmad Shafīq and Mohamed Morsy. It was the hardest moment inside the movement… Because we are not an ideological movement, we had a lot of people from different ideologies. This moment was very hard for us because some people wanted to vote for Morsy and some people wanted to vote for Shafīq and it wasn't just for our members [April 6th-Democratic Front] but other groups. And the Morsy voters and Shafīq voters left our [organization] because our decision was that we would not participate in any election without a constitution…. Whatever, for Shafīq or Morsy, they left. It was a critical movement for us and also it excluded or destroyed a lot of movement, not just April 6th-Democratic Front (I12).

Likewise, the various constituent groups who chose to proceed differently also entered into conflict with one another. This is especially true for the April 6th Youth Movement, who decided to support Morsy – a move that would serve to greatly discredit it in the eyes of many other revolutionary youth groups (I11, I22b, I25).

In addition to these internal tensions and the decline in membership that the crisis provoked, a number of groups also chose to disband altogether. The most important among these was certainly the Revolutionary Youth Coalition. In a lackluster public statement, the coalition members simply announced the end of their collaboration in light of the completed transition

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to civilian rule, although individual members hinted at much deeper problems plaguing the coalition and its inability to collaborate, specifically in light of the elections and the differences in ideology and participation strategy between members (El Gundy, 2012). Critically, the presidential election acted as a the largest moment of crisis for the *shabāb al-thawra* not because they had failed to secure a candidate or see their revolutionary goals inscribed in campaigns, but because the election revealed internal tensions over personal political preference that were sublimated by the movement's strict non-ideological practice and its lack of concrete political programs. In interviews, the activists repeatedly explain that the presidential election revealed they "have really opposing ideologies" (GI5b) and that "the different ideologies in the movement [are] fighting each other" (GI4b). In their collective narrative, the crisis as provoked by the presidential election is the result of inherent tensions engendered by their commitment to non-ideological affiliation and the existence of personal political preferences by individuals.

In the months following the election of President Morsy, the community of practice would face further instability as a result of a decline in the collective sense of joint enterprise and the definition of priorities. Virtually all of the revolutionary youth groups extended a tentative offer of good faith to Morsy and his MB-FJP party[18], signaling their willingness to accept the new president on the condition that he fulfill the goals of the revolution and the promises of inclusiveness made to the electorate (Egypt Independent, 2012a). Some groups – Salafyo Costa, April 6th, amongst others – even partook in the various political processes undertaken by the new regime, most notably the Constituent Assembly and the drafting of the constitution (I9, I22b). Much as with the presidential election, the decision to collaborate with the Muslim Brotherhood government was subject to intense debate and criticism: the movement's self-defined *raison d'être* – to fight for the achievement of the revolutionary ideals, to bring the downfall of the system – was losing internal currency in light of the new political order and debates over participation vs. contestation. One activist speaks about the need to "give Morsy a chance" (I9) and another explains "we thought that we can

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[18] While the party's official name was Freedom and Justice, some scholars prefer MB-FJP in order to highlight the non-separation between the Muslim Brotherhood organization and the political party. I utilize this shorthand here.

make a political channel and make projects with the new president" (I19); however, other activists staunchly refused to associate with the Brotherhood, citing a lack of trust in their intentions (I14, I25). The community of practice was left somewhat adrift in terms of sense of joint enterprise.

As disappointment with Morsy and his style of governance as well as lack of tangible socio-economic improvement began to mount, however, the revolutionary youth's interpretation of context allowed for a re-assertion of the activists' struggle. As reiterated across the interviews conducted for this dissertation, the activists' argument with the Brotherhood was based not on the Islamist program *per se* but the Brotherhood's political practice, and namely its accommodation of the military and continuation of abuse and torture, as well as its differing interpretation of the revolution's meaning, and namely its emphasis on procedures, elections, and the market economy. Interviewees cite the Brotherhood's "dirty games" with the military and their "thuggish" behavior (I6b), their "use of violence" (I12) and "militias to kill people" (I11), their "same economic plans [as] Mubarak" (I15), their "catastrophic administration," and that ultimately "there is no big difference between the regime of Mohamed Morsy or the Mubarak one: same decisions and same way of thinking" (GI8a). This is not to say that differences in preference over the secular vs. the religious state do not exist, but rather that the opposition of the *shabāb al-thawra* derived from the fundamental dimensions of the community of practice, and specifically the dignity narrative and their particular definition of the revolutionary ideals. Given this interpretation of context, the political crisis of November 2012 was a decisive moment, serving to re-energize the revolutionary youth and marking the definitive rupture with the Muslim Brotherhood.

The political crisis was sparked by the procedural problems plaguing the constitution-writing process[19] and Morsy's 22 November 2012 Constitutional Declaration that, among other things, rendered all presidential decisions free of judicial scrutiny until the adoption of the new constitution (Pioppi,

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[19] Despite the appearance of broad representation, the Constituent Assembly, charged with drafting Egypt's new constitution, was overtly dominated by Islamists (the Brotherhood as well as the Salafis); for non-Islamists members, the threat of boycott or resignation was the only recourse for obtaining concessions (Brown, 2012b). Almost all non-Islamist members of the Constituent Assembly resigned in protest of the Constitutional Declaration, leaving the drafting of the constitution entirely in the hands of the Brotherhood and its Salafi partners.

2013:61). This measure was designed to counter the threats emanating from the courts and figured into the broader struggle for control of the constitution; its impact, however, was disastrous to Morsy's presidency and served to destroy the last shreds of good faith the revolutionary youth were willing to extend him. For the activists, the Constitutional Declaration was proof positive of Morsy's despotic rule and an authoritarian tendency worse than that of Mubarak (I5a, I6b, I9, I19, GI4). The November 2012 crisis, in which protests raged for weeks and became increasingly violent, pitted the Brotherhood's extremely loyal base against a broad coalition of the opposition, which included both former regime insiders and leftist-liberal-secular factions.[20]

For the revolutionary youth, the events of November 2012 represented the largest external actions undertaken since the presidential election, and allowed the various constituent groups to reunite around a common cause: the fight to bring down the Morsy regime (I6b, I14, I19). In this manner, the political crisis was interpreted as a major renewal of its revolutionary struggle (I4, I9, I14) and allowed the community of practice to bridge the chasms of joint enterprise that emerged from the election. The Facebook page of the April 6th Youth Movement, for example, on 27 November 2012 even made explicit this sequencing of the November crisis with the 18 days, posting a photo of the mass protests on Tahrir Square with the caption "we would like to draw your attention that this photo is not taken on 11 February 2011... It is a photo of Tahrir Square on 27 November 2012."

The events of November 2012 also signaled the start of the activists' almost irrational hatred of the Muslim Brotherhood, a sentiment that was repeatedly expressed in interviews and that would build throughout the spring 2013. This anger towards the Brotherhood was not just the result of the political crisis but also the death of a fellow revolutionary youth activist,

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[20] In a belated effort to placate the opposition, Morsy agreed to annul the Constitutional Declaration but refused to relinquish the MB-FJP's authority over the constitution, approved by popular referendum by year's end in an electoral instance with the lowest participation rate since the 2011 uprising. The MB-FJP had succeeded in securing the constitution, but in so doing had not only made enemies across the political spectrum but had also driven them into a coalition force, leading to the dramatic polarization of Egypt's political scene (Pioppi, 2013:62).

Gaber "Gika" Salah, a well-liked and enthusiastic 16-year old member of the April 6th Youth Movement, during a protest commemorating the 2011 battle on Mohamed Mahmoud street. Gika's death, which was brought up in numerous interviews, reverberated throughout the revolutionary youth, reinforcing the personalization of the struggle and the shared perception of a battle between the activists and the *niẓām*, while also forcing the activists to question "the responsibility about a member getting killed" (GI4b). Indeed, Gika became one of the primary symbols of the movement's personal struggle and its battle for place and voice in the political arena – and would figure heavily into the construction of grievances, as will be shown in the second half of the chapter. It was this combination of a re-defined sense of purpose and the reiteration of the personal attack on the movement that rendered November 2012 such a critical moment in the movement's narrative, allowing it to focus energy on a new priority: the downfall of the *ḥukm al-murshid* (rule of the Supreme Guide).

Usurpation of the "Shabāb al-Thawra"

The final sequence of the movement's narrative in the post-Mubarak period under consideration in this dissertation commences roughly with the downfall of the Morsy regime in summer 2013 by military coup. Here, the activists' narrative is thematically focused on the rapid decline of the political situation as well as their own status and ability to carry out action. This narrative sequence focuses on the sentiment of usurpation of the name "*shabāb al-thawra*" by an alternative organization, Tamarod, as well as the abeyance[21] of the revolutionary youth in the face of harsh repression. Of particular importance in this narrative sequence is the event of Morsy's ouster itself, whose interpretation demonstrates the underlying understandings upon which the community of practice is based.

In late April 2013, a signature campaign was launched, calling for the immediate end to Morsy's term and the convening of early presidential elections. Calling itself Tamarod (rebellion), the campaign centered on the collection of signatures to place pressure on the regime and listed as common

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[21] I use the term abeyance here in the sense attributed in social movement theory. Abeyance refers to periods of movement decline and de-mobilization, whereby a movement utilizes alternative methods of contestation in order to sustain itself. Abeyance is generally observed during moments of political or cultural hostility.

complaints the security and socio-economic situation, the lack of dignity or justice for victims of abuse, and the subservience of Egypt to the United States. The goal was to achieve 15 million signatures, more than the number of votes that had been cast for Morsy one year earlier, and to culminate in a mass national protest on 30 June 2013 – exactly one year after the MB-FJP came to power. The Tamarod campaign's profile fit that of the revolutionary youth: they were young (late twenties), not connected to any political parties, and utilized grassroots initiatives and street action to achieve political change. They even spoke in the vocabulary of the *shabāb al-thawra*, utilizing the terms "social justice" and "dignity" on their petitions and referencing poverty and socio-economic problems. However, Tamarod was not the brainchild of any one particular constituent group of the revolutionary youth; indeed, its connection with the social movement was thin at best. Press accounts and interviewees indicate that the five or so individuals behind the initiative were active in Kifāya as well as the National Association for Change yet had no formal connection with any of the constituent organizations of the revolutionary youth (Roberts, 2013). The organizers of Tamarod were not familiar to the leaders of the movement as of May 2013, according to my interviews. Nonetheless, the constituent organizations rapidly and enthusiastically joined the Tamarod campaign (I11, I19, I22b, I25, GI5, GI8), utilizing their members and extensive networks to obtain signatures and transfer petitions to the *de facto* Tamarod headquarters. By May 2013, interviewees spoke almost exclusively of Tamarod as their primary strategic focus, stating for example "we are all one and we have to work with each other… all of Egypt is part of Tamarod" (I19) and "all of us have to share in Tamarod so as… to be one hand so as to force [out] Morsy" (GI8a).

Because Tamarod was a campaign, based on the collection of signatures, as opposed to a formal organization, it could be easily adopted by various groups and independents. To this point, in the lead-up to the military coup, interviewees speak of Tamarod as "a very lovely democratic experience" (I22b) and "pretty brilliant, it's just reviving things, making things move" (I25). The extent to which the leaders of Tamarod shared the deeper values, goals, and interpretations that comprised the community of practice, and in particular the understanding of political generation and the revolutionary ideals, was never considered prior to Morsy's ouster (I3, I5b, GI8). Tamarod was simply assumed to be a useful tool to bring down the

MB-FJP, and questions of long-term goals and strategies of its organizers were largely ignored (I19).

On 30 June, the organizers of Tamarod announced they had collected over 22 million signatures (an unverified number), and Egypt witnessed the largest protest in its history, with millions flooding city centers across the country. The country's police – many in uniform – joined the protesters, together calling for the fall of the regime and Morsy's immediate departure, recycling the same slogans utilized two-and-a-half years earlier against Mubarak (Norton, 2013:343). By the next day, with still millions of people in the streets, General al-Sīsī presented Morsy with an ultimatum to resolve the crisis within 48 hours or the military would intervene with its own "roadmap" out of the crisis – a promise fulfilled two days later.[22] Crucially, for the revolutionary youth, the military's intervention is not interpreted as an inappropriate transgression into politics but rather the expression of the people's will. The activists refuse to accept that what transpired on 3 July was a military coup: literally every single activist I interviewed in autumn 2013 insisted, repeatedly, it was not a military coup that had taken Morsy out of power but the people's power, that the military was merely an agent of popular will. In this vein, interviewees state, "it's not a coup, one word: it's not a coup, surely it's not a military coup" (I13); "they took Morsy out of power because the people wanted it… I'm supporting any tool that will take off the power from the Muslim Brotherhood" (I17); "this is not a coup, this is just the army taking sides" (I15); "what al-Sīsī declared the 3rd of July was very close to what we wanted" (I18). This narration of the military coup reveals how the background understandings of the community of practice shape its interpretation of events. For the activists, seeing millions on the streets demanding the downfall of the Muslim Brotherhood's rule was evidence that the revolution was continuing, precisely because it fulfilled their belief in bottom-up processes as the source of change and the transfer of sovereignty to the streets. Activists repeatedly speak about the 30 June

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[22] The MB-FJP, for its part, seemed not truly to understand the stakes at hand or that its own political survival was hanging in the balance. Instead of negotiating with the military, or offering concessions, or even acquiescing to demands in a final bid at self-preservation, the MB-FJP stubbornly insisted on the legitimacy of Morsy's presidency and blindly walked into the coup (Hessler, 2013).

protests as a second "revolutionary wave" and relegate to the military a small assisting role. The problem for the revolutionary youth was not the military's initial intervention but the institution's foray into politics thereafter, and the explicit role played by Tamarod therein. As will be shown in the second part of the chapter, this interpretation would figure heavily into the construction of political opportunities and, hence, the negotiation of movement strategy.

Despite the unanimous participation of the revolutionary youth in the protests of 30 June–3 July 2013, the various constituent organizations and leaders who had become important political figures since the 2011 uprising took a backseat to Tamarod and its figureheads. It was the spokesman of Tamarod who was convened by General al-Sīsī to demonstrate the support of the *shabāb al-thawra* for the military's removal of Morsy from power. And in the months following the ouster of Morsy, Tamarod (who transformed into a formal organization following the coup) was recognized by the media and the military regime as the new face of the revolutionary youth (see for example Iskandar, 2013). Crucially, the activists' interpretation of the new organization in the aftermath of the coup completely rejects this link to the *shabāb al-thawra.* This opposition to Tamarod is based precisely on differences in practice. It was Tamarod's willingness not only to collaborate with the new military regime but also to support its various forms of repression and power grab[23] that warranted its absolute rejection by the revolutionary youth. In their interpretation, Tamarod supported the regime's request for a "popular mandate" to utilize repression in order to obtain political power, rather than struggle on behalf of the revolution (I3, I5b, I12). One interviewee states, "the big problem between us and Tamarod [is] we didn't say that al-Sīsī and the persons running Egypt have to kill all of these people" (I13) while another comments, "they are seeking their interest and they want to participate in political life, and they will go for the election. [We] will not do this because it's against [our] values" (I10). The revolutionary youth's interpretation of Tamarod's interest in personal gain,

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[23] The approval of Tamarod for military actions, such as the use of violence to purge "terrorism" from the streets, as well as for the military's transitional road map and interim puppet government, became a foundational pillar in asserting the legitimacy of the new political order (Antoun, 2014): youth, as the symbol of the revolution, were a necessary partner to corroborate the message that 3 July 2013 was a correcting of the revolutionary path, and not the naked return of the military to power.

collaboration with the status quo, and compromise on goals clashed wholeheartedly with the activists' understandings of both political generation and revolutionary action. The vitriol with which the activists speak about Tamarod reveals a deep sense of betrayal: they had all actively supported the campaign and its specific goals (and most importantly the ouster of Morsy and the call for early elections) only to see the name of the *shabāb al-thawra* become appropriated by a group whose manner of action was not only entirely opposed to its interpretation of youth, but worked against the achievement of the revolutionary ideals. In this sense, Tamarod is a revelatory foil to the community of practice and quite revealing of the manner in which collective identity of the social movement is constructed, as will be demonstrated in the second part of the chapter.

Along with this interpretation of usurpation, the revolutionary youth also viewed the new context under General al-Sīsī as utterly counter to the revolutionary ideals, based on the pursuit of political power by the military (I5b, I13, I17, GI4) along with the utilization of violence against citizens (I12, I15, GI2). The new political order that emerged demonstrated brutality and radicalization as well as the domination of the military general as the new strongman of Egypt, ruling behind a figurehead coalition government. Discourse regarding the Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition voices was virulent and xenophobic, the crackdown on dissent and protest was ruthless, and the press was subject to strict censorship and bodily harm. Egypt in the months following the military coup witnessed an explosion of sectarian violence, the largest massacre[24] in its modern history, and multiple months of emergency law and nightly curfew.

In the revolutionary youth's collective interpretation, the context of brutality, along with the overwhelming popularity of the new regime by the masses as well as prominent political figures across the board, is linked to the abeyance of revolutionary youth activism. In finding themselves excluded from the broader political process taking place and lacking space for

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[24] In the wake of the coup, the MB-FJP and its supporters organized numerous protests as well as the prolonged occupation of Rabʿa al-ʿAdawiyya square in Cairo's desert satellite Nasr City and Nahḍa Square in the Giza area. On the morning of 14 August 2013, security forces surrounded the protesters from all sides, blocking exits, and began firing while advancing their tanks into the heart of the square. Snipers positioned on nearby rooftops also contributed to the carnage. By day's end, over 800 people, almost entirely unarmed civilians, were left dead (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

criticism, protests and collective action stopped almost entirely and countless members dropped out (I15, GI4). At the same time, the activists were hesitant to demonstrate any sort of contestation for fear of being associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. In this context, efforts emerged to express a "third way," to carve out an alternative niche in the political arena that was neither pro-Morsy nor pro-military nor pro-*feloul*. As will be shown in the second half of the chapter, this would directly inform organizational construction processes, specifically through the establishment of a new coalition.

Crucially, the revolutionary youth's interpretation of the political context sequenced the al-Sīsī regime with the pre-uprising era both because of the practices of the ruling regime and that of other political forces, more interested in "looking for their own personal interest" (I25) rather than fighting the new autocracy. Although the revolutionary youth did attempt to re-launch their street action by November 2013, these demonstrations were met with brutality and the arrests of many prominent members. The revolutionary youth had entered into the regime's crosshairs. The movement – the heroes of the 2011 revolution – became targets of repression, and three of the leaders of the April 6th Youth Movement were sentenced to jail for violating the new protest law. By 25 January 2014, the revolutionary youth were unable to organize their annual commemorative protest on Tahrir Square, instead calling on members to stay home and avoid violence rather than risk their lives. As will be shown in the second half of the chapter, this interpretation of the post-military coup context would heavily inform the construction of political opportunity and strategy.

5.1.2 Generational Battle: Politics vs. Revolution

These interpretations of the rapidly-shifting context in post-Mubarak Egypt, anchored in the assumptive schemes of political generation and revolution, resulted in a critical development in the community of practice and in particular in its shared meaning of generational battle. In my interviews, the subject of a generational battle since the ouster of Mubarak came up several times, as did the general tendency to position youth as opposite political elites – regardless of their ideology or party or affiliation. Initially, my understanding concerned the question of representation and participation in politics, that the generational battle concerned the fight against hierarchy and the desire for access to decision-making and the political process; however, I

came to understand that this shared notion of generational battle figures into a much broader understanding of the political and the "doing" of politics, which the activists understand as standing opposed to revolution and the "doing" of revolutionary action. For the activists, the generational battle is not about competition and struggle for a place within the political game; it's about playing a different game altogether. It is, in essence, the practice of politics versus the practice of revolution (or, more precisely, the practice of revolutionary youth).

The collective understanding of political generation and its manifestation in youth practice as explored in chapter three did not undergo any significant changes in the three years following the departure of Mubarak from power. The major dimensions of this generational practice, as pertaining to operations, values, and motivations of activism and contestation, and as developed from generational encounters in the Mubarak era, continued largely the same. The emphasis on non-ideological affiliation remained a hallmark of youth practice, and perhaps was even strengthened as revolutionary youth coalitions successfully brought together former Muslim Brotherhood members, Salafis, Copts, secularists, leftists, and liberals (GI3, GI4). The importance of consensus-based decision-making was intensified (I6b, I12), and the eschewing of personalized politics and cults of personality around elites remained strong. Likewise, the importance of non-violence and solidarity as values underscoring the understanding of youth also remained essential (I6b, GI1, GI5), as did the belief in the altruistic and holistic motivations lying behind activism and contestation (I3, I25). In fact, these various dimensions of youth practice became more pronounced in the period following the 18 days, as will be demonstrated in the discussion of movement construction processes in the second section. As opposed to being only implicitly visible in the movement's discourse and actions, the conception of youth practice became fully recognized and revindicated: the movement was now making a very conscious effort to apply youth practice in the development of its organizations and internal procedures, and in its strategies, as will be shown later in the chapter.

Yet beyond this increasing awareness and deliberate application of youth as a manner of acting and interacting, the three years following Mubarak's ouster saw the revolutionary youth develop a shared understanding of "the political," of the nature of political reality and its units. Here, politics refers to the manifold practices and institutional dimensions of social order, whereas the political refers to the ontological dimension of

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power and state-society relations. In essence, this period sees the community of practice develop its own unique understanding of politics, a common interpretation of political being, as well as a shared notion of what politics entails and where it exists. I posit that this understanding of politics and the political developed out of the various disappointments and setbacks following the 2011 uprising, and in particular the failure to realize revolutionary ideals. In this sense, it is precisely the assumptive schemes of political generation and revolution that stimulated this new shared understanding of politics and the political. The collective understanding of youth no longer was just concerned with the political generation within the fields of activism and contestation, but came to include the foundational understanding of what is meant by the political. It is this understanding of the difference between the political and the revolution, and politics and revolutionary action, that lies at the heart of the movement's perception of a generational battle since the 2011 uprising.

As explored in chapter four, the revolutionary youth did not have a grand strategy or precise political goals during the 18 days. The demands of the uprising did not involve a defined political program or even much precision by what was meant by "bread" or "freedom." Likewise, even as the community of practice developed a shared conception of revolutionary ideals and the vision for the post-revolution state, this was not accompanied by political proposals for their achievement. While this was perhaps understandable during the heady days of uprising, given the unpredictable and incredibly rapid manner in which the uprising and ouster of Mubarak unfolded, the activists interviewed for this dissertation as of November 2013 still lacked an agreed-upon concrete idea of what type of political regime, or which candidates, or what policies were needed to make revolutionary gains (I5b, I17, I27a, I29, GI6). On the contrary, they have generally shied away from direct participation in politics and have ostracized members of various organizations who have done otherwise (I9, I14). One commonly cited explanation for this is the lack of political experience of the activists and hence their focus on making demands as opposed to proposing solutions. This is an argument I have heard from political scientists both inside and outside Egypt (D8, D11), and a theme in articles treating the *shabāb al-thawra* and their fall from grace (Hassabo, 2014; Marfleet, 2014), and I partially agree. The activists were political ingénues on the morning of 12 February 2011, and they did place too much faith in the early days after Mubarak's departure on the idea that Egypt's various (non-*feloul*) political

forces could be rallied behind their understanding of revolution and the uprising's meaning. In fact, this dynamic continued in the lead-up to the 30 June 2013 protests, as interviewees affirmed that they were not interested in negotiating the post-Morsy scenario, preferring instead to focus simply on his ouster (I19). In this vein, as will be shown later, a major dimension in movement construction over the period of February 2011–25 January 2014 was a continuous process of political learning.

However, I argue that this lack of political experience or know-how is not the main reason the revolutionary youth have failed to institutionalize or participate directly in formal politics, or even put forth a concrete political program. Instead, I contend that it is the community of practice's shared meaning of politics that explains its stance. For the revolutionary youth, the various collective interpretations of events in the aftermath of the Mubarak regime led to a rather narrow understanding of the political, with the term becoming exclusively associated with the formal and procedural aspects of government. Here, politics comes to be understood as different from "the struggle" and concerned with "parliament and elections, not to make a new life" (I4). The units of the political in the shared meaning of the activists include political parties, individual politicians and MPs, the bureaucracy, etc… while its location is institutionalized realms, including electoral instances, the parliament, the courts, and other formal venues of governance. The political, thus, necessitates a structural system in which to operate. As a result, the act of doing politics – of becoming a political party or politician or MP; of running in elections or passing legislation or debating in cabinet meetings – maintains the structural system of operation (I3, I11, I25). In their collective understanding, the political is inherently linked to the institutional status quo and as such is "dead" and "futile" (GI6b); politics, for its part, involves competition between units for the achievement of power and exercise of domination therein. For the revolutionary youth community of practice, the nature of the political is innately corrupted and the act of politics is necessarily corrupting.

This understanding of politics is related to the activists' disappointment with elections and those in power, alongside the realization that real change to the system had yet to occur. Their mounting disillusion with politics is in fact increasingly visible in my interviews, which took place over three different periods, moving from the November 2012 political crisis to the rise of Tamarod to the post-coup order and crackdown on the revolutionary youth themselves. The way interviewees speak about the political and the nature of

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politics is increasingly cynical, verging towards the end of my fieldwork on outright animosity. Initially, many of the activists were in fact willing to experiment with politics as a means of institutionalizing revolutionary gains. A number of activists interviewed, and especially those from Masry Hor and We Are All Khaled Said, joined ElBaradei's new Dustūr party and indeed took leading roles in the party's formation (I4, I23a, I25, GI5); likewise activists from April 6th initially spoke about creating a new political party (I5a, I8), as did those from the Revolutionary Socialists (I15). What they observed, however, was lethargy, willingness to compromise, and collaboration with the *feloul*. One activist from Masry Hor, for example, expresses her disappointment with political leaders, stating, "I voted for Hamdīn [Sabāḥi] during the first round of the presidential elections… Given what they've done so far, especially ElBaradei… and then with the National Salvation Front[25], they had taken different positions that made me really disrespect them" (I25). Likewise, the April 6th Youth Movement formally participated in the MB-FJP's Constituent Assembly, only to see their voice ignored. It was this witnessing of politics in action – seeing political elites they believed in make compromises and focus on procedures over goals; seeing elections and assemblies serve to reinforce the status quo as opposed to bring down the system – that drove their disdain of the political.

For the revolutionary youth, the political ultimately stands opposite the revolution, as the political is equated with the system and the status quo whereas the revolution expressly aims to change just that. As one interviewee explains, "it has nothing to do with al-Sīsī and the Muslim Brotherhood, we are talking about an institution that needs to be [wiped out]…. al-Sīsī and whoever is there" (GI6a). The act of doing politics cannot ever achieve the goals of the revolution *as they define them* (I16, GI4b). To utilize the discursive repertoire of the community of practice, politics is *islāḥiyya* (reformist) whereas revolution is about radical rupture and change. Given this, the revolutionary youth came expressly to avoid participation in politics or engagement with the political as they understand it, instead operating under the premise of "revolutionary pureness" (*al-naqāʾ al-thawrī*) (I9). This

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[25] During the November 2012 political crisis, various opposition groups united to form the National Salvation Front, led by the leftist-liberal elites ElBaradei and Sabāḥi along with prominent Mubarak-era strongman Amr Moussa, demanding both the rescinding of the Morsy's presidential decree along with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly.

revolutionary pureness translates into the utter unwillingness to compromise on revolutionary goals or collaborate with opponents (I7, I11) as well as a lack of emphasis on democratic procedure, and also reinforces the notion that the space of revolution is the non-institutionalized realms and the street (I12, I22b). In this way, the revolutionary youth do not interpret their action as political but rather revolutionary (indeed, I imagine that the activists interviewed for this research would contest my calling them a political actor). This dichotomy between the political and the revolution is also reflected in their understanding of the post-uprising moment, which they see as a prolonged revolutionary struggle. As one interviewee explains, "the normal democracy in Egypt is not the solution. The [thing] I think that the West should understand about Egypt: we are in a revolution, not a democratic transition. And there is a difference in meaning" (I27b). As he states, democracy and its accouterments cannot be utilized as a means for achieving the revolution, as the nature of the political will prevent revolutionary change from occurring. For the activists, the political can only escape its corrupted and corrupting nature once the revolution has succeeded.

Thus whereas the activists see the older generation as playing politics and concerned with the political, they see themselves as making revolution and concerned with revolutionary change. As one activist explains,

> We are now in a society that is qualified to say or to recognize the concept of youth… Our main problem is that the [political elites] are trying to send a message to the Egyptian people that nobody understands the political situation but them. And we shouldn't trust in the youth because they make too many demonstrations… Those elite persons, there isn't a big difference between leaders like Hamdīn Sabāḥi, there is no big difference between the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood and the followers of Mubarak as well. Because they don't want to make the Egyptian people feel better or to change the society, the Egyptian society. No. They want to make the targets themselves only, not to make Egypt better or make Egyptian people better. So our main problem is those people. The youth make the movement in the streets (I13).

As mentioned here, all elites of the previous political generation are lumped together in the same category, regardless of their affiliations or stance. The revolutionary youth and their joint enterprise is thus positioned in a different arena entirely, outside of "politics" and instead acting in the street for a different set of causes. This is a categorical difference in interpretation of action, and lies at the heart of the generational battle. As will be shown in the second half of this chapter, the background understandings and the associated

practices of revolutionary youth, along with the broader meaning of the political as shared by the community of practice, exerts enormous influence on movement construction processes, and in particular in the movement's internal organizational development as well as its calculation of political opportunities, and the negotiation of movement strategies. Likewise, this perception of a generational battle in particular also influences how the movement interacts with other political players, and in particular the move towards tacit alliances.

5.1.3 The Limits of Practice

Despite the many different changes taking place in Egypt between February 2011–25 January 2014, the shared meanings of the term "revolutionary" and "revolution" in terms of subjectivity, goals, and values did not undergo any major changes following the 18 days. The dignity and social contract narratives continued to form the basis of the movement's understanding of the major objectives that a post-revolution Egypt would manifest (i.e. the transformation of state-society relations to be based on protection, accountability, and justice), while the values of tolerance, non-discrimination, and co-habitation continued to fuel the activists' understanding of citizenship and social relations in a post-revolution era. What did develop in this period – and in direct relation with the understanding of politics and political instances as counter to the achievement of the revolution – was the further identification of the source of revolutionary change. For the activists, the prefiguration of revolution became intimately connected with not only their own form of action, but with changing the consciousness of the masses. In a group interview, two activists explain this point, stating that their message to the people is, "you are the government, you are the one in charge of this, you build your own country" (GI6).

Within the shared understandings of the community of practice, the revolution will occur when all Egyptians understand their rights and assume the power to demand them (I4, I14, I27b, I29). It is when all Egyptians understand their right to dignity, to social justice, to a state that works to protect and shelter them, and to equal citizenship that the goals of the revolution can be achieved. As the activists explain it, once this change of consciousness en masse has occurred, the people will naturally make choices in order to guarantee that their rights are fulfilled; however, though this

understanding of the source of revolutionary change is intimately linked to rights, certain limitations in their reach also appear. Most importantly, the period following the 18 days sees difference in priority regarding revolutionary goals and values emerge between groups, along with the implicit tendency to relegate the issues of minorities and women to a secondary status. These limitations to the supposed universalism of the revolution's vision for social relations and state-society relations were a source of friction within the revolutionary youth, at both the level of individuals as well as organizations. In analyzing the counternarratives of the revolutionary youth, inconsistencies and inherent power dynamics within the community of practice are revealed.

Bounds of Revolutionary Ideals

Despite agreeing on the collective interpretation of the revolutionary ideals, the activists nonetheless do not commonly agree on which objectives take precedence (I18). While they do see the achievement of the post-revolution state and its renewal of various social and political relations as a unified package (GI1, GI6), the constituent groups place unequal emphasis on the different dimensions of revolution. This is particularly visible in the constituent groups whose mission and/or membership profile is rather narrow. For example, for the Maspero Youth Union and Salafyo Costa, the most notable Coptic and Salafi groups of the *shabāb al-thawra*, emphasis is placed in particular on tolerance and citizenship over social justice and redistributive social welfare. One co-founder of the Maspero Youth Union explains, "we're both fighting for social justice, and we fight for freedom and liberty and equality for all Egyptians and citizenship. But for us, citizenship comes first… but for the leftists, social justice comes first" (I18). Likewise, groups such as No to Military Trials and Kazeboon place their priority on dignity and ending the culture of abuse and non-accountability (GI6). These differences in priority are not seen as particularly detrimental to the shared meaning of "revolution" as goals and values remain constant across the community of practice; however, as will be shown in the next section on construction processes, these differences in priority lead to varying strategies and calculations of priority that, at times, place certain groups at odds with one another.

Graver, however, is the existence of limitations and inherent prejudices that reach beyond the revolutionary ideals. Though the activists' shared understandings purport values of non-discrimination and equal citizenship

across all Egyptians, there remains a lack of universalism in their application. This is especially true with regards to women revolutionary youth and the achievement of women's rights. Nearly every single woman activist interviewed for this research mentioned that gender issues were considered by male activists to be "sub-issues" that should only be addressed once the revolution had been achieved. Moreover, despite advocating the practice of revolutionary values as inherently linked to revolutionary subjectivity, women activists confirm that paternalistic attitudes and the problems of patriarchy persist even within the *shabāb al-thawra*. One interviewee explains, "women's issues are not being focused on…When it does come up, the response is always, 'We'll get to that later. What's important now is getting the objectives of the revolution carried out.' And when you try to explain that includes… it's like, it doesn't register" (I25). These opinions were reiterated across the various interviews with women activists. Importantly, however, they did not seek to form their own organization or struggle on behalf of women's rights outside of the framework of the revolutionary struggle. As another interviewee explains, "we believe the revolution is the way… women's movement and women's rights should not be away or different from the revolution; it's part of it. And as it's a part of it, their rights and their needs must be responded to. We must be heard" (GI1c).

These limitations of the revolutionary ideals also extend to other minority groups. In questions regarding the potential rights of other very minority religious communities in Egypt, such as the Baha'i, Shia, and Jewish populations, interviewees indicated that such groups were perhaps far to small to necessitate legal protections (GI2). Likewise, with regards to the gay community, interviewees speculated on the difficulty of achieving any sort of acceptance of homosexuality, yet did not confirm whether or not the revolutionary ideals should be extended to such groups (GI4). Thus despite the shared notion of "revolution" and "revolutionary" as concerned with reciprocal duties and equal rights, certain prejudices and power dynamics continued to assert themselves even within the activists' discourse and practice.

As will be shown next section, these various elements of the community of practice – the activists' understanding of the generational battle and the separation of politics and revolution; the internal contests over practice and priority – directly informed the construction processes of the social movement in the post-Mubarak period.

5.2 Generation and Prefiguration in the Social Movement

Following the 2011 uprising, social movement construction and the various processes associated therein were heavily marked by the activists' understanding of the generational battle and the associated meanings of politics/the political vs. revolutionary struggle/the revolution. These shared notions influenced construction in a variety of ways: through the use of symbolism and physical space in order to delineate the differences between politics and revolution in the construction of grievances and collective emotion; through organizational training and socialization as a means of constructing the ideal-type of the revolutionary youth activist and carving identity borders; and through the practice of revolutionary pureness in developing the movement's external strategies and alliances with other players. Indeed, the period following the ouster of Mubarak sees the most obvious and clear efforts to manifest the precepts of "youth" and "revolutionary" in the organizational, ideational, and strategic dimensions of the social movement. In this vein, the activists' consciousness of themselves as the *shabāb al-thawra* – and in particular what this means with regards to their actions, motivations, and position within the public sphere – informed quite directly the dynamics of the social movement. Nonetheless, the very deliberate attempt to manifest these practices of political generation and prefiguration of revolution presented the movement with important dilemmas and shortcomings. In exploring how youth practice and revolutionary practice informed movement construction processes, this section reveals the inherent tensions that ensued from the movement's interpretation of "politics" and "revolutionary" as contradictory forces, as well as how the practice of revolutionary youth worked at times at cross-purposes to the achievement of the revolution.

5.2.1 Symbolism and Space

At the first dimension of movement construction – the processes by which individuals come to realign themselves as part of the collective – the development of grievances and emotions served a dual purpose in the aftermath of Mubarak's ouster and the tumultuous three years of political

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permutation. On one hand, and in line with the two previous phases of the movement's development, the construction of shared grievances and emotions assisted in the recruitment of new members into the movement. Yet perhaps more importantly, these processes also played a profound role in maintaining membership, and the willingness and enthusiasm to mobilize. Although the revolutionary youth experienced an important period of expansion in the immediate aftermath of Mubarak's ouster, much of this was based less on a deep understanding of the movement's values and objectives than a desire to participate somehow in changing the country through a vector that emphasized youth (I6b, GI4, GI5). The construction of shared grievances and emotions, thus, served to maintain the participation of these newly mobilized individuals once the initial high of the 2011 uprising faded and the daily grind of activism, along with the numerous set-backs in achievement of goals, began to accumulate.

The processes of construction along with the content of grievances and emotions demonstrate several underlying trends, and notably the use of symbolism and space that reflected the activists' understanding of politics and the revolutionary ideals. Here, the construction of shared grievances utilized highly evocative symbols to reflect the shared perception of generational battle and youth practice, while the construction of collective emotions utilized physical space in order to recapture the revolutionary moment as experienced during the 18 days. In addition, these construction processes demonstrated the activists' increasing self-awareness as revolutionary vanguard. As the various coalitions and constituent organizations became increasingly conscious of their distinct position in the arena of contestation, and as the *shabāb al-thawra* became a recognized political player in the post-Mubarak Egyptian landscape, the content of grievances and emotions reflected their self-awareness. More precisely, the battle narratives of the revolutionary youth, and the activists' collective sense of a personalized struggle over their right to exist, came to influence shared grievances and emotions.

Grievances and the Vestiges of Mubarak's Regime

The grievances put forth by the revolutionary youth movement in the post-Mubarak period resembled those constructed prior to the 2011 uprising: in addition to the complaint of disregard and socio-economic suffering, the movement's two primary grievances of abuse and corruption, as established during the pre-uprising phase and elaborated upon during the 18 days,

continued to figure most dominantly in the collective understanding of social malaise and injustice. In this sense, and despite the occurrence of several instances of regime change in the period of February 2011-25 January 2014, the collectively named grievances of the activists following the 2011 uprising were largely a continuation of those during the Mubarak era. What changed, however, were the discursive and symbolic manners in which these grievances were constructed, which demonstrated a degree of innovation that reflected the evolving understandings of the community of practice.

Violence and the Symbol of the Martyr
In examining interview data, statements to the press, Facebook pages, and the content of protest materials, the problem of abuse and the various forms of violence inflicted by the arms of the state on civilians was overwhelmingly the most emphasized grievance of the revolutionary youth movement in the period following the 2011 uprising. Indeed, this grievance was cited in virtually every interview conducted with activists who joined the movement only after the 18 days, and figures into the collective action frames for nearly every major mobilization effort organized by the movement over the course of the three years since the ouster of Mubarak. This is perhaps unexpected and merits reiteration: for the *shabāb al-thawra*, the most fundamental grievance and sense of injustice fueling the construction of the social movement over the course of nearly ten years concerned not the lack of participatory politics or the socio-economic problems plaguing the country, but the exertion of bodily and psychological harm with impunity. In essence, it is the dignity narrative that dominates in the grievance construction process of the revolutionary youth movement, and, as such, the quest for protection from abuse, along with justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators, that represents the movement's essential purpose.

Yet despite the perpetuation of this particular grievance, the manner in which it was constructed in the post-uprising period demonstrates a much higher incidence of socio-cultural symbolism than in previous years. The notion of the martyr, and in particular the activist as revolutionary martyr, becomes predominant in the discursive and visual repertoire of the revolutionary youth and peppers discussions in interviews (I4, I7, I16, GI1). Statements to the press made by the various constituent groups of the movement as well as the different coalitions explicitly refer to those killed during acts of mobilization as "martyrs of the revolution," and in particular those killed during the 18 days, at the Maspero massacre in 2011, or on any

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of the Mohamed Mahmoud street battles. For example, a representative of the Maspero Youth Union, in announcing mobilization for the first anniversary of the uprising, stated that the purpose of the protest was "to complete the revolution and achieve justice for martyrs who fell during clashes at Maspero, Tahrir, Mohamed Mahmoud street" (Egypt Independent, 2012b). Likewise, the April 6th Youth Movement stated in an interview that the primary purpose of the July sit-in was to obtain "retribution for the martyrs" (Saoud, 2011b). The utilization of the term also appears frequently on the Facebook pages of the April 6th Youth Movement (27 July 2011; 12 October 2011; 25 November 2011; 25 January 2012; 24 June 2012; 25 January 2013; 24 January 2014) and the Revolutionary Socialists (20 November 2012; 25 January 2013; 30 June 2013; 25 July 2013; 18 November 2013). Both pages, for example, make regular posts exclaiming "glory to the martyrs" and referring specifically to fellow activists killed during protests with this appellation. The April 6th Youth Movement even goes as far as to post a song titled "Some People Will Be Martyrs, Others Will Keep Talking" as part of its commemorations each year on the anniversary of 25 January.

The symbol of the martyr also figured heavily into the protest materials of the movement. Pictures and photographs of revolutionary youth killed during acts of activism – and especially Mina Daniel and Gika – were often displayed during protest events. For example, at the 25 January 2012 protest commemorating the first anniversary of the uprising, protesters wore simple masks bearing the image of those fallen and were instructed to print t-shirts with the names and photos of those killed (Salem, 2012). Likewise, protesters commemorating the losses on Mohamed Mahmoud wore eye patches in remembrance of those who had been targeted by snipers. Empty coffins draped in the Egyptian flag were carried to the movement's protests to symbolize the deaths of the revolutionary martyrs, and graffiti art of those killed became abundant on the streets near Tahrir Square.

Protester wearing mask with name "Mina Daniel" on forehead.
Egypt Independent, 2012c

Symbolic coffins draped in Egyptian flag. Sign reading "Down with military rule."
Egypt Independent, 2012d

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Image of Gika, on Tahrir Square.
Egypt Independent, 2012e

The use of the martyr symbol to capture the grievance of abuse adds an important dimension to the movement's social construction of this collective complaint. The martyr is a powerful and highly evocative socio-cultural symbol in Egypt. The Arabic term, *shahīd*, is imbued with the dual sense of "martyr" and "witness": the martyr is one who witnesses and testifies a truth in their death (Halverson et al., 2013:322). The martyr, as opposed to the victim, is engaged deliberately in some sort of struggle or battle. There exists a degree of righteousness in the purpose of the martyr's action, and death implies the ultimate sacrifice for the cause. These dimensions of sacrifice for a greater truth reflect the movement's collective interpretation of their struggle as motivated by a higher cause and the particular role that they self-appoint as vanguard of the revolution. The diagnostic framing here positions the perpetrators of the crimes – whether the Ministry of the Interior, the military regime, or the Muslim Brotherhood – as opponents in a contest whose importance and meaning goes far beyond the particulars of any one single demonstration. As a result, the injustice that the grievance invokes goes beyond the crime itself, becoming placed into a broader struggle over the revolution.

The utilization of the martyr symbol in the construction of the movement's most important grievance was quite evocative for individuals and new recruits to the movement, thereby facilitating its adoption.

Knowledge of the continuation of abuse and the death of revolutionary youth activists was widely disseminated in various print and social media, and was in particular actively spread by the constituent group Kazeboon, who would regularly hold screenings of homemade films documenting abuses and the martyrdom of the *shabāb al-thawra*. Various interviewees who joined the movement only after the fall of Mubarak referred to the importance of these crimes in their decision to mobilize precisely because they were contextualized in a broader struggle. In a group interview with several women from the Revolutionary Socialists, the question of the martyr and the sense of duty to continue the fight is discussed, with one activist concluding, *"I think it's important whether they are part of our group or not. We feel the same for Gika as we feel for others… It's the martyrs, it's the idea that people have died in this revolution, so it has to continue"* (GI1a). In this discussion, the activists not only adopt the discourse of the martyr, but also situate the grievance in a much deeper context than the more limited problem of abuse and lack of accountability for specific victims. The grievance as such is elevated by placing it within a much broader socio-cultural symbolism and associating the issue of martyrdom with the righteous battle. It was this implication of sacrifice for the collective that rendered the martyr image so evocative and the reception of the grievance by individuals so powerful. Other interviewees confirm this interpretation of the grievance as concerned with the far larger cause and struggle not only for individual justice but indeed for the revolution (I13, I16).

Mubarak as Symbol
The second major grievance as annunciated by the activists during the post-Mubarak period concerned the practice of power, and more precisely the continuation of dimensions of non-transparency, domination, and corruption that so marked Mubarak's rule. Like the grievance of abuse explored above, this socially constructed complaint derived from one previously promulgated by the movement under the Mubarak regime, where emphasis was largely placed on the various problems surrounding corruption. In the period following Mubarak's departure, the grievance expanded its conception of the problem, as the notion of the generational battle became increasingly well defined by the activists. The issue was no longer just that corruption existed, but that the manner in which Mubarak exercised power, its characteristics and nature, persisted without discernible difference despite the occurrence of elections, the redrafting of constitutions, and several changes in authority

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figures. It was this continuation of Mubarak's practice of power that came to be a fundamental grievance, which in turn influenced its framing and the identification of opponents.

To frame this lack of change and the persistence of Mubarak's form of power, the movement quite early on identified the presence of Mubarak-era bureaucrats (*feloul*) and their retention of posts and positions in the state as a primary source of the problem (I11, I16). The movement made demands for the purging of all state institutions (as for example in statements to the press made by various constituent groups during the November 2011 protests) and rejected the legitimacy of alliances or configurations in which *feloul* were present (I14). The term *feloul* became a byword for enemy of the revolution in the movement's vocabulary, and was constantly utilized by interviewees as a symbol for the persistence of Mubarak's practice of power and, hence, the anti-revolution. Likewise, the construction of this grievance necessitated a process of rendering the various authority figures identical to Mubarak. One manner of achieving this was to make explicit the comparison between Mubarak and the person in power. For example, in the lead-up to the 2012 presidential election, the *shabāb al-thawra* organized protests that explicitly compared Shafīq to Mubarak with regards to domination and abuse (Fiki et al., 2012); while in the lead-up to the 30 June 2013 mass demonstration the term "Morsy Mubarak" was explicitly utilized to refer to the president (Revolutionary Socialists, 29 June 2013). The movement would also frequently refer to those at the helm as "tyrant," "dictator," "pasha," or "pharaoh" to serve as shorthand for their grievance while simultaneously effacing the particularities of any one political figure. For example, during the November 2012 political crisis, the Facebook page of the April 6th Youth Movement explicitly avoided calling Morsy by name, instead addressing him only as the "Pharaoh" (April 6th Youth Movement, 22 November 2012); likewise, the Facebook page of the Revolutionary Socialists referred to both Morsy and well as al-Sīsī as "pasha" (Revolutionary Socialists, 21 November 2012; 13 August 2013; 18 November 2013). In utilizing these symbolic images of absolute power from a bygone era, the movement was able to identify quickly not only the complaint itself but also the emphasis on the highly problematic practices of those in power. This process of rendering identical the practice of Mubarak's power with those who came after reached its climax following the military coup, when the movement made explicit the equivalence of *"Ikhwān, ʿaskar, feloul"* (Brotherhood, military, Mubarak regime). This was made obvious in Facebook posts (Revolutionary Socialists,

15 August 2013; 16 August 2013), and in graffiti and other visual symbols that made explicit this equivalence, for example superimposing the faces of Mubarak and the faces of Morsy and al-Sīsī.

"Leave your house. Morsy is Mubarak."
Abou-El-Fadl, 2013

Depiction of the military, Mubarak, and Morsy.
AFP, 2013

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Importantly, it is worth pointing out here that the basis of the grievance was not the lack of sufficient democracy *per se,* or the problems with the constitution or other procedural deficiency, but quite specifically the fact that the practice of power remained largely identical as that under Mubarak and his *niẓām.* The framing of this grievance deliberately placed the identified problem – the continuation of Mubarak's practice of power – against the revolutionary goal of transferring sovereignty to the people. I posit that it is for this reason that one of the movement's most frequently recurring political demands during both the SCAF and Morsy periods, as expressed in statements to the press (for example al-Shorūq, 21 November 2011), was the transfer of sovereignty and the creation of a national salvation government representing a broad cross-section of society, a demand that in essence captures the revolutionary ideal of the people as the source of authority.

Recapturing the Emotions of Tahrir

A quite demonstrative part of prefigurative practice, the three years following the 2011 revolution sees the movement's construction of shared emotions centered largely on the consistent reproduction of collective sentiments experienced on Tahrir Square during the 18 days. The fear barrier had been broken beyond repair (GI5, GI5, GI8), and the continuation of repression and violence seemed mostly incapable of dissuading the *shabāb al-thawra.* Instead, the activists pointedly projected optimism and positivity for the country's future, along with a deep-seated sense of fraternity, similar to the emotions of hope and communitas experienced on the square. Continuously kindling these shared sentiments, especially in light of dwindling political prospects and the onset of extreme polarization, was a means of maintaining enthusiasm about activism as well as belief in its purpose (see also Jasper, 2011). The construction of these emotions of optimism and fraternity were accomplished both by discourse and the re-enactment of space. By constantly returning to the space of the emotions desired – Tahrir Square, Mohamed Mahmoud street – the revolutionary youth movement was able to recapture, albeit fleetingly, the emotions experienced during the 18 days and stimulate continuous motivation.

Optimism

One of the most striking things about speaking with activists from the revolutionary youth movement is the incredible optimism they express about Egypt's future and the capacity to achieve the revolutionary ideals (I5b, I16,

I28, GI7). Even during the bleakest of times, interviewees continuously expressed their belief that things would turn around, that their cause would prevail. During my fieldwork in the autumn 2013 – several months after the coup and the Rabʿa al-ʿAdawiyya massacre, under a nightly military curfew and the start of the crackdown in earnest on the movement itself – interviewees maintained their hopeful outlook and belief that real change was on the horizon. This is also quite visible in Facebook posts. For example, in the aftermath of the first round of the presidential election in 2012, the April 6th Youth Movement posted "there is nothing to worry about... we are free revolutionaries and we will continue the struggle" (27 May 2012) and "don't forget ... you are the heroes... you are free... no one will ever enslave you" (30 May 2012); likewise, the Revolutionary Socialists' Facebook posts also exude this optimism, stating for example "we are coming back" (18 November 2013).

I initially was skeptical of their optimism: could they really still believe that the revolution was on the right path, after nearly three years of increasing social animosity and violence, and the blatant yet popularly celebrated return to power of the military? Perhaps they were expressing this optimism for my benefit. Mindful of my position as a foreign researcher who would be writing a lengthy report on the *shabāb al-thawra*, perhaps they felt the need to massage the message, not to admit how bad things had become and the role they possibly played in bringing about this situation? As the fieldwork continued, however, and as my understanding of their collective interpretations of revolution deepened, I came to see this optimism as genuine, precisely because the path Egypt had undertaken over the past three years corresponded to their understanding of the source of revolutionary change. Each instance of mass mobilization against the ruling authority was proof that the people were conscious of their rights and willing to take to the streets to claim them. The July 2011 sit-in, the November 2012 crisis, and the 30 June 2013 mass mobilization are understood as examples of "revolutionary waves" (I12, I13) that were increasingly important. In their interpretation, the repression of the military in the aftermath of the coup could not change the increasing consciousness of rights and the proven ability of the masses to exert their power. For example, when asked if, in the aftermath of the ouster of Morsy, he now thinks it will be easier to reach the goals of the revolution, one interviewee responds, *"it's easier somehow, yes. People know now there is a way to freedom. They saw it with their own eyes.*

They know the power of changing and they could take out their rulers if they couldn't run the country" (I17).

The process of building this optimism, thus, was inherently linked to the actual act of activism and the return to the spaces of revolutionary change – namely, the street. The enactment of protests and demonstrations, in particular at Tahrir Square, was a means of perpetuating the revolution by prefiguring the revolutionary square, and was as such collectively interpreted as a positive sign that the country was "righting" its revolutionary path. Returning to the streets, and to the major sites of activism, stimulated optimism not only because it emulated the experience of the 18 days but, crucially, because it signified the deepening of the revolutionary struggle. It was precisely during the moments when the achievement of the revolutionary ideals seemed farthest away that the process of returning to the space of revolutionary action could stimulate the greatest feeling of optimism amongst members. This emotion-space dynamic was clearly on display during two moments of my fieldwork: the November 2012 political crisis and the return to Mohamed Mahmoud in 2013 for the annual commemorative protest. During the protracted demonstrations of November 2012, I can attest to an almost giddy sense of anticipation and carnival-like atmosphere that permeated the revolutionary youth as the crisis unfolded and activists re-took to the streets. Likewise, in the days leading up to the 2013 Mohamed Mahmoud commemoration, I sat through a strategy meeting of Kazeboon and witnessed the incredible excitement and optimism the activists exuded in their preparation for a return to the street.

Fraternity

The second major emotion constructed by the revolutionary youth movement in the post-Mubarak period was the sentiment of fraternity linking various members of the movement to one another. Fraternity as a collective emotion is a somewhat abstract concept; while usually synonymous with "brotherhood," I use the term here in the sense attributed by French revolutionaries and their ideal of *fraternité*, implying both affective bonds as well as moral obligations interlinking members of a community. In this way, fraternity as an emotion implies not only the profound sense of kinship ties but also duty to one another. For example, one interviewee states, "I see the whole sacrifices that people have done… their lives, their eyes… I have to come to do this because people sacrificed much more than me… I have to continue" (GI1b). For the revolutionary youth, the collective

sentiment of fraternity is present across the movement, despite differences between constituent groups and the personal rivalries between leaders. In physical meetings with activists, especially in group settings, this shared emotional bond is strikingly visible. The activists hold very close relationships to one another that go past most friendships. They are intimately connected in one another's lives. I spent numerous evenings in Cairo socializing with activists, going to their birthday parties, or drinking tea until late in the night. I was constantly struck by the extent to which they are in one another's constant company, that they have essentially become a new familial unit. I asked about this in one group interview with activists from Masry Hor, who explained,

> GI5a: Before that of course I used to hang out with friends and I didn't do anything but working and hanging out and visiting my relatives and so on, but now it is totally different. I don't do the other things I used to do it before the revolution, it is more committed to the revolution.

> GI5b: Actually you're more committed to this than the job you're getting paid for. And sometimes you let go of a good job opportunity just because there is a stand, a conference… Another thing, it's an interesting angle to look at it. Your friends are changing, your social circle is changing. Like many different people co-mingle for so long and now they're best of friends and so many people that were your best friends, now you just talk to them occasionally, like once a month or twice. So you changed your social sphere, you changed you eco-system, everything (GI5).

In this manner, the shared emotion of fraternity, and especially its dimension of ethical obligation and moral responsibility to one another, served as a counter to the free-rider problem (Olson, 1968): one's motivation to mobilize was in this way enhanced by the mobilization of others, as opposed to diminished.

The process lying behind construction of this collective emotion was undertaken through acts of solidarity, themselves a manifestation of youth practice. The activists in the movement demonstrate remarkable solidarity with one another, in particular when a member is either arrested or killed, or even simply suffers some other personal tragedy. Indeed, it is these demonstrations of solidarity that most powerfully transcend intra-movement differences and infighting. As one of the co-founders of the April 6th-Democratic Front explained during an interview, the movement puts aside any differences whenever a revolutionary youth activist – regardless of

constituent group – is threatened or harmed in order to co-mobilize and demonstrate its support (I11). These acts of solidarity are also visible on the Facebook pages of various constituent groups, where members who were injured or arrested are constantly mentioned along with requests to provide support to them and their families. For example, the Revolutionary Socialists posted in response to the arrest of members, "freedom for detainees, freedom for Ahmad al-Farāsh, tomorrow Ahmad will be interrogated in the prosecution at 10:00, we hope everyone descends in solidarity with him" (20 November 2013) and, "freedom for Mahmoud Talʿat (Tamtam). A member of the April 6th movement in Alexandria – he was arrested in the street and was taken to al-ʿAṭārīn police station a few minutes ago" (27 January 2014). These acts of solidarity are also particularly closely tied to symbolic space. This is why the movement continuously returns to Mohamed Mahmoud street: it is not just to express a collective grievance but an expression of fraternity. This emotional dimension was in fact overtly on display during the November 2013 commemorative protest of the Mohamed Mahmoud battles: the evening prior to the demonstration, the movement gathered at the family house of Gika in order to set up a mourning tent. Importantly, this feeling of fraternity as produced by acts of solidarity did not extend past the movement's members: co-mobilization did not occur, for example, following the massacre of Muslim Brotherhood protesters at Rabʿa al-ʿAdawiyya (I18). In this sense, the emotion and the process by which it was constructed was limited to the *shabāb al-thawra*.

5.2.2 Experimentation, Socialization, and Exclusion

At the second dimension of movement construction, which considers intra-movement processes as related to organizational resources and collective identity development, the revolutionary youth movement's efforts were considerable, and demonstrate the degree to which the movement was consciously shaping itself around the background understandings that "revolutionary youth" had come to encompass. With regards to resources and organizational elements, the construction processes undertaken by the movement depict a continuous learning process, and the attempt to correct perceived errors, mistakes, or deficiencies with regard to the embodiment of youth. This included important efforts at governance restructuring and member training, by-and-large undertaken through iterative experimentation.

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This was particularly visible during perceived times of crisis or abeyance, when the activists would turn their focus inward and place emphasis on internal improvement.

Likewise, the process of collective identity construction depicts how the movement's understanding of revolutionary youth practice came to shape borders of inclusion/exclusion. Of particular importance here is the socialization process that the movement carried out among its members, which essentially involved training activists in the collective interpretations and practices of the *shabāb al-thawra*. In addition, the movement was able to reinforce its collective identity through practices of solidarity, which demonstrated externally the boundaries of inclusion, as well as the practice of exclusion, whereby members were expelled from the movement. It was these deliberative efforts to manifest revolutionary youth in form and content that contributed so importantly to construction at the intra-movement dimension.

Learning Processes in Organizational Construction

In a clear and quite directed effort to manifest the concept of political generation, the various constituent organizations comprising the revolutionary youth movement undertook intensive efforts to reformulate their internal procedures and decision-making processes in a manner that would both increase efficiency while responding to the demands for participation in decision-making by rank-and-file members (I6b, I11, I15, I18). The internal re-structuring of these organizations was based largely on trial-and-error and a process of experimentation, guided by the background understanding of youth practice – a process that was at times met with dissatisfaction, provoking a degree of infighting between members as mentioned earlier in the chapter. These efforts to restructure the individual organizations also included an important component of member training, and specifically the dissemination of political education and activism training in order to strengthen the awareness and tactical skills of new recruits. Beyond the individual organizations, this process of experimentation and the attempt to establish an organizational configuration that responded to precepts of youth practice while maintaining efficacy in the political arena carried over to the coalitions, and specifically influenced how the latest coalition – Gabha Tariq Thawra – was sculpted.

Flowcharts and Procedures

For the constituent organizations pre-dating the 2011 uprising, the massive increase in number of members necessitated a profound rethinking of organizational flowcharts and decision-making processes. Prior to the uprising, groups such as the Revolutionary Socialists, the Justice and Freedom movement, and Gabha Hora comprised only several dozen active members at most; as such, decisions could be taken rather informally during meetings through group discussion, and little distinction was made between regular members and leaders (I19, GI8a). Following the departure of Mubarak, however, these groups swelled to hundreds of members each, or in the case of the April 6th Youth Movement, to several thousand members in Cairo alone. To cope with this sudden onslaught of membership, these organizations imposed member hierarchies that distinguished between historic leaders and new recruits and created internal committees and a division of tasks. April 6th, for example, created a co-founders office, a political office, an administrative office, a media department, a translation department, a public street works office, and nominated spokespersons for the group's official communication with the press, in addition to geographic groups for assembling average members (I6b, I8). The co-founders office, made up of 22 historical members, would meet once per month to discuss strategy, and make recommendations to the political office (which coordinated with other players in the political arena and determines tactics) and administrative offices. As for rank-and-file members, they would gather once per week based on geographical location. The movement as of January 2014 was largely decentralized across Egypt's different governorates: April 6th branches in each governorate were allowed to organize activities and take day-to-day decisions relatively autonomously, although they were required to follow the strategic lines as established by the co-founders (I6b, I8). This type of organizational model – based on the division of tasks and the creation of internal committees and offices – was also adopted by many of the movement's new constituent organizations. The Maspero Youth Union, for example, was structured largely along the same lines, with a political committee, a media committee, a protest organization committee, and a law committee, whereby the political committee was responsible for major decisions, including the appointment of other committee members (I18). Similar models were also adopted by the Justice and Freedom movement, the Revolutionary Socialists, the April 6th-Democratic Front, and (to a slightly different extent) Salafyo Costa (I19, I15, I12, I22b).

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For the various constituent organizations, the process of restructuring and the defining of flowcharts and internal procedures was not a one-off event, but an iterative process undertaken in response to moments of crisis (I6b, I18). Most of the organizations and groups spoken with state that they undertook organizational re-modeling in the aftermath of the 2012 presidential election and the July 2013 military coup (indeed, almost all groups interviewed in the autumn 2013 admitted they were in a deep process of organizational restructuring following the military's reassertion of power). These processes of internal organizational (re)construction were enacted in order to increase effectiveness and as a response to trends of movement decline in both membership and popular legitimacy. The manner in which the different groups decided upon their models reveals a trial-and-error approach and a constant process of learning. The activists freely admit they lack strong organizational skills or procedural knowledge; they utilize an iterative process of organizational re-modeling in order to determine the most adequate internal structures that nonetheless reflect youth practice. As one co-founder of the April 6th Youth Movement explains, "you won't believe it if I told you that it [the internal structure] really came out of us. We used to stay every day, and each of us write two or three papers and put it all together and take all the good ideas and put it down, how it should work and how it should go" (I6b).

These attempts by the movement's various groups to put into place pragmatic internal organizational models that also respond to youth practice have been far from flawless. Many interviewees, including the founders and principal decision-makers of groups such as April 6th, admitted their structures are unwieldy and that internal coordination and communication is greatly hindered. However, the important amount of time and effort that the activists have spent to determine their procedures, flowcharts, and bylaws is interpreted as essential to the movement's action, precisely because they are attempting to embody their understanding of political generation along with the values of revolution. In interviews, activists state that their organizations must reflect the changes they seek, or in essence prefigure revolutionary goals. Salafyo Costa, for example, requires that its leadership committee hold an equal number of Muslims and Christians in order to practice the cohabitation for which it strives (I22b). It is this effort to manifest youth and the revolutionary goals that has so greatly shaped the movement's internal organizational structures, and which has in turn been a source of schism. This

is particularly visible with regards to decision-making procedures and the desire for non-personalized, non-hierarchical practices.

In general, the decision-making procedures adopted by the various constituent organizations of the revolutionary youth movement demonstrate a certain tension between vesting power in the hands of the general assembly (and hence equally distributed across all members) and restricting decision-making authority to the hands of leaders, and more precisely movement founders, only. In practice, this is essentially a tension between the delegating of decision-making to leaders versus direct participation through organization-wide voting. In almost every group interviewed for this thesis, the tendency has been to leave major decisions regarding internal governance and external strategy, along with the right to veto, in the hands of a few (I6b, I12, I15, I18). Most leaders interviewed here deemed such measures necessary in order to avoid mission drift and to ensure that the organization's actions were aligned with revolutionary values. A co-founder of April 6th explains, "the co-founders are the ones who know everything about the movement since it started, and they know how to defend it and how to keep it on the right track… we are the ones who decide what to work on, because we are the ones who know what the movement can do, and what it should do and shouldn't do" (I6b). This sentiment was re-affirmed by the leaders of Salafyo Costa (I22b) and the Revolutionary Socialists (I15).

This tendency to bestow decision-making power to a select few, however, has been the source of important friction within individual groups and has served as a point of sharp criticism between different groups, especially when those in power are unelected. Several interviewees cite a democratic deficit within their organization as a source of important tension and dissatisfaction, especially amongst those who have left the movement or have migrated to different constituent groups (I11, I12, GI4). Likewise, the accusation that leaders have become too enamored with their power came up repeatedly across interviews. In short: the groups' decision-making processes are measured against the bar of youth practice; when an organization or leader displays practices deemed too close to those of the previous generation, infighting and ruptures have emerged. This is most apparent within the narrative of the April 6th-Democratic Front, which was established as an offshoot of the April 6th Youth Movement precisely because of perceived deficiency in youth decision-making procedures. In my interviews with the group's various leaders, emphasis was placed on the frequency of elections and process of leadership selection as evidence of the group's

superior democratic track record and distribution of decision-making power (I11, I12, I13, GI8b).

It should be noted, however, that voting at the level of the general assembly takes places within all the constituent organizations of the movement. Great emphasis is in fact placed on this. Within most groups, voting at the level of the general assembly is utilized to determine leadership in one way or another, regardless of internal flowchart or precise procedure. Just as important, voting at the level of the general assembly is systematically undertaken to determine a group's political position vis-à-vis national electoral instances. Prior to national referendums, parliamentary elections, and the presidential election of 2012, the various constituent groups of the movement all held internal votes to determine the stance the group would take (i.e. whether to boycott or to vote, and if so for which position or candidate) (I8, I12, I15, I17, I22b). Yet while this emphasis on voting and the attempt to promote horizontal decision-making reflected the activists' desire to express their perception of political generation, it also had an inherently destabilizing effect on the organizations themselves. As one interviewee states, "we're not used to democracy, we're not used to elections. The movement [April 6th] did a respectful thing about doing elections... but they didn't organize it right. So people were fighting... it's a fight between hundreds against hundreds inside the movement" (GI4b). In this vein, it was precisely because the various constituent organizations were "non-ideological," meaning more precisely that members represented a variety of different political positions and ideological inclinations not recognized by the organization itself, that the use of general assembly voting was so destabilizing. And as mentioned in the first section of this chapter, voting prior to national electoral instances served to bring forth latent ideological and political tensions between members, without clear means of resolution (I12, I17). Members were expected to toe the line as decided by the general assembly, regardless of their own political preferences (I22b). It is precisely this tension between two ideals of youth practice – non-ideological affiliation and participatory decision-making – that created organizational instability at the intra-movement dimension.

Secrecy and Autonomy

While the movement's constituent groups defined their own particular bylaws, governing procedures, and member rules, two overarching policies common across groups guided the acquisition and use of material resources:

the primacy of secrecy and financial autonomy. Most groups harbored two Facebook pages, one public to project the movement's strategy and actions, and one private where opinion polls and voting took place and where members could communicate behind virtual closed doors. For certain groups, such as Kazeboon, leaders remained largely anonymous (I17); for other groups, the precise location of offices or number of geographic locations remained undisclosed (I8). This use of secrecy was certainly in part a holdover from the Mubarak era and the fear of repression; however, there was also a very strong perception of "infiltration" or "penetration" plaguing the movement. Virtually every activist I spoke with during the course of fieldwork mentioned the problem of *agents provocateurs* planted in the midst of various groups with the express aim of sowing discord and divulging critical information. One interviewee, for example, explains, "they send someone to spy on us, to know what we are thinking of, to know what we are planning and what we are going to do, and what is our strategy in the coming period. These people cause problems in the movement" (I6b). In this sense, although the *shabāb al-thawra* became a widely recognized and celebrated political actor in the aftermath of the 18 days of revolution, and although the movement's primary constituent organizations along with its most important leaders became household names, maintaining a level of secrecy was nonetheless considered paramount in order to protect the movement from security forces and to guard against the divulgence of strategic decisions and plans.

The second major policy guiding the construction of resources concerned finances and the sources of funding. The achievement of financial self-sufficiency was considered hugely important to each group's autonomy, and in this vein finance for activities and publications was largely drawn from membership dues and in-kind donations. Almost every group interviewed here required very modest fees from members (around 20 Egyptian pounds per member, usually less for students), and sought the utilization of offices and work tools from within its membership structure (I5a, I11, I17). Particularly important was the refusal of funding from foreign sources: in order to avoid accusations of foreign links and the existence of potential spies, the various constituent groups systematically avoided finance from foreign NGOs or development organizations, especially American in origin. The various groups did seek and accept, however, funding from private individuals in Egypt, mostly businessmen whom they claimed supported the movement yet chose to remain on the political sidelines (I18).

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The sources of these donations remained strictly confidential, although the activists emphasized that such contributions had no impact on internal decisions or strategies. My questions regarding potential conflicts of interest were either met with confusion or were quickly swept aside; for interviewees, it was only funding of foreign origin that was potentially problematic and therefore was resolutely avoided.

Recruitment and Training

The membership structure of the revolutionary youth after Mubarak's departure, especially in the first six months of the post-uprising period, saw an important shift in terms of member profile: new recruits had little experience with activism outside the flurry of the 18 days of revolution (I6b, I25, GI1). Moreover, these new recruits tended to be younger. Whereas the leaders and founders of the majority of groups with whom I spoke were almost all past their student years and were employed professionals (IT consultants, teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc…), the rank-and-file members recruited after the uprising tended to be either college or even high school students (the youngest interviewee for this research was a high school student aged 16). This was, in part, the result of deliberate recruitment efforts on the part of the constituent groups and their tendency to target the student population. As presented in chapter three, the movement had poor ties with organized labor and thus turned to universities as an obvious recruiting ground; this trend intensified in the post-Mubarak period, as the various organizations comprising the movement were able to campaign openly and work on university campuses. The Revolutionary Socialists and the two April 6th groups in particular were actively recruiting from university campuses, and membership in Cairo in particular drew from 'Ain Shams University, Cairo University, and October 6 University (I8, I15). The initial aim was simply to accumulate numbers, to promote the quantitative growth of the organizations, in part because of the competition and rivalry that existed between them. In interviews with the two April 6th groups, this competition for larger membership comes across quite clearly, especially in the period prior to the 3 July 2013 coup.

In light of these new member profiles, the various organizations of the movement implemented extensive training programs for the new recruits to provide both political education and a skill set for activism, which represented by far the bulk of internal activities put forth by the organizations. Much of this training consisted of presentations of political

ideologies, providing members with an overview of socialism, liberalism, and secularism, among others (I15, I18, I22b). I attended a political training session with Salafyo Costa in October 2012, where participants were watching a presentation on the difference between the Egyptian political left and right with regards to policy. The Revolutionary Socialists, for their part, require members to attend weekly reading sessions in order to educate members on Marxism and its precepts (GI1); the Maspero Youth Union offers political philosophy courses in order to situate their mission and in particular their emphasis on citizenship (I18). One interviewee, a leader in the political office of the April 6th-Demcratic Front, describes the process of training new members,

> We ask them a lot [of questions] and we make some tests to measure their cultural awareness, to measure their political awareness, and to measure their loyalty to our movement. We do a lot of culture lectures and political lectures, and we invite a lot of Egyptian thinkers… from different ideologies. And every month we make a big meeting with our members… to train them when they will speak with other people outside of our movement, what should they do (I12).

As he describes here, a second component of training concerned capacity building within the context of activism. Most organizations spoken with require members to attend leadership training courses. The April 6th Youth Movement also requires new members to participate in training on the methods of mobilization and street action (I6b), and Kazeboon trains new members on tactics of citizen journalism (I17). This emphasis on capacity building and political education demonstrates the movement's effort to construct the type of membership it desires. And in fact, in speaking with new recruits, it is striking the extent to which they adopt the discourse and common interpretation of their organizational affiliation – even more than the founders and historical members of the organizations themselves.

Coalitions

The other major dimension of intra-movement construction with regard to resources during the post-uprising period concerned the operation of coalitions meant to facilitate intra-movement communication and coordination, and to serve as the representative of the *shabāb al-thawra* to the public as well as in negotiations with other political actors. As mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the number of active coalitions increased dramatically in the first months following Mubarak's departure, in large part

as a response to the massive increase in number of constituent organizations but also because of practices of exclusion and rivalries between various constituent groups of the movement (Afify, 2011). The majority of these coalitions were informal and fluctuating in nature: they lacked formal procedures as to decision-making and faced considerable difficulty in determining a common strategy, and their membership was in constant flux. While most of these coalitions either disbanded (or simply faded into non-existence) quickly, a few – namely the Youth of the Revolution Union and the Alliance of Revolutionary Forces – managed to establish a recognized name for themselves in the press and continue operations throughout the period under consideration here. For the purposes of this analysis, however, I will focus on two coalitions only: the Revolutionary Youth Coalition, as the original and flagship coalition of the movement, and Gabha Tariq Thawra, as the last cross-organizational structure established by the movement's constituent groups. As will be shown, these two coalitions were comprised largely of the same member organizations; in terms of operations, however, the internal procedures of Gabha Tariq Thawra attempted to build upon lessons learned from the failures of the Revolutionary Youth Coalition.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Revolutionary Youth Coalition was established during the 18 days, on Tahrir Square, in order to provide a unified voice to the various groups who had organized the 25 January 2011 protest and to establish a singular representative of the "true" revolution during the transition process post-Mubarak. The coalition was comprised of the group behind the ElBaradei campaign, April 6th, the Justice and Freedom movement, former Muslim Brotherhood youth, as well as several independent activists. Over time, the coalition's membership grew to include other groups, including the Progressive Youth Union and a group behind Sabāḥi's presidential campaign, amongst others. The composition of this coalition demonstrated the ideals of youth political practice: the coalition was non-ideological, acting instead as an umbrella bringing together different ideologies under the common interpretation of the revolution's goals and values. However, the coalition also maintained policies of exclusion, which ultimately were detrimental to its ability to assume the role of single representative of the *shabāb al-thawra* by inciting instead resentment amongst non-represented groups. In a statement released upon its dissolution in July 2012, the coalition explains, *"due to some latent fear of attempts to sabotage the new organization, the coalition closed down shop. This was an unjustifiable and serious mistake…. We believe that this had soured contact*

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with other respectable revolutionary groups" (The Arabist, 2012). Beyond this specific problem of representation, a second constraint on the coalition's ability to assume its role of movement coordinator and chief spokesperson stemmed from its internal operations, and in particular the manner in which delegates functioned. As discussed in chapter four, each delegate from a member organization acted as a mouthpiece but lacked any authority to take decisions (I28), hampering the ability to function efficiently. The coalition's decision to disband, in its own words, resulted from the fact that it "was composed of organizations that were completely ideologically different, ranging from the far right to the far left… There were a number of changes that necessitated a new alignment, whereby it could be possible to reach a decision under a different framework" (The Arabist, 2012).

The establishment of a new coalition in October 2013, Gabha Tariq Thawra (Way of the Revolution Front), also known as Thuar, essentially picked up where the Revolutionary Youth Coalition left off. This new coalition was established in response to the greatly constrained context of the post-Morsy period. As explained by one activist participating in the group, "we know the people will eventually come out from their silence and… go out against al-Sīsī… So when the time comes, if there is only military rule in the street, the people will definitely go to the Muslim Brotherhood. We do not want this to happen, so this is exactly why we're doing Gabha" (I16). As indicated here, the new coalition was created to allow the main constituent organizations of the revolutionary youth to combine forces in order to confront the new military regime. In terms of constituent groups, Gabha Tariq Thawra represented the major organizations of the movement, including the two April 6th groups, the Revolutionary Socialists, Masry Hor, and the Justice and Freedom movement, yet continued to demonstrate its ideological diversity by including the moderate Islamist party of Abū al-Futūḥ as well as the Dustūr party (I16, I17, I28, I29).

The new coalition made important changes to its internal procedures in light of lessons learned from its previous experience, most importantly with regards to decision-making processes (I29). Delegates to the coalition were vested with the authority to take decisions on their group's behalf, thereby providing the possibility for more rapid advancement and more efficient meetings. In addition, the internal organizational model of Gabha Tariq Thawra mirrored that of the movement's various constituent organizations: as opposed to the completely flat and undifferentiated participation as visible in the Revolutionary Youth Coalition, the new coalition was internally divided

into various committees responsible for different tasks, as well as regional offices that were granted autonomy with regards to daily tactics. The leadership structure of Gabha Tariq Thawra was concentrated on a Temporary Office that comprised the coalition's founders who were responsible for defining strategy (I16); all other decisions were taken by vote at the level of the general assembly. In interviews carried out with movement members delegated to Gabha Tariq Thawra, the difference in internal procedure was repeatedly cited as evidence that this new coalition would prove more successful than its predecessor. To this point, during interviews in autumn 2013, a high degree of hope was placed in the ability of the new coalition to bridge internal rivalries or divisions in order to overcome the obstacles faced in the post-coup order. The gravity of the situation pushed the various constituent organizations of the movement into creating a formal mechanism for collaboration and coordination. As with the individual constituents, the organizational construction of the movement's primary coalitions depicts a continual learning process and the attempt to reconcile practices of youth with pragmatism and efficiency.

The Socialization of the Revolutionary Youth

In the three years following the ouster of Mubarak and the surge of the *shabāb al-thawra* in Egypt's political scene, the movement's collective identity became solid and well defined. The bases upon which an individual or organization was deemed a member of the movement – in other words, the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion – came to be commonly recognized and consistently applied. Indeed, it was in the aftermath of the uprising that the movement's collective identity was no longer just concerned with ties binding like-minded organizations but the very definition of revolutionary youth itself. As touched upon in the first part of the chapter, these identity borders were entirely related to the collectively held meanings of politics and revolution and the notion of generational battle, as well as the extent to which actions and works fulfilled the archetypes of youth and revolutionary practice.

In nearly every interview conducted during the course of fieldwork, interviewees were asked to define what makes someone a revolutionary and what makes an organization a part of the *shabāb al-thawra*. The responses obtained were strikingly similar across the interviews, despite the lapses in time and different missions and priorities between the various constituent organizations. This is not to say that everyone agreed as to which

organizations in particular should be included; on the contrary, the existence of rivalries and internal disputes led many interviewees to denounce one another as not sufficiently dedicated revolutionary youth. However, parsing the underlying criteria upon which this collective identity is commonly understood, and upon which the right to inclusion is judged, reveals a high degree of consistency. A sample of responses of activists from Masry Hor, the Justice and Freedom movement, Kazeboon, and Gabha Tariq Thawra reveals the importance of both the dimension of youth practice and the adherence to the same interpretation of the revolutionary goals and values to this boundary of inclusion,

> What they have in common is a people who are genuinely working for the objectives of the revolution. They are not seeking any personal gain, they're not looking to be famous. They're just really genuine, down to earth people. And of course the front to defend Egyptian protesters. They're really genuine human beings (I25).

> *

> [The revolutionary] I think he's a one with no problem to die, to take his freedom and justice, social justice, and his dignity (I19).

> *

> A revolutionary? Yes I am… I believe in the revolution with *ʿaīsh, ḥuriyya, al-ʿadāla al-igtimāʿiyya*…. I believe that I could change, I could change for me, my family, and the people around. For the Egyptian people (I17).

> *

> The goals of the revolution, our affiliation to social justice, our affiliation to national independence, our affiliation to popular freedom, being against the military judgment or military domination in the society, our affiliation to transformational justice. And the [most] important to this all, our material affiliation to revolutionary goals. (I29).

As can be gleaned from the above, it is both the dimensions of youth practice, as well as the belief in the same revolutionary goals, that render one a member of the *shabāb al-thawra*. It is precisely for this reason that Tamarod is excluded from the identity borders of the revolutionary youth, as in their collective interpretation Tamarod is more interested in politics than in revolution. Of particular importance to this collective identity is the act of

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self-sacrifice, of giving one's life to the cause. The activist martyr is, thus, the ultimate embodiment of the collective identity of the movement. The repletion of images of martyrs pertains not only to grievances but indeed is also a symbol of the movement's collective identity.

This process of collective identity construction was carried out externally and internally. As discussed in chapter three, the revolutionary youth movement carved external boundaries of inclusion/exclusion through its use of solidarity practices – a process that continued and in fact intensified in the post-Mubarak period. The practice of solidarity, and in particular the very strong acts of co-mobilization carried out with respect to movement-specific battles and commemorations, such as Mohamed Mahmoud street, provided a means to delineate the *shabāb al-thawra* from other actors in the political arena. These acts of co-mobilization to demonstrate support to those jailed or honor the memory of the injured or killed were by-and-large unique to the movement, and thus acted as the most important instances of movement-specific mobilization that was not shared by either bystanders or other political forces. Such instances not only served to distinguish the movement in the broader political arena, but implied delineation between "us" and "them." It was the movement's victims, and, pointedly, not just any Egyptians, who were being honored. In this sense, the close association of the revolutionary youth movement with the symbol of its martyrs – Mina Daniel, Gika, eye patches, Mohamed Mahmoud street – also became a means of constructing an identity frontier. In this sense, the construction of shared emotions and collective identity were closely interlinked.

Beyond this construction of external identity borders, the movement also relied on the socialization of new members, as well as sanctions and expulsions, to ensure that all members adhered to the common interpretations of politics and revolution. As mentioned in the previous section, an important dimension of the movement's self-construction in terms of human resources concerned the administration of training and capacity building to new members; part-and-parcel with this process was the socialization of recruits into the values and practices of the organization in particular and the revolutionary youth movement in general. New members were trained not only on the "how" of activism but on the underlying values that informed their action – in other words, socialization into the practice of youth and revolution. The April 6th Youth Movement, for example, provided new recruits with activism training grounded in the values of non-violence and altruism underlying the common interpretation of youth practice. As one co-

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founder of the group explains, "[non-violence] is the first thing we teach our members. We explain to them that we kept fighting for years by non-violence and that's why we succeeded" (I6b). For interviewees recruited into the movement only since the 2011 uprising, this socialization into the movement's way of thinking and way of doing is critical to their understanding of the revolutionary ideals and the manner by which to achieve them. In discussions with activists, a theme that repeatedly emerges is the importance of participation in the movement to their understanding of what the revolution means. One activist from the Revolutionary Socialists explains the importance of study groups to the development of common interpretations, "you're committed to some ideas but actually when you go further into the ideology of the Revolutionary Socialists and what we say and what we believe in, you get more convinced" (GI1). The socialization of new activists through training served precisely to solidify these common interpretations of politics and revolution.

In addition, the implementation of rules through bylaws, as well as sanctions and expulsions, also contributed to internal collective identity construction. Each constituent group of the movement incorporates a series of rules, usually codified in organizational bylaws, to which members must adhere; these rules are based on the application of movement values and practices, and as such serve as a formal means for ensuring adherence through prefigurative practice. For example, Salafyo Costa requires members explicitly to avoid discussions of religion within the framework of organizational activities and meetings in order to promote tolerance of difference and lack of social differentiation based on religion (I22b); the April 6th Youth Movement, for its part, does not allow members to join a political party, in order to maintain the non-ideological nature of the organization (I6b). Members who disobey rules are subject to sanctions (fines, loss of positions) or in some cases expulsion from the group altogether. This utilization of sanctions and expulsions also applies in cases of non-participation in movement activities and demonstrations.

The use of expulsions as a means of consolidating the collective identity, and more precisely the adherence to revolutionary and youth practice, became far more utilized in the aftermath of the 3 July 2013 military coup. Across interviews, activists explain that, in the face of the al-Sīsī regime and in particular the disillusionment with Tamarod, emphasis shifted from quantity of members to quality. One co-founder of the April 6th Youth Movement, states, "number of members is not everything… You need

trust[worthy] people, you need educated people, you need people [who] know what they need to do and how they need to do it" (I5b) while another interviewee explains that they are expelling members who "entered our movement for the purpose of media, for being an activist, not for our goals, not for our vision" (I12). As implied here, the constituent organizations became far more interested in an individual activist's adherence to the practices of youth and revolution than in their willingness to fight. Recognizing that certain members were less interested in the actual revolution than fighting the authority in power, the constituent groups have attempted to rethink their recruitment policies and cull members who do not fit into the movement's collective identity. In the months following the coup, and especially the Rabʿa massacre, most of the groups interviewed placed a moratorium on recruitment, were in the process or re-writing their bylaws, and were increasing their internal training and emphasis on socialization (I5b, I12, I16, I18). The processes associated with collective identity construction were, as such, leading to more exclusiveness and restrained membership within the constituent organizations of the *shabāb al-thawra*.

5.2.3 Practicing Revolutionary Pureness

Finally, at the third dimension of movement construction, which considers the perception of opportunities and allies/opponents along with the development of external strategies, the processes of construction that the movement undertook during the three years since the 2011 uprising were largely shaped by the understanding of generational battle, the source of revolutionary change, and prefigurative practice of revolution. The objective in this section is not to provide a detailed overview of the movement's ever-shifting perception of opportunities, nor to list every strategic move initiated since Mubarak's departure; rather, I seek here to draw forth broad themes regarding the construction processes themselves, and more precisely how opportunities and other players were perceived and assessed, and the underlying precepts guiding strategic choices. With regard to political opportunity, the emphasis here is placed on two axes: the importance of discursive environment to the perception of a positive opportunity, and the utilization of what I categorize as cross-movement, tacit alliances. In both cases, these perceptions and assessments of context were related to the movement's understanding of the conditions for revolution; nonetheless, they

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point to subtle contradictions within the activists' understanding of revolutionary change. With regard to strategy, the analysis here emphasizes how the movement's understanding of politics vs. revolution came to guide strategic action. In particular, the discussion elaborates how the concept of "revolutionary pureness" translated into a reactionist and rejectionist strategy. In this way, the movement's strategy attempted to recreate the conditions of mass mobilization and the consciousness of the masses rather than proactively proposing political programs. This backward-looking strategic emphasis, however, led to important shortcomings that only began to change at the very end of the period in question, as the movement went into abeyance and began rethinking its strategies altogether. As will be shown, this last phase of strategic construction began to reveal the inherent tensions between revolutionary youth practice and the achievement of goals.

Constructing Opportunities for Revolution

In the three years under analysis here, the revolutionary youth movement's perception of its context – the opportunities for action and the assessment of other political players – varied according to the specific authority figure in power and the various contextual dynamics in play at a given moment. In this sense, it is somewhat difficult to provide a snapshot account of the movement's perceived political opportunities in the period of February 2011-25 January 2014, given the highly fluctuating and radically shifting political evolution in Egypt over the course of these three years. Nonetheless, it is possible to cite two broader trends regarding how these perceptions and assessments were formed – in other words, the underlying interpretive processes behind the construction of political opportunity. First, the decisive factor shaping the activists' perception of opportunity for action was their estimation of the discursive environment and the reception of narratives on the part of the Egyptian people en masse. In speaking with activists over the course of three field missions and two different regimes, the manner in which they perceived opportunity was not particularly based on the issue of repression or changes within the cadre of elites, or even on the international context and its degree of support to either the movement or the authority in power. Rather, the critical factor was how the activists perceived average Egyptians' understanding of the political situation and their potential receptiveness to the movement's message – a hallmark of their perception of opportunity in the Mubarak era as well (see chapter three). This emphasis placed on audience and the currency of the movement's oeuvre within

society in general is reflective of the activists' understanding of the source of revolution. It is when the activists perceived a discursive environment favorable to the *shabāb al-thawra* that they assessed positive opportunities for action. Second, as to political players, the manner in which the movement assessed the other primary actors – the SCAF/military, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the opposition elite (ElBaradei, Sabahī, Abū al-Futūḥ, Moussa, amongst others) – also demonstrates an interesting degree of fluctuation. While these players were generally assessed through the prism of the movement's understanding of politics, the ally/opponent dichotomy was blurred at key moments, leading the movement to see former enemies as potential partners.

Discursive Environment

With regard to discursive environment, the role of the media, the nature and intensity of regime discourse, and the general public's attitude toward the *shabāb al-thawra* figured into the movement's perception of either a positive or negative opportunity for action. For the activists, the period of SCAF rule proved far less propitious to action than the year of Muslim Brotherhood power, precisely because the discursive environment was much more closed (I7, I12). In the movement's collective interpretation, the 16 months of SCAF rule were marked by the rampant proliferation of military lies and a "media mafia" (I3) that largely toed its line, along with a public perception of the military as national hero and savior of the Egyptian state (I17, GI4). Numerous activists in fact cite this outpouring of support for the military (and not the SCAF *per se*) as an obstacle to action. As one interviewee explains, "it was harder for us under the ruling of SCAF because the Egyptian people have a culture of loving the military" (I12). For the activists, this context of media propaganda and a general public supportive of the army created a discursive environment where the movement's revolutionary message, and in particular its denunciation of the transition process as deviating from the revolution's true path, fell upon deaf ears. This was compounded by the dissemination of discourse on the part of the SCAF that sought to undermine the revolutionary youth's popular legitimacy by making accusations of foreign infiltration or likening the *shabāb al-thawra* to petty criminals. For example, the SCAF's campaign to discredit the April 6th Youth Movement by promulgating rumors of foreign backing and the potential role of the United States or even Israel's Mossad in the organization were interpreted by the movement as a clear attempt to discredit it in the eyes of the general public

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(I6b). Another interviewee explains this closed discursive environment and the various reasons for which opportunity for action was constrained during the period of SCAF rule, stating, "in December 2011, people had already started to turn against the revolutionaries… you've been tagged a thug… the problem is that the media was controlled, as usual, like in any dictatorship" (GI6a). As can be noted here, the crux of the issue is not just the control of the media or the perpetuation of discourse de-legitimizing the revolutionary youth, but more importantly how this affects the public at large and, hence, diminishes the possibility of adoption of revolutionary subjectivity by the people. Without an audience receptive to its message, the movement's ability to undertake revolutionary practice and stimulate change via bottom-up processes is sharply reduced. This closed discursive environment during the SCAF period, and in particular the difficulty of establishing support amongst the population in general, was confirmed by numerous other interviewees, who all agreed that opportunities for action and the capacity for mobilization were more difficult under the first period of military rule than under President Morsy (I3, I6b, I7, I9, I12, GI6).

For the activists, the discursive environment under the year of Muslim Brotherhood rule was increasingly favorable to the movement. With regards to the media, the Muslim Brotherhood was seen as having far less control and ability to promote a positive image of itself in the press; on the contrary, the activists state that many media figures were expressly against the Brotherhood, thereby creating a natural stream of anti-Morsy slant. One interviewee explains, "when the Muslim Brotherhood came to rule, they already had their enemies, the media was their enemy" (I17) while another states, "SCAF had the state media justifying everything, even the military crimes... during Morsy, this was less of course, and the state media was kind of against them" (I15). Likewise, in their perception, the general public (extremely divided at the moment of the presidential election) was either directly against the Islamists or, in the very least, harbored deep suspicion of the group. As one interviewee from the Revolutionary Socialists elaborates, "[the people] were demanding the government to step down and Morsy to step down…. they started demanding economic things and then it expanded to political things. So during Morsy's time the consciousness of the people was really, really high" (I16). Over the course of the year, this positive discursive environment was in fact intensified as the Muslim Brotherhood became increasingly unpopular with the descent into economic catastrophe and the creeping sense of insecurity (I4, I6a, GI8). The Brotherhood's lack of

control over the bureaucracy[26] was interpreted as contributing to this positive discursive environment as the Egyptian public placed blame on Morsy for various woes, thereby contributing to the creation of an audience receptive to the movement's message.

In the period following the 3 July 2013 military coup, the movement experienced what it viewed as the most difficult constraints to action, precisely because the discursive environment was so closed and the general public so hostile to their message (I5b, I13, I16, GI6). The months following the coup were marked by the strict crackdown on the media and the overwhelming popular support bequeathed to the military and its new order. Photos and posters of al-Sīsī were displayed everywhere, hanging in offices and on the sides of buildings as well as in private homes, and a veritable cult of personality around the general was palpable. The rise of the new military order under al-Sīsī was also characterized by ultra-nationalism and discourses of terrorism as a means of discrediting political opponents, and namely the Muslim Brotherhood, which was named by the regime and in the press as an enemy of state. To this point, the term "terrorism" and the expression "fifth-column" became regular vocabulary to describe dissenting voices and any form of opposition to the new regime.[27] This was combined with ubiquitous xenophobia, with foreigners being regularly viewed as infiltrators; I myself, as an obvious foreigner, was met at times with overt hostility when conducting interviews in public areas with my tape recorder visible.

Just as important, the regime's characterization of the political situation created a sharply bipolar context in which only two mutually exclusive positions were possible: one could either be pro-Sīsī or pro-Brotherhood. The

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[26] The MB-FJP found itself, upon assuming power, faced with an almost entirely unreformed bureaucracy still largely populated by Mubarak-era technocrats (Pioppi, 2013:59), with each ministry seeking to retain autonomy from the executive as well as the structural privileges developed under Mubarak's system (Brown, 2012a). Despite the attempt to accommodate the bureaucracy, resistance to Morsy and reform remained rampant and was particularly venomous within the judiciary and the Ministry of the Interior (Brown, 2013). In this vein, the country's police force enacted a deliberate strategy to foster insecurity, fueling massive discontent with the Brotherhood.

[27] Even notable liberals repeated this discourse: the renowned author Alaa al-Aswany, for example, justified the extreme repression of the Muslim Brotherhood on the basis that they were traitors to Egypt (Azimi, 2014).

political discourse also heavily equivocated what had transpired on 3 July 2013 as the continuation of 25 January 2011. In this vein, a slipshod monument was erected in Tahrir Square in November 2013 to commemorate the "martyrs of the two revolutions" (only to be torn down by angry protesters less than 24 hours later), and commemorations on 25 January 2014 were co-opted by the new regime, as demonstrators cheerfully sung the praises of the army and the police and called on al-Sīsī to run for president, replacing the revolutionary slogans. Given this, the movement's critique of the military order was framed in the media and by the regime as support to the Muslim Brotherhood and de-stabilizing to the state. Press accounts referred to the movement's constituent organizations as a "fifth column" of the Brotherhood and as counter to the revolution. In commenting on this regime discourse, one activist states, "how can we interact with this and send a different message to the people? It's like a Cold War: the military and the state, and the revolutionaries" (I29). For the movement, this discursive environment neutralized its ability to proffer an alternative message or raise any form of contestation. In a discussion, one activist from the political office of the Revolutionary Socialist explains why the post-coup discursive environment was such a constraint to the movement's action, "some people are thinking that the state is currently facing terrorism… There is no terrorism. It's a concept that the state had to imprint in the minds of the people… The broader spectrum of people, I believe they still believe in the revolution, but they may be confused" (I16). As he makes clear here, the essential problem with a closed discursive opportunity is the negative effect it has on the movement's potential audience, and as such its ability to stimulate broad support and gain critical mass struggling for the same interpretation of the revolutionary ideals. This theme was reiterated in most interviews that were undertaken after the military coup. As will be shown in the discussion on strategy, the shaping of the discursive environment and the attempt to prevail over regime discourse represented an important part of the movement's strategy in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising, and directly responded to the activists' focus on the masses and the popular claiming of rights as the only viable means of achieving the revolutionary ideals.

Allies/Opponents

The relationship that the activists cultivated over the course of three years towards other major players in the political arena is not entirely straightforward. While as of 25 January 2014 the revolutionary youth had

identified the military, the *feloul*, and the Muslim Brotherhood as outright opponents with regard to achievement of the revolution (I13, I27a; Mada Masr, 2014), during other crucial moments these players were given the benefit of the doubt or indeed treated as implicit allies. The same is also true, albeit to a lesser degree, for the other primary political leaders in Egyptian politics, and especially those who comprised the National Salvation Front. This fluidity in the relationship with other players reveals the impact of urgency or perceived threat on the calculation of allies and opponents. Indeed, I posit here that the structure of implicit allies as constructed by the revolutionary youth movement is directly related to the perception of threat.

In general, the movement's assessment of other political actors was based almost entirely on the degree to which each actor's action was in service of the revolution, or on the contrary constituted simply "playing politics" and thus the maintenance of the status quo and personal power gain. In this sense, players were viewed as allies if they were perceived to practice revolution and not politics. This is precisely why Tamarod in the post-coup period came to be rejected by the movement. When asked about the movement's assessment of the Muslim Brotherhood, for example, one activist reveals how players are evaluated against the measures of politics versus revolutionary practice, stating, "the Muslim Brotherhood are known to be traitors. They really betrayed the revolution… They are our enemy now. They are like Mubarak exactly, and we fight them like Mubarak exactly. And we will keep fighting them like Mubarak and more" (I6b). Nonetheless, with regard to tacit collaborations, the movement has proven more flexible. The activists were willing, at least initially, to work with the Muslim Brotherhood and then extend a cautious line of faith to Morsy upon his election (I5a, I9); likewise, despite the disastrous first outing with the SCAF in the collective memory of the activists, they were willing to embrace the military's intervention to depose the Muslim Brotherhood (I17, GI4). Similarly, while the movement came to reject the National Salvation Front because of its incorporation of *feloul* (I14) and the interest elites such as Sabāḥi and ElBaradei displayed for personal gain (I25), they nonetheless incorporated Abū al-Futūḥ into Gabha Tariq Thawra. In these cases, the perception of others as evaluated against the measure of practice did not necessarily change; however, the willingness to collaborate did, at least tacitly. I argue that the seeming shift in the perception of allies and opponents resulted not from a reassessment of the actor or a reattribution of goals and motivations,

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but a perception of imminent threat that allowed for the emergence of cross-movement, tacit alliances.

The term alliance is perhaps somewhat misleading, as it implies a form of institutionalized or formal agreement; in fact, alliances can manifest in a variety of formats and degrees of explicitness (Rucht, 2003). Understanding differences in alliance type is important for adding nuance to the concept and thus increasing analytical leverage. As opposed to within-movement alliances, in which members are located in the same camp, cross-movement alliances do not necessarily share the same values and/or collective identity, nor is there the same depth of affinity. In some cases, cross-movement alliances occur within "movement families" (della Porta and Rucht, 1995:230), which share certain values and/or organizational overlaps, even if specific objectives diverge, thereby permitting the formation of alliances without major compromise on ideological points. In other cases, however, cross-movement alliances occur between groups with much larger points of divergence, where the alliance is based only on the existence of one shared, and often short-term, goal. Such alliances are much more fragile and likely to breakdown as a result of irreconcilable ideological differences. Moreover, they can pose an insidious threat to alliance partners: in allying with ideologically disparate groups, alliance members risks diluting their key ideational or symbolic dimensions (van Dyke, 2013). Indeed, alliance with ideologically opposed groups can compromise identities via association with "tainted" allies (Meyer and Corrigall-Brown, 2005:331), which can in turn weaken a movement's capacity to recruit or maintain a moral high ground. Tacit alliances, for their part, are not publicly acknowledged and instead are manifested through acts of support. Such alliances are similar to inter-state alignment as theorized by Snyder (1997:6-16). Alignments identify mutual opponents and friends via perceived interests, capacities, and behaviors. Expectations of support, for their part, are established and reinforced through the "pattern of alignment" (1997:7), which includes a variety of demonstrations of informal, non-binding cooperation, such as co-mobilization and the release of statements that demonstrate some degree of support.

I argue that the movement's seeming support extended to players such as the military during the coup of 2013 or Abū al-Futūḥ's Islamist party should be understood along these lines: the activists' collective interpretation of the players themselves had not changed; rather, they perceived an imminent threat to the revolution itself, and as such were willing to accept

some form of implicit cooperation for the sake of a proximate goal. For example, with regards to the ouster of Morsy, the revolutionary youth movement's collective interpretation of the Muslim Brotherhood's rule emphasized the entrenchment of the Islamist party (I6b, I19) and its insidious changes in the nature of Egyptian society (I18). Interviewees stress that under the Brotherhood, the achievement of the revolution was at "not zero, minus" (GI8a). Given this, the removal of the Brotherhood from power was collectively understood as a means of regaining the revolution, and as such became the movement's proximate goal. To this end, the activists were willing to work with a variety of actors for the purpose of achieving this short-term objective. As one activist explains, "we are now all working with [everyone]. It makes us closer to our aim, to make Morsy resign" (I19). For at least some activists, this willingness to work in cross-movement fashion even extended to the military. In one revealing discussion, for example, two activists admit, "we were talking about who was going to take Morsy down. We knew that no one was going to take him down except Sīsī" and "all of us working with Tamarod, we have the same idea: that we want the military to come in Cairo and take Morsy" (GI4).

I argue that this logic of imminent threat and proximate goal helps illuminate why the *shabāb al-thawra* do not view the 3 July military intervention as a coup. This same logic was also present in the post-coup period, and specifically in the willingness to work with non-movement actors through Gabha Tariq Thawra. Interviewees repeatedly confirmed that they must work with all players against al-Sīsī in order to combat the new military-regime and reassert revolutionary action (I5b, I13, I16, I29). As one activist states, "we need to work with everyone… the revolution must come back, we can get it back with this coalition" (I5b). They acknowledge that such collaborations are short-term in nature and that inherent differences with regard to long-term objectives and the interpretation of revolutionary values will ultimately cause these fragile alliances to break down (GI6). As one member of Gabha Tariq Thawra explains, "in the future, we will be divided on different political agendas or different ideologies, this is normal" (I29). Nonetheless, they are willing to re-align their relationships in the short-term in order to face the overwhelming threat to the revolution. Such calculations demonstrate certain limitations with regard to the activists' broader rejection of politics, and a degree of breakdown in the capacity to maintain the strict practice of revolutionary youth. Yet despite the obvious dilemmas embedded within these choices, the movement has placed emphasis on the construction

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of the conditions for revolution rather than longer-term strategic planning. This is reflected in the movement's broader strategies during the period in question, which I turn to next.

Reactive and Rejectionist Strategy

Despite viewing themselves as the vanguard of the revolution, and despite having carved a distinct and influential niche in the political arena, the external strategy put into place by the revolutionary youth movement in the years following the 2011 uprising was plagued with shortcomings, limiting the activists' ability to achieve their objectives and institutionalize gains. The movement's strategy was largely "reactive" in nature (I9). The activists adopted a defensive position designed to counter the strategic moves of other players and political evolutions that they deemed counter to the revolutionary goals; however, the movement by and large failed to undertake pro-active action that was specifically designed for the achievement of these same goals. As a result, their strategy tended to focus on short-term and immediate issues as opposed to the long-term objectives of the revolution, and comprised rejectionist demands as oppose to forward-looking proposals. These characteristics of their strategy reveal a profound tension between the movement's understanding of the sources of revolutionary change (a bottom-up process involving changes in consciousness and prefiguration of the revolution) and their focus on the authority in power. One activist from Masry Hor hints at this tension, stating, "working on awareness and other social issues is working from the ground up. I don't believe that is the time for this… If you're thinking that during Muslim Brotherhood reign or Mubarak's or whatever, that they will enable you to do any of this and get anything done, you're mistaken" (GI5b). Essentially, the activists' strategic emphasis was on establishing the necessary conditions for pursuing the revolutionary aims, which was compounded by their delineation of generational spheres of action and hence avoidance of formal entry into institutional politics. The movement's strategy consisted of discursive efforts designed to respond to regime discourse while continuously promoting the revolutionary slogans as a means of maintaining the movement's "brand," as well as field strategies for street action designed to replicate the mass mobilization of Tahrir Square and the 18 days.

Discourse and Slogans

Given the movement's perception of opportunity as linked to the assessment of the discursive environment and the potential receptiveness of its audience, one important dimension of strategy consisted of responding to the type of political and (anti)revolutionary discourse as proffered by the authority in power and media. This was in fact the entire mission of certain groups, and in particular Kazeboon, whose action was aimed at exposing military, and later Brotherhood, falsehoods and crimes through the diffusion of films and documentary evidence to the public (I17, GI6). In general, the revolutionary youth movement's discourse focused on denouncing the authority in power, blaming the regime for various problems, and claiming that the current political situation was counter to the revolution and – critically – to the demands and expectations of the Egyptian people. In this way, the movement's discursive strategy aimed to create a dichotomy between the authority in power and the people writ large, while also maintaining the premise that the *shabāb al-thawra* spoke on behalf of the masses. Such efforts sought to undermine regime discourse while at the same time generating the idea of mass consensus around the same revolutionary goals. For example, the movement's strategic discourse surrounding the November 2011 protests clearly diagnosed the SCAF as the source of instability and economic hardship while also proclaiming that the junta's political management failed to meet the revolutionary expectations of the people. On the Facebook pages of the movement's various constituent groups were statements such as, "to the military council... stop the bloodshed… leave" (April 6th Youth Movement, 22 November 2011). Likewise, statements made by the Revolutionary Youth Coalition to the press blamed the country's economic problems on the government's failure to restore security (and not protests or workers' strikes, as per official discourse), stating "all this talk is propagated by the military council, state media and the government to turn people against the revolution and its demands" (Fam, 2011). Such discursive content is repeated at numerous different occasions, as visible in both Facebook as well as statements to the press. At the commemorative protests marking the three anniversaries of the 2011 uprising, the various constituent groups and coalitions issued statements that explicitly placed blamed for the chaotic and socio-economically disastrous environment on the authority in power, denouncing their rule as diametrically opposed to the goals of the revolution while also placing the "people" in a hostile dyad against the regime. This included statements such as "the military has mismanaged the

transition period and has failed to preserve the dignity of the Egyptian people" (Halawa 2012); "the country is burning… the president is the first responsible for what is happening in the country, and it is his responsibility to take the country out of the dark tunnel it has entered because of the absence of a clear vision in running the country" (April 6th Youth Movement, 27 January 2013); and "the regime seeks to suppress the revolution in favor of a handful who are seeking power" (al-Masry al-Youm, 2014).

Alongside this attempt to undermine regime discourse, the movement also continued to use the same slogans as developed during the 18 days, thereby establishing a degree of "brand recognition" while maintaining its emphasis on dignity and social justice. Indeed, very little innovation with regard to slogans was undertaken during the post-Mubarak period (I5b, I12, I17). The slogan "bread, freedom, social justice" became ubiquitous and was utilized during all protests and demonstrations – regardless of the actual context or specific demands being made. For example, the movement's protest in commemoration of the Mohamed Mahmoud battle in November 2013 was specifically carried out to demand justice for the victims of repression and the restructuring of the Ministry of the Interior, yet utilized the 2011-era slogan deliberately to identify the *shabāb al-thawra*. In this sense, the iconic slogan of the 2011 uprising became indivisible from the revolutionary youth movement, and stood as form of shorthand for the movement's range of grievances, claims, and demands. Likewise, the slogan "the people demand the downfall of the regime" was refurbished with each new authority figure in power, becoming the demand for the downfall of military rule or the Muslim Brotherhood (I6b, I17). This reiteration of the same slogans is in part a reflection of the activists' interpretation of the stalled or unachieved revolutionary process. As one interviewee states, "we will not change our slogan because this slogan still has not been achieved" (I12). Related to this, the continuous use of the uprising's slogans also reflects the activists' understanding of a prolonged revolutionary process and the simple replacement of figureheads as opposed to radical change in power and state-society relations (I6b, GI6). The constant return to the same slogans was a communication of the unachieved revolution.

Street Action
As mentioned in the first part of the chapter, the activists' dichotomizing of politics and revolution and their respective spheres of action translated into external strategy mostly limited to the street and the organization of protests,

demonstrations, and other field tactics taking place outside of electoral instances or institutionalized political venues. As one interviewee states, "we focus our movement on the street only. We left the elections and the previous political participation for the regime and the others working against the revolution" (I28). The strategic rationale for street action was the recreation of Tahrir Square: it was in recapturing the collective consciousness of demands and rights, social de-complexification, and the transfer of sovereignty to the people that activists believed could produce the necessary conditions for fulfilling the revolution. Given these background understandings, a major dimension of the movement's strategy was the attempt to organize instances of mass mobilization for dignity and social justice, utilizing the same space (Tahrir Square) as well as the same tactics (sit-ins, encampments). This constant return to the same space of the revolutionary moment and the effort to assemble average Egyptians around a "revolutionary" and non-"political" message was captured in the movement's repeated calls for a *milyuniyya*, literally a gathering of millions for the purpose of contestation and the reclamation of rights – the essence of revolutionary prefigurative practice as they understand it. Indeed, the term *milyuniyya* became an important element of the activists' vocabulary when disseminating information about their planned instances of mobilization or recounting outcomes of protests. Looking through statements to the press as recorded by al-Shorūq, the term is used by representatives of either the constituent organizations or the coalitions of the movement at the July 2011 sit-in, the November 2011 protest, the November 2012 protests, the 30 June 2013 protest, as well as the commemorations on 25 January in 2012 and 2013. For example, with regards to the November 2011 protests against the SCAF, a representative of the April 6th Youth Movement made the statement, "millions in the crowd have been successful and managed to deliver a message to the military council to the effect that the revolution was still present in the hearts of the people" (Khaiyal and Al-Jandi, 2011). This strategic effort to call for participation in the millions, or indeed to purport that millions had heeded the call, was directly related to the activists' understanding of the source of revolutionary change and the need for collective, bottom-up action outside of institutionalized politics.

To achieve this strategy of recreation of the 18 days, protests were designed utilizing the same frames and field tactics as during the revolution. The July 2011 sit-in provides a quintessential example. The movement organized a mass protest and sit-in on Tahrir Square under the titles "The

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Revolution First" and "The Poor First." This event was framed as specifically non-ideological and not concerned with particular political battles, focusing instead on the repetition of the revolutionary demands. The Facebook page of the April 6th Youth Movement, for example, advertised the event with the following,

> Now is not the time to disagree with each other about what should be done first, elections or drafting the constitution. Also, the time has not yet come for starting the competition between different potential presidential candidates. Demands of the protest: 1- Prompt delivery of justice. 2- Purging of state institutions. 3- Honor the martyrs and the injured of the 25 January Revolution. 4- Liberty. 5- Social justice. 6- Judicial independence. 7- Community participation. 8- Dignity (April 6th Youth Movement, 27 June 2011).

This effort to recreate the revolutionary moment also figured into the activists' planning of the 25 January commemorative events and the 30 June 2013 protest: in all cases, the movement's mobilization efforts stressed dignity and social justice, with specific emphasis on the poor and negligence on the part of the ruling authority, as well as the non-ideological and non-political (as per their understanding of the term) nature of demands. Likewise, the demonstrations involved marches through various disadvantaged neighborhoods and emanated from mosques, converging upon Tahrir Square and terminating in sit-ins and the establishment of overnight camps. For example, the commemorative protest on 25 January 2012 involved a variety of marches towards Tahrir Square (April 6th Youth Movement, 23 January 2012, 24 January 2012; al-Masry al-Youm, 26 January 2012); while, the 25 January 2013 protest focused on the issues of poverty and lack of social justice (April 6th Youth Movement, 24 January 2013; Revolutionary Socialists, 24 January 2013, 25 January 2014). And much as with the 2011 uprising itself, this strategic effort to gather the masses around a common vision of revolution leaned more towards a backward-looking rejection of the current political order rather than a forward-looking proposal for the achievement of the revolutionary ideals.

This strategy for street action, however, was in part hampered by the competition that emerged in the post-Mubarak period over control of Tahrir Square as site of protest. For the activists, Tahrir Square and its exclusive association with the *shabāb al-thawra* was necessary in order to maintain symbolic importance and the ability to assemble masses behind their particular interpretation of the revolution as inherently tied to their lived

experience of the 18 days. Yet protest on Tahrir Square was no longer the sole domain of the movement: the Muslim Brotherhood, for example, organized near-weekly Friday demonstrations on the square in 2011 and 2012; likewise, the al-Sīsī regime utilized Tahrir as the site to legitimize its rule and the equivocation of the military coup with the continuation of the revolution. As one interviewee explains, "the Muslim Brotherhood after the 18 days, every Friday they demonstrated in the millions in Tahrir Square, every week. So the demonstrations lost their meaning" (I8). In addition, the general weariness with constant demonstrations and political upheaval over time, and the perception that "the revolution" is "chaos" (I11) reduced the ability to successfully replicate the 18 days (I14). As one interviewee states, "people were so enthusiastic, they wanted to do anything, they wanted to help and share and go to the street and fight with us… Now, no. People in Egypt are not used to politics, are not used to staying in the streets. They don't have a long breath, and our fight needs a very long breath" (I6b). This competition over both the physical and symbolic control of the square, along with the protest-weariness of the general public, pushed the revolutionary youth towards innovation of tactics in order to recapture the interest and imagination of the general public (I8, I16, I17). In this vein, the utilization of a signature campaign for Tamarod was viewed by the activists as a worthwhile venture precisely because it represented innovation at the tactical level (I19, I25). Nonetheless, for the movement, the purpose of various street tactics and innovations in the repertoire of contention was to recreate the revolutionary conditions in order to allow the revolution to occur by the people, and not via top-down processes of reform.

Limitations and New Strategic Directions
While the movement's strategy at the discursive and tactical levels remained largely derived from the activists' background understandings and in particular the delineation between politics and revolutionary practice, there was a palpable degree of dissatisfaction with this strategy among the activists, as well as a realization that the lack of a concrete and forward-looking strategy was a hindrance to the movement's success (I9, GI4, GI6). As one interviewee stated, "surely we will not change our slogans, but we have to change our techniques and methods to reach these slogans" (I13). In interviews, many of the activists cited that while they all agreed on the overarching objectives and values of the revolution (that there was no disagreement about the meaning of revolution), the non-ideological nature of

the movement prevented the ability to offer concrete proposals. As one interviewee states, "we're always in the street, we're always on the ground… people have no notion of what's to come and how to get there, it's a big problem" (GI5b). Increasingly over time, however, this emphasis on broad demands and rejection as opposed to concrete proposals became a source of frustration within the movement, and became a reason for defection. One interviewee, a founding member of the April 6th Youth Movement, explains his decision to leave the group precisely because of this absence of effective strategy, stating, "the lack of vision after toppling Mubarak until starting the problems with the SCAF made a strategic vacuum for the movement…. We're working for toppling the head of the state, then we are going into a strategic vacuum… until we find a new enemy and start working against this new enemy. It is reactive, not pro-active" (I9). In other words, the strategic effort of mass mobilization was not aimed at developing a constituency behind a common program or set of policies, but around rejection of the current power arrangement for failure to meet revolutionary goals. Indeed, looking through the primary demands put forth by the revolutionary youth movement during the largest moments of mobilization over the course of three years, what stands out is the rejection of those in power precisely for failure to achieve the goals of the revolution and for continuing the practices of the Mubarak regime; absent, however, were concrete proposals for the conversion of "dignity" and "social justice" into concrete policy. In this sense, the movement was simultaneously demanding that the authority in power respond to revolutionary claims while also rejecting their very authority.

This strategy of somewhat contradictory claim-making only began to change in the aftermath of the 3 July 2013 military coup, as the movement went into a period of abeyance and re-organization for the commemorative marches on Mohamed Mahmoud street in November 2013. Across interviews, the activists confirmed that they were shifting strategies in order to make specific proposals for the conversion of dignity and social justice into concrete policies (I5b, I10, I15, I28, GI6). One interviewee explains, "we put [forth] alternatives, we are not just criticizing what happened, and we send projects to the authorities. As we criticize corruption, we will build a new country" (I10). This strategic shift reveals a political learning process, and an awareness that simply making demands while rejecting those in power could not achieve the revolution. During a strategy meeting that I attended

with activists from Kazeboon, one activist explained to me this change in strategy,

> This is actually about bread and freedom and social justice and human dignity, and these are the things people died for. But we didn't want to feel that people died for just slogans and chants that didn't have substance, they did have substance. So the idea was to collect the substance that are related to these four chants with real projects [or] draft laws. Because how can you call it a revolution if the revolution does not rule? And the revolution will only rule through laws and making changes on the ground… So we're not just people standing and protesting in the street, we're actually offering (GI6a).

This strategy was also adopted by Gabha Tariq Thawra, for virtually identical reasons (I27b, I29). The movement's strategy for achieving revolutionary ideals thus only began to change after almost three years of post-Mubarak political turmoil. Alongside this was the dawning awareness that adherence to non-ideological contestation and claim-making was perhaps causing a permanent strategic impasse. During the last set of interviews conducted in autumn 2013, some activists began admitting that striving for the revolutionary goals without an ideology was perhaps impossible and even detrimental to the achievement of goals (GI4, GI6). As one interviewee states, "in Egypt nowadays, you must have [an ideology]. When I connected to 6th of April, first I loved to not have an ideology, but nowadays you must have one" (GI4a). In essence, the movement's lack of concrete strategy and failure to achieve goals was coming into confrontation with at least one dimension of youth practice. The extent to which the "revolutionary purity" of action could be maintained was being called into question by the activists, leading to new ruptures and disputes. By 25 January 2014, where the empirical research for this project terminates, the movement had found itself at a crossroads where the collective understanding of political generation and revolution, and their translation into specific practices as embodied by the *shabāb al-thawra,* seemed to potentially collide.

Concluding Remarks
In considering the tumultuous and rapidly shifting political context in the first three years following the ouster of Mubarak, this chapter has provided insight into the political decisions of the revolutionary youth in the aftermath of the uprising, and as such has helped respond to the puzzles posed in the introduction to this chapter. One of the most important conclusions of the chapter concerns the revolutionary youth's understanding of the generational

battle, in which the attributed meaning to politics stands counter to the revolution and involves entirely different spheres of action and stakes. The *shabāb al-thawra* understand the generational battle not as an inter-generational contest over power or participation but as a much more profound struggle against virtually all political forces for the sake of the revolution. I believe we must grasp this understanding of the generational battle if we are to understand the revolutionary youth in contemporary Egyptian politics.

The chapter has also demonstrated how the practices of generational activism and revolutionary prefiguration have been particularly evident at the dimension of intra-movement and extra-movement construction. The construction of resources and the organizational elements of the social movement have been greatly shaped by the desire to manifest both youth and revolutionary practice, acting as both a source of friction and political learning. The analysis has also demonstrated the translation of these practices into rejectionist political strategy and the privileging of short-term goals over long-term proposals, as well as the limitations and at times cross-purposes of practice in the achievement of the movement's goals. This includes not only the internal lacunae in the practice of equality and tolerance but also the difficulty of resolving the strategy of "revolutionary pureness" with the achievement of radical change, dignity, and social justice. It is these discrepancies in practice and the ensuing strategic dilemmas that the revolutionary youth must confront in order to attain their external objectives but also, critically, to maintain their internal coherence and indeed existence as a social movement.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The overarching aim of this dissertation has been to assess the role of practices of "youth" and "revolutionary" in the construction of the *shabāb al-thawra* social movement. This has been accomplished through the development of an innovative conceptual and analytical framework problematizing "revolutionary youth," thereby allowing for a detailed assessment of the underlying meanings and patterns of action captured therein and how these inform organizational, ideational, and strategic construction processes of the political actor. In this concluding chapter, I focus attention first on the strengths of this approach, as well as the primary contributions this dissertation makes to theory and to social movement analysis. I then demonstrate the utility of my approach through a presentation of the five primary findings of the thesis. In the third section, I discuss the *shabāb al-thawra* and their social and cultural impact in Egypt more generally, as well as the connections that can be drawn to other social movements globally. While avoiding a measurement of outcomes, I nonetheless argue for a favorable assessment of the *shabāb al-thawra*. Finally, I comment on the avenues for future research this dissertation opens, focusing in particular on various comparative studies that can emerge from this thesis.

6.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Advancement

The conceptual and analytical framework of this dissertation provides not only an innovative apparatus for addressing the research question but makes distinct theoretical contributions. The conceptual framework successfully brings together two different literatures, practice theory and social movement theory, in order to provide conceptual precision; the analytical approach, for its part, establishes a heuristic device and deploys six key concepts in order to

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increase the scope and depth of analysis. In so doing, the dissertation puts forth new conceptual and analytical tools that contribute both to the empirical study at hand as well as the literature on social movements in general, on youth movements more particularly, and the state of the art on the *shabāb al-thawra*.

6.1.1 Communities of Practice and Culturalist Analysis

The conceptual point of departure for this dissertation entails a specific framework for culturalist social movement analysis, lying at the nexus of practice theory and social movement theory. Assessing the role of movement-specific culture in internal movement dynamics, the research is based on the premise that the term "revolutionary youth" must be detached from its nominative sense; instead, I posit that the term should be understood as socially meaningful patterns of action that inform the manner in which the social movement constitutes itself. At its core, my conceptual framework utilizes the concept of communities of practice in order to assess movement-specific culture. I emphasize youth practice and revolutionary practice as meaningful actions endemic to the community that inform movement internal processes and, more specifically, the organizational, ideational, and strategic construction of the social movement. In making explicit the community of practice, I bring to the fore collective understandings, assumptive schemes, and interpretations of historical-social context, and their dynamic relationship with social action. Indeed, the strength of this dissertation and its ability to respond to the research question stems from this clear link established between the meta-level of movement culture and its manifestation in movement motivations, actions, and goals through the conceptual bridge of practice.

The communities of practice approach provides two distinct benefits. First, it establishes clear parameters for understanding what is meant by culture and, just as importantly, how it can be assessed. Put otherwise, communities of practice allows the development of a tripartite conceptual structure – revolutionary youth community of practice; youth practice as assessed through the generational encounter; revolutionary practice as assessed through free spaces of prefiguration – upon which I can apprehend the meta-level of the social movement. In this way, the concept of culture looses is slightly nebulous quality and instead comes to signify the mutual

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negotiation of meaning, the definition of joint enterprise, and the development of a shared repertoire of bodily and mental action. Recognizing the dynamic nature of these processes, this conceptual framework assesses the complex and iterative relationship between background understandings, historical-social context, and action. Second, communities of practice renders evident the link between movement culture and movement dynamics through the concept of practice, which serves as the bridge between the meta-level of culture and its informing of various movement processes. By introducing practice theory into culturalist social movement analysis, this dissertation sheds conceptual light on the relationship between culture and action while also providing a clear framework for its analysis. To this point, the incorporation of practice into social movement analysis represents the most important theoretical contribution of the thesis.

In addition, the use of communities of practice puts forth a new concept of youth and reconceives the notion of political generation, thereby contributing to the study of youth movements in general and current research on the *shabāb al-thawra* in particular. The variety of studies that have been conducted on youth movements globally (for example, Mische's seminal 2008 study; Coe et al., 2012) have tended to explore youth as a category as opposed to meaningful patterns of action; by understanding youth as community of practice, and in particular as generational political practice, this dissertation provides a new tool for the study of youth in which this critical dimension is problematized as opposed to descriptive. Through analysis of youth community of practice, the background understandings and attributions of meaning between generations are brought forth, as are the differences in patterns of action. This dissertation contributes a conceptual framework for the study of youth that illuminates the differing expectations and interpretations of both politics and the political, and how these inform differences in action at the generational level. The thesis thereby provides new entry points into understanding the essence of generational political battles and what renders youth a distinctive analytical category. Moreover, this contributes directly to the current literature on the *shabāb al-thawra* by adding new insight to the discussion of political generation and its formation. Political generation is reconceived not simply as shared social location and/or political consciousness but is inherently linked to socially meaningful action and the generational encounter. In this way, I proffer a process-oriented understanding of the *shabāb al-thawra* political generation, highlighting the role of inter-generational dynamics and differences in practice.

6.1.2 Scope of the Analytical Framework

With regard to the analytical framework, the dissertation's point of departure is the conceptualization of the movement-as-process, whereby the social movement is conceived as a continuous process of construction of the collective. In order to operationalize these processes and bound social action for the purposes of the research, the dissertation uses a heuristic device to divide movement construction into three dimensions of collective action, and assigns to each dimension specific concepts from social movement theory. In this way, the dissertation explores the processes by which individuals come to align themselves with the collective through the concepts of grievance and collective emotion; analyzes intra-movement construction through the concepts of resources and collective identity, and assesses the movement's external actions and interactions through the concepts of political opportunity and strategy. The six key concepts, in turn, are understood as social constructions themselves and, hence, are broached through a constructivist reading. Of particular interest to this thesis is the manner in which various aspects of the community of practice inform the social constructions captured by these concepts.

This framework provides an integrated and comprehensive analysis of the social movement. The heuristic device allows the research to pose a variety of questions regarding the constitution of the collective and the different forms of action; in this way, it permits a much broader scope of social movement construction to be assessed. In addition, the use of heuristic dimensions of analysis reveals the transversal and crosscutting manners in which organizational, ideational, and strategic construction processes intervene in the continual construction of the collective actor. Moreover, by assigning to the key concepts specific dimensions of analysis, I increase analytical leverage by rendering clear how the concepts operationalize specific processes of movement construction. In this way, my analytical framework makes a contribution to the social movement literature through the scope of analysis it engenders.

In addition, the dissertation makes a contribution through the extension of social movement analysis to an understudied case-type. In conducting an in-depth case study on an authoritarian context, this dissertation adds to our knowledge of social movements outside advanced democracies. The lion's share of social movement research has been concerned with movements in North America and Europe, and indeed whole paradigms (most notably the

literature on new social movements) have been almost exclusively concerned with movements in advanced capitalist democracies. This dissertation thus contributes to filling a gap in the literature by proffering analysis of a largely neglected case-type. By exploring a social movement outside the democratic and Western context, I demonstrate the extent to which social movement theory is applicable across regime-type and in different cultural and social settings. Moreover, I show that key concepts in social movement theory can be applied even in cases where the claims and stakes of the movement differ dramatically from those in Western societies. In this sense, the dissertation reveals that concepts such as "collective identity" are not merely applicable in advanced democracies and in battles over cultural codes, but apply in cases of revolutionary movements and battles over political systems. This thesis demonstrates that the more important analytical factors to explore a social movement are not the external context of the regime, but how the underlying intersections of context, interpretation, and practice inform the social movement's actions and interactions in the political arena.

6.2 Advancing Empirical Knowledge of the *Shabāb al-Thawra*

This thesis increases the overall knowledge of Egypt's revolutionary youth and provides a clear identification of the *shabāb al-thawra* in terms of the sociological make-up and organizational leadership as well as the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion of the actor. Although by nature heteroclite, internally diverse, and fluctuating, I nonetheless demonstrate that the social movement is encapsulated by the activists' common understanding of political generation and their particular definition of revolutionary ideals, as well as their shared practices of youth activism and revolutionary prefiguration. Through this identification, the dissertation contributes a far more precise understanding of whom exactly we are speaking about when we refer to Egypt's *shabāb al-thawra*. Beyond this identification of the revolutionary youth, the conceptual and analytical framework of the dissertation unveils five primary findings, including both empirical insights on the social movement as well as analytical insights with regard to the key concepts. In this sense, my particular approach permits not only empirical conclusions

regarding the *shabāb al-thawra* but helps refine and increase our knowledge of key concepts from social movement theory.

6.2.1 Generational Battles and Alliances

The first major finding of the dissertation concerns the collective understanding of generational battle and its relationship to the movement's strategic actions and interactions in the post-Mubarak period. The communities of practice approach has allowed me to assess the activists' collective understanding of "the political" and "the revolution," and in particular the dichotomizing of politics and revolutionary action. Inherently related to this is the notion of generational battle and how the *shabāb al-thawra* see themselves and their action with regard to other political actors. By investigating the revolutionary youth as a community of practice, I reveal that the activists' understanding of generational battle is precisely the clash between politics and revolution: whereas the older generation of activists, political parties, and elites continue to "do" politics, the revolutionary youth see themselves as undertaking a different type of action entirely. The generational battle is not concerned with access and participation, or even with the specific goals of the post-Mubarak era, but with a much more fundamental battle over the meaning of politics and the manner to achieve radical change.

Through the analytical approach, I show how this understanding of generational battle, and the clash of politics and revolution, has informed the movement's external actions, and specifically its development of strategy and perception of allies/opponents. The movement has developed a strategy of rejection of institutionalized politics and the legitimacy of elected leaders, translating into backward-looking demands as opposed to concrete proposals for the achievement of goals. In addition, the movement has increasingly rejected other actors they estimate are "playing politics," including not only the vast majority of parties and traditional elites but, tellingly, Tamarod. Yet, the attributed meanings to politics and revolution have also produced unlikely alliances. Among the more interesting findings here involves the activists' proclivity for cross-movement, tacit alliances. The rejection of institutionalized politics and the existing bureaucracy, and the revolutionary youth's perception of imminent threat to revolution, has translated to emphasis on proximate goals and tacit support to erstwhile opponents for the

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purpose of creating the necessary conditions for revolution. This process by which the *shabāb al-thawra* perceive opponents/allies not only sheds important light on our understanding of the movement's interactions in the post-Mubarak period, but helps refine our understanding of political opportunity by adding typological nuance to the notion of alliance (see also Rucht, 2003; van Dyke, 2013) and the role of perceived threats therein. This primary finding regarding the generational battle, and the manner in which these inform the movement's strategies and alliances, thereby helps unravel some of the puzzles of the post-Mubarak period, including the revolutionary youth's self-exclusion from formalized politics and their support for a blatant military coup.

6.2.2 Framing Dignity and Social Justice

A second major finding that the conceptual approach has uncovered concerns the joint enterprise of the *shabāb al-thawra*, and in particular the emphasis on dignity and social justice, and how these inform the movement's construction of grievances and strategic frames. Here, the communities of practice approach reveals how the revolutionary youth interpret the sources of societal malaise, along with the underlying meanings of their claims and goals. This analysis has found that the revolutionary youth's primary ideational content focuses on social and economic issues related to abuse, injustice, and the transformation of the state to act in the service of its citizens – and not, importantly, increased political participation or reform. While I do not imply that the *shabāb al-thawra* are uninterested in a democratic transition, I do emphasize that it is dignity and social justice that represent the dominant claims of the revolutionary youth.

Through the analytical approach, in turn, the thesis demonstrates how these joint enterprises of dignity and social justice have informed the movement's construction of grievances and strategy, and in particular the framing processes entailed therein. In this vein, the analysis has revealed that the primary grievance fueling the revolutionary youth movement over the nearly ten-year period researched involves the problem of torture and abuse, through which diagnostic framing identified the police and the Ministry of the Interior as critical opponents. The framing of this grievance drew upon the symbolism of the martyr in order to elevate the sense of injustice and perception of righteous battle in the quest for dignity. Similarly, the

movement's primary mobilization strategies placed heavy emphasis on the framing of socio-economic problems and the absence of social justice in order to de-legitimize the ruling authority (whether Mubarak, the SCAF, Morsy, or al-Sīsī) and bridge political demands with socio-economic ones. The chief collective action frame of the movement, as captured in the revolutionary youth's iconic slogan ʿaīsh, ḥuriyya, al-ʿadāla al-igtimāʿiyya (bread, freedom, social justice), involved processes of frame bridging and frame amplification that related the broken social contract and inadequate social protections to the identified opponent of the political status quo to the goal of a radical transformation in state-society relations and a renewed system of redistribution. These findings not only shed important light on the nature of the revolutionary youth's objectives, but provide certain insight into social movement framing processes more generally. As revealed here, strategic choices regarding frames are not purely instrumental or based on rational calculation; rather, they are inherently related to collective understandings and interpretation of both context and objectives, and indeed lead to their reification. As such, the dissertation highlights that framing processes are bounded by the movement's internal culture. This finding emphasizes the inherently cultural nature of framing and strategic choice more generally (see also Jasper, 2004).

6.2.3 Linking Emotions and Identity through Solidarity

The third major finding of this dissertation concerns the activists' collective understanding of political generation, the various elements of youth practice, and their role in the construction of shared emotions and collective identity. In assessing youth community of practice, and in particular the generational encounter and the perception of political generation within the field of activism and contestation, I have demonstrated that youth practice includes non-ideological and non-hierarchical action, values of solidarity and non-violence, and motivation underlined by altruism. Through the analytical framework, in turn, my research reveals the multi-faceted ways in which these various dimensions of youth practice have informed social movement construction processes, ranging from the iterative development of organizational governance models to the pursuit of inclusive mobilization strategies to the socialization of new recruits.

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Yet beyond these various insights, one of the most important findings regarding the relationship between youth practice and movement construction involves solidarity. Here, the dissertation not only shows how youth practice of solidarity contributes to the construction of shared emotions and collective identity, but provides important insight on solidarity itself and its interconnection between the social construction of emotions and identity. More precisely, the dissertation finds that solidarity is not simply one type of shared emotion or a synonym for collective identity (see for example Benford and Snow 2004; Flesher Fominaya 2010b); rather, it is a distinctive practice that contributes to the co-construction of emotions and identity. For the revolutionary youth, solidarity practice formed the basis of construction of courage and fraternity, emotions which not only served to vanquish the barrier of fear and provide a sense of hope but indeed acted as a continuous mobilizing factor, allowing sustained adherence to the social movement. Solidarity practice was also revealed as critical to the construction of collective identity and in particular to the delineation of borders of inclusion/exclusion by determining instances of co-mobilization and acts of movement-wide collaboration. In this way, the communities of practice approach not only has provided new insights into solidarity and distinguished it from other existing concepts in social movement theory, but additionally demonstrates how shared emotions and collective identity are interrelated and mutually constituting through the link of solidarity.

6.2.4 Discourse and Space in Prefiguration

The fourth major finding of this dissertation involves the role of revolutionary practice in the perception of political opportunities and construction of strategies, and more precisely the role of revolutionary prefiguration in the importance given to discursive opportunity and strategies of spatial re-performance. In investigating the community of practice and the relationship between free space and prefiguration, I have highlighted how revolutionary practice involves bottom-up efforts in order to promote revolutionary waves. My analysis reveals that this prefigurative practice delineates the space of action (the street, the figurative square) and identifies conditions for change (awareness of rights, capacity for mass mobilization). This understanding of revolutionary practice, which is essentially the (re)creation of the conditions for revolution, is in fact an outpouring of the

activists' theory of change and the possibilities of its achievement as developed in the Mubarak period.

Through the analytical framework, the dissertation demonstrates how this prefigurative practice has informed the movement's assessment of its context and mobilization strategies, and in particular the perception of political opportunity as linked to discursive environment and the use of symbolic space for the re-performance of revolution. My research finds that the activists' assessment of their broader context and the possibilities for action are closely linked to the discursive environment. Here, their perception of a ripe moment for revolutionary struggle is less concerned with issues of repression and/or changes in access to power than in the potential audience receptive to their message. The importance of discursive opportunity and the assessment of the potential audience are an unexpected discovery, given the authoritarian regime(s) under which the movement operates and the very real constraint of repression. This finding has implications for our understanding of political opportunity and the constructivist reading of the concept: as shown here, the construction of political opportunity is inherently related to collective interpretations of goals, and not only the assessment of context. Likewise, my research demonstrates how revolutionary practice has informed the movement's mobilization efforts, and in particular how the re-construction of the figurative square has informed a variety of field and discursive-symbolic tactics. One particularly interesting finding is the spatial dimension of this strategy, and the return to the same spaces of protest, and in particular Tahrir Square. In returning to the spaces of mass protest, the movement is very literally attempting to re-create the 2011 uprising and prefigure the revolution. This finding highlights the performance of space and spatial strategy within social movement construction (see also Benski et al., 2013; Daphi, 2014). The conceptual and analytical approaches have, as such, deepened our understanding of why the revolutionary youth remain so focused on street action and the significance of discourse and Tahrir Square to the achievement of their goals, and why major instances of mass mobilization – almost regardless of outcomes – are interpreted positively as revolutionary waves.

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6.2.5 Political Learning

The final major finding I highlight concerns the tensions between the ideals of youth and revolutionary practice and the explicit and implicit constraints of social movement construction, and how these tensions have produced both internal movement ruptures and political learning processes. While the conceptual approach has unveiled that the understandings of youth and revolutionary practice create collective norms regarding how activism should be undertaken, the analytical framework reveals that their manifestation in social movement construction is at times hampered out of either necessity or unintentional shortcoming. As has been shown, while the revolutionary youth place great emphasis on collective decision-making and democratic internal governance, the implementation of such models within constituent organizations and movement-wide coalitions has proven difficult. This tension between the ideals of democratic governance and the practical constraints of internally heterogeneous and rapidly expanding groups coincides with findings from other social movements (see also Juris, 2005; Pleyers, 2005). Similarly, the attributed importance to non-ideological affiliation and the interdiction on politics as inherently corrupting and anti-revolutionary has proven increasingly problematic for the movement in strategic terms. Less explicitly, the analysis has revealed a certain relegation of minority members and rights issues to secondary status, unveiling hidden power structures and implicit biases that hinder the manifestation of the revolutionary youth's collective belief in tolerance, equality, and non-discrimination. Such implicit tensions between values and their manifestation within the social movement have created important frustrations and, in certain cases, defection from the movement altogether.

While these findings point to sources of instability within the revolutionary youth, they also reveal important learning processes and the iterative construction of the social movement. The various constituent organizations have consistently attempted to develop more efficient and participative models of governance in an effort to best manifest their ideals of practice. Similarly, a veritable strategic shift was underway in light of the al-Sīsī regime, pushing the movement towards more concrete political proposals of reform and a re-thinking of their strictly "apolitical" stance. These iterative processes of construction and their link to reflexive learning coincide with the conceptual framework applied, and in particular the nexus of Wenger's communities of practice approach and Melucci's conceptualization of

movement-as-process, both of which stress the reflexive quality of social action and its dynamic relationship with broader historical-social context.

These five primary findings demonstrate the manifold roles that collective understandings of "youth" and "revolutionary" play in the organizational, ideational, and strategic construction of the *shabāb al-thawra* social movement, and the utility of the conceptual and analytical frameworks in revealing these links between interpretation of context and background understandings, patterns of meaningful action, and their manifestation in the processual construction of the social movement. The nexus of practice theory and social movement theory, as achieved through the culturalist approach to social movement analysis, has proven able to respond to the overarching research question, while the broad scope of the analytical framework has increased our knowledge of the key concepts.

6.3 Beyond the Revolutionary Youth

In considering the place of the revolutionary youth in contemporary Egyptian politics and global trends in activism, I argue for an optimistic assessment of the movement. The *shabāb al-thawra* have had an undeniable social and cultural impact in Egypt, transforming patterns of contestation and the personal biographies of the activists. In addition, the revolutionary youth movement is not a uniquely Egyptian phenomenon. Rather, connections can be drawn between the revolutionary youth and social movements worldwide, highlighting broader trends in collective action and contestation at the global scale.

6.3.1 Social and Cultural Impact

Despite their limited participation in institutionalized politics, the revolutionary youth do play a meaningful role in contemporary Egyptian political and social life. First and perhaps most importantly is the symbolic capital of the *shabāb al-thawra* and their legitimizing moral force in post-Mubarak Egyptian politics. In spite of the public's weariness with protests and instability, and the disappointments accumulated since the 2011 uprising, the revolutionary youth have retained a certain authority in validating transition processes in post-Mubarak Egypt. In this sense, their self-appointed

role of revolutionary vanguard does carry a degree of weight within Egyptian society more broadly. In assessing the July 2013 military coup, what seems apparent is the revolutionary youth's ability to confer legitimacy to the military's seizure of power. The manner in which Tamarod was used by al-Sīsī to demonstrate the support of the *shabāb al-thawra* for the new regime and its repressive measures, along with the simultaneous discrediting of the most prominent organizations and leaders of the movement who were protesting the military's actions, reveals the symbolic power of the activists and their ability to affirm the "righting" of the revolutionary path. I argue that it is this symbolic capital that explains the efforts of collaboration/co-optation of the revolutionary youth by various political forces, and not the size of the movement's constituent base.

In addition, the revolutionary youth have had an undeniable impact on both political practice as well as repertoires of contention in Egypt. The promotion of non-ideological contestation and the creation of organizations not reducible to one individual at the top have promulgated new models for political practice that extend to other types of organizations and political parties. In essence, youth practice is being replicated outside the social movement. Likewise, the utilization of occupation as a protest tactic has become a standard repertoire of contention across the Egyptian polity (and indeed worldwide, as will be examined below). In this sense, the manner in which people assemble, contest, and act together has been distinctively influenced by the *shabāb al-thawra*.

Beyond these broader cultural impacts, however, has been the personal impact of the social movement on the lives of activists. In relating their biographical narratives of activism, the interviewees almost universally cite the profound importance of participation in the social movement on their lives. Activism with the revolutionary youth has had a transformative effect on the movement's members: it has permanently broken the barrier of fear that was such a powerful pillar in the authoritarian system, has provided the activists with an entirely new community of peers and family unit, and perhaps most critically has brought new meaning to their lives. Interviewees repeatedly relate the profound sense of purpose they now harbor, and their unwillingness to abandon the struggle. Moreover, participation in the movement has served as an enormous learning experience for the activists on everything from political theory to the nuts-and-bolts of decision-making and organizational management. Regardless of what we may think of the 2011 uprising and its failures to meet the aspirations of the people or our

assumptions of the democratic transition, this sense of agency, purpose, and fraternity that the revolutionary youth movement has inspired, along with the very real lessons learned in politics and leadership, cannot be taken away. This has also had a multiplier effect across the country: where apathy once reigned, Egyptians today are keen observers of political life, and the capacity to self-organize has become far more commonplace. The movement has had a deeply meaningful impact on the lives of the activists, and Egyptians more generally, that transcends the difficulties and setbacks of the transition process and should serve as a source of hope for the country's future.

6.3.2 The *Shabāb al-Thawra* and Global Social Movements

The findings of this dissertation may be placed within a discussion of global trends in activism, enabling a comparison of the revolutionary youth to similar social movements worldwide. Although the constituent organizations of the *shabāb al-thawra* movement are not formally linked to transnational activist networks (with the exception of the Revolutionary Socialists), there are nonetheless striking similarities between this social movement and other initiatives around the globe, specifically with regards to protest tactics and modes of collective action as well as the connecting thread of neoliberal contestation. In this vein, Egypt's revolutionary youth can be placed within a much larger analysis including Spain's Indignados, the various Occupy movements across cities worldwide, and Turkey's Gezi Park mobilization, among countless others. Although each of these social movements emerged independently and in response to specific national crises, they nonetheless demonstrate a degree of global convergence in both the repertoires of protest and the underlying grievances fueling action. The most obvious common trend between these movements is, of course, the use of encampment and the occupation of public spaces, which not only is a shared form of protest but which has indeed become a rallying cry itself. As in the case of Tahrir Square, these acts of occupation from Wall Street to a public park in Istanbul are embodied protests of the political, social, and economic order, serving not only to make claims on the state but to prefigure the type of society sought. As with Egypt's revolutionary youth, protesters in such movements recount the importance of process as much as outcome – that the very act of being and acting together, and of reclaiming physical space and social autonomy – is a form of self-realization and the constitution of a new political and social

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ideal (see for example Petropoulou, 2010; Hughes, 2011; Hatem, 2012; Mitchell, 2012; Farro and Demirhisar, 2014; Özkırımlı, 2014). Similar to the revolutionary youth, these movements are marked by their horizontal structures and deliberative democratic governance, the broad cross-sections of society protesters represent, and their contestation of neoliberalism. Moreover, these shared traits are not simply displayed in tactics but are revindicated by the various protest movements: there is a palpable awareness among protesters of the inter-linkages between their collective actions, despite the lack of a formal transnational network. The direct comparisons that protesters make to other movements, and the prevalence of memes such as "#Occupy," demonstrate a collective acknowledgment of a global struggle despite the ostensibly different specific demands being promulgated.

To this point, it is a profound sense of disenfranchisement stemming from the political-economic order that is shared by protesters worldwide. As with the revolutionary youth, these global movements share a deep sense of a ruptured political system and the desire for new exercise of citizenship, as well as the renegotiating of distribution for the purpose of social justice. In the stream of anti-globalization and global justice activism, these national movements are contesting various aspects of the political and economic order and the perverse effects of neoliberalism (see also Giroux, 2012; Steger et al., 2013; Ogien and Laugier, 2014) while prefiguring new forms of solidarity, equality, and democracy. Egypt's revolutionary youth movement, in line with these global trends in activism, is manifesting new social relations and new practices of citizenship that can be read as part of the global struggle against the neoliberal order. This is not to conclude that the *shabāb al-thawra* are simply a carbon-copy manifestation of the global justice movement. There are distinct particularities to the revolutionary youth's claims and goals that nuance the demand for political and economic redistribution, and in particular the anchoring of social justice in a socio-cultural master narrative derived from Islamic precepts and the insistence on youth as an inherent quality of the struggle. Nonetheless, I underline that the revolutionary youth, and indeed the similar movements that arose across the Arab world in 2011, are neither wholly exceptional nor simply contemporary versions of the 1989-1990 pro-democracy movements in Eastern Europe; rather, they are a central component of global activism trends whose claims reflect national context yet who ultimately share their modes of protest and their prefiguration of new state-society relations.

6.4 New Avenues for Research

Given the contributions at both the empirical and theoretical levels, this dissertation opens further avenues of research and possibilities for expansion into new projects. The conceptual and analytical framework constructed in this thesis can usefully be applied across different cases in Egypt as well as to other countries in the Arab world which have experienced similar-type mass uprising and new forms activism since the period of 2011. In Egypt, new research on other forms of youth participation that go beyond the *shabāb al-thawra* – civil society initiatives, youth-oriented political parties – could utilize the conceptual tool of youth community of practice to make comparisons with the revolutionary youth. In such a comparative study, determining similarities and differences within communities of practice with regard to background understandings and attributions of meaning as well as meaningful patterns of action and the definition of joint enterprise could prove quite useful for comprehending the different types of youth participation that have proliferated since the ouster of Mubarak. Based on the fieldwork undertaken for this thesis and the various interviews conducted with youth entities not included under the umbrella of the *shabāb al-thawra*, my suspicion is that striking similarities with regards to youth practice, and in particular the emphasis on non-ideological and non-hierarchical action, exist, yet that the understanding of politics and the political are markedly different. This type of comparative study would add a degree of nuance to our collective understanding of youth as an analytical category, and the extent to which the perception of political generation and the implications on public participation extends past the revolutionary youth.

Likewise, this analytical model could be quite usefully applied to other cases across the Arab world, most notably in Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain, where seemingly similar revolutionary youth movements have arisen as important fixtures in national political scenes. To my knowledge, no major comparative study of the *shabāb al-thawra* across Arab countries exists; as such, we are as yet unable to parse out the differences in what is meant by "youth" and "revolution" across the region, nor how these social movements may differ in their organizational, ideational, and/or strategic processes. A comparative study, utilizing the conceptual approach of communities of practice and culturalist social movement analysis as undertaken in this dissertation, would shed great light on what is meant by "Arab youth" in the sense of political category, as well as the differences in

the understanding of revolution that may exist across national contexts. More generally, exploring the broader understandings of the political and the differences in meaning of politics, and how these relate to social movement actions and interactions, would elucidate how the struggles for reform or radical change are undertaken by these actors across the region. Comparing the meanings attributed to the term *shabāb al-thawra* by different revolutionary youth movements in the Arab world, and how these in turn shape practices, would contribute to our knowledge of the region's new political actors and the extent to which these social movements are truly similar. The Arab world has been unequivocally changed by the historic uprisings of 2011 and the transformative moment of hope and unity that the mass mobilizations entailed; understanding the collective interpretations and meanings vested in these events, and how these in turn inform political action and social relations, is a necessary research agenda if we are to grasp the complexity of the region's transition processes today.

Finally, given the links I draw here between the *shabāb al-thawra* social movement and global trends in activism, the application of the communities of practice approach could provide invaluable insights into the similarities and differences that exist within transnational networks as well as more independent initiatives that nonetheless utilize the same repertoires of contention and contestation of order. Such an approach would in particular illuminate the nature of prefigurative practices and the background understandings and attributions of meaning that are endemic to these movements, and how these may differ across contexts despite similar frames and protester demands. Such an approach would also permit deeper understanding of differences in internal movement dynamics and strategies in particular. Egypt's revolutionary youth and the 2011 uprising are often popularly hailed as having inspired movements and mobilization across the Middle East and further afield; examining practices and their informing of movement construction processes can help elucidate in a comparative sense what this means.

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Annex 1: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

SELF
1) Description of Self: History of Activism

ORGANIZATION
2) Resources and Organizational Issues:
      - When founded and why?

      - Changes in members over time?

      - Changes to the internal organization? Decision-making? Financing?

      - What are the internal activities and how have they changed before/after the uprising?

      - Changes in relationship with media? And with Facebook/Twitter?

UPRISING
3) During Uprising
      - Why did you decide to act at that particular moment? What was different on 25 January 2011?

      - Who did you work with and why?

      - How did you mobilize people?

      - Problem of fear and *ḥizb al-kanaba*: how did you deal with this?

      - Slogans *ʿaysh, ḥuriyya, al-ʿadāla al-igtimāʿiyya* and *isqāt al-niẓām:* What does it mean exactly? How did you decide on this?

      - What was the relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood like during the uprising? Political parties? Workers?

POST-UPRISING
4) Arena and Players
    a) Revolutionary Youth Groups and Coalitions
        - Can you describe what happened to the movement after the uprising?

        - Who were the revolutionary youth groups? How did you interact with them? Why?

        - Can you speak about the coalition(s)? How did you interact with them? Why?

    b) Relationship to workers movements and political parties?
    c) Opponents
        - Who were the opponents in the period of SCAF, Morsy, and al-Sīsī?

        - What was the relationship like with the SCAF? Morsy? Al-Sīsī?

        - How did this affect your organization?

5) Audience
    - What kind of actions have you taken since the uprising?

    - What made you decide to mobilize at these times?

    - What were the goals of your action in this period?

    - What mobilization strategies did you use?

    - Did you use a different message? Why or why not?

    - Was it harder or easier to take action after the uprising? Why?

6) Identity, Values, and Ideology
    - What makes someone "youth"?

    - How would you define a revolutionary? Who is a revolutionary? Who isn't?

    - What are the values of the revolution? What do these mean?

    - What are the ideologies of your organization?

    - Are there debates between the members of your organization about these values and ideologies? How do you resolve these debates?

Annex 2: Group Interview Guide

SELF
1) Description of Self: History of Activism

PRE-UPRISING
2) Grievances

- What was your personal situation like before the uprising?

- What problems did you personally have?

- Did other people have the same problems? Which people? How did you know?

- Do you think there were people with fewer problems? How did you know this?

- Do you think there were people with more problems? How do you know this?

- What did you think about these differences?

- Did you discuss these problems with people? With whom? Did everyone agree, or did you have different opinions?

- Did you see people talking about these things in public? Who? What did they say?

- Were there any people or groups who you felt really understood these problems? What made you feel that they understood better?

MOBILIZATION
3) Becoming an Activist

- What made you decide to become an activist?

- Were you scared? How did you get past that fear?

- Why did you join this organization in particular?

- Are you a member of any other groups?

UPRISING

4) Political Opportunity and Lived Experience

- When you heard about the revolution in Tunisia and Ben Ali's departure, what were you thinking? How did this make you think about Egypt?

- Can you describe for me the uprising as you lived it?

- Are there any images or moments or memories that stand out?

- Can you tell me what you were feeling during the uprising?

- How did you feel about Egypt during the uprising?

SUBJECTIVITY

5) Political Consciousness

- Before you became an activist, how did you feel about politics?

- Did you follow politics?

- What do you think about politics now?

- How has the experience of activism changed you?

MEANING CONSTRUCTION

6) Identity and Values

- Would you call yourself a revolutionary?

- How would you define a revolutionary?

- Who is a revolutionary? Who isn't?

- What are the values of the revolution?

- What are the ideologies of your organization?

- Are there debates between the members of your organization about these values and ideologies? How do you resolve these debates?

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