The “Challengers”

The driving forces behind the youth’s demand for change in the Egyptian Uprising

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Abstract

This study reflects on what were the most important motivational factors for the Egyptian youth to participate in the 25th of January 2011 revolution. By applying a conceptual framework from social movement theory, it attempts to explain what paved the way for the Egyptian youth's participation in the 18 days of protest in Tahrir Square. The analysis is based on qualitative interviews conducted with Egyptian youth who participated in the revolution, as well as on interviews with area specialists. The analysis shows that the youth's motivation to participate in the upheavals was capitalized on a combination of domestic and regional events. While the political, economic, and social order described the underlying factors simmering in the country, the death of Khaled Said awakened the Egyptian youth and framed their grievances. This incident served both as a turning point and a symbol that unified them. These factors came to the surface, and the youth dared to take to the streets as soon as they saw that the Tunisian people had succeeded in overthrowing their own authoritarian regime. The Tunisian revolution served as a model, both by demanding the downfall of the autocratic regime the Egyptian people identified with, and by demonstrating the possible effects of collective action. For the future of Egypt, it seems crucial that not only the government, but also families, learning institutions, political parties and religious institutions give young people increasing attention and influence.

Key words: Egypt, revolution, The Arab spring, social movements, motivation, political influence, youth influence in the society.

Dedication

To the youth of Egypt.

May your voices be heard, and your dreams come true.

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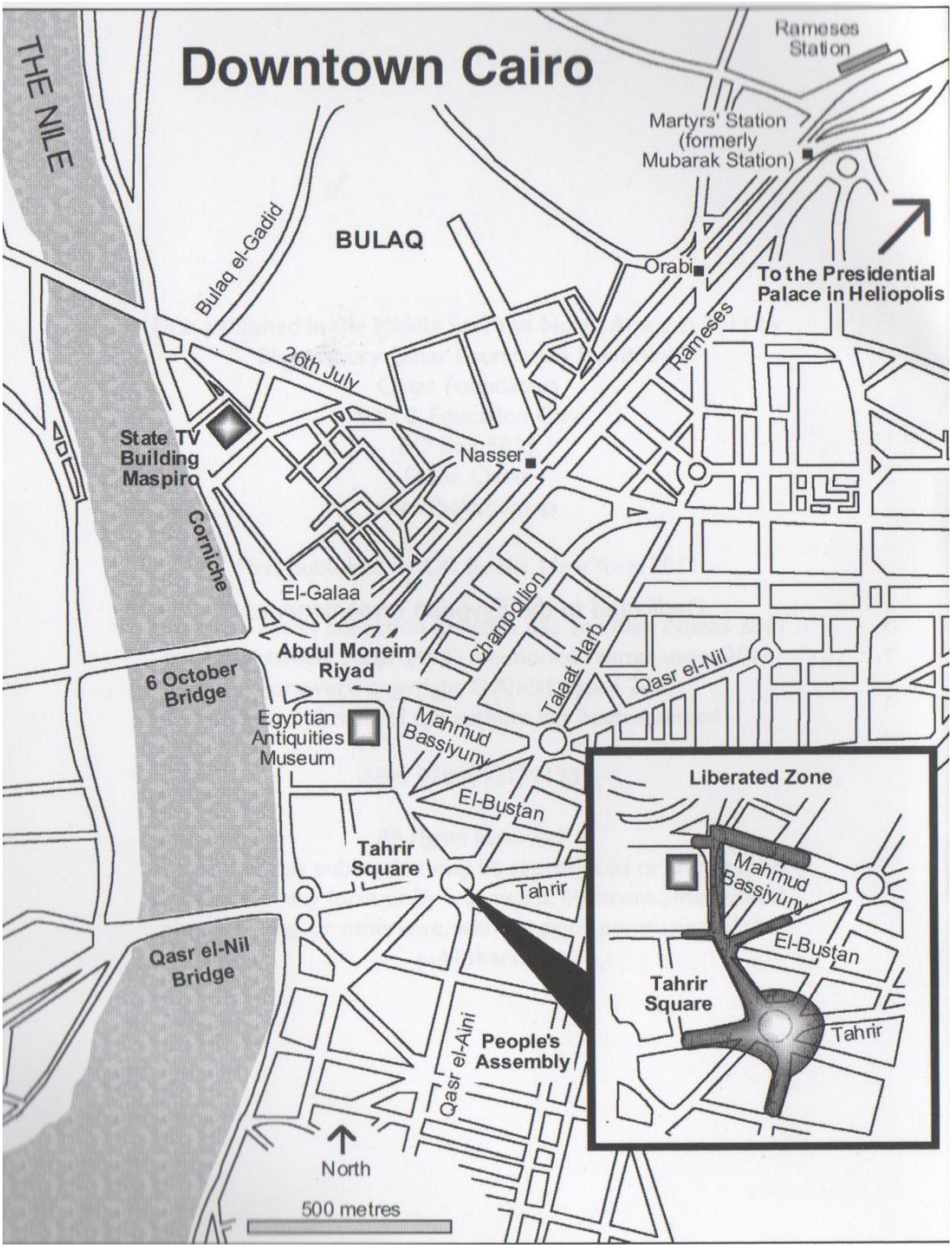
”When the people decide to live, destiny shall obey
Darkness will disappear and the chains will be broken”

Abu al-Qasim al-Shabi,

Tunisian poet

Map of Downtown Cairo



Adapted from map by Nadia Idle & Alex Nunns 2011

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"If you had asked me how old I was after [the] revolution, I would have answered: I'm 18 days old. During the 18 days in Tahrir Square I felt that I was totally a human being. Everyone accepted me, everyone trusted me, and everyone talked with me. And I did the same thing with them. It was 18 days of utopia, and it changed many people. We must go back to the way we were during those 18 days in order to build up our country again" ("Anwar" 2012 [interview]).

On the 25th of January 2011, an uprising erupted in Egypt, which captivated the world. The Egyptian people managed to overthrow its authoritarian president, Hosni Mubarak, who had been ruling Egypt for nearly 30 years. Several attempts had been made in the past to gather support for change in Egypt (El Mahdi 2012; Khalil 2012). Local protests and strikes had been carried out for years by educated youth and workers in Egypt to call attention to high unemployment, low wages, police harassment, and state corruption (Goldstone 2011: 337; El Mahdi 2012; Khalil 2012; Shehata 2012).

As the protest movements in Egypt had been small and ineffective, the regime officials took measures to increase their own wealth at the expense of the people's suffering (Al Aswaany 2011: viii). By controlling elections and political parties and using subsidies for goods to pay off their citizens, autocratic regimes, such as in Egypt during the regime of Mubarak, manage to keep the masses depoliticized and unorganized (Angrist 2011; Cook 2009; Goldstone 2011). Furthermore, the Mubarak regime ensured that the population remained disconnected and passive by using media control, surveillance, and intimidation (Goldstone 2011: 331).

Before the revolution, research on Egyptian youth focused mainly on the youth bulge that causes many problems in the Egyptian society (Muñoz 2000; Meijer 2000; UNDP 2010; Herrera 2010). At the same time as alienation was growing among the

young people, there was a decline in their chances to integrate socially, politically and economically (Meijer 2000:1). However, the 18 days of protest proved that youth has the ability to claim their own rights. The youth who were usually regarded as incapable of change were addressed as those who had brought about this uprising (Al Aswaany 2011; Khalil 2012; Shahine 2011). By enforcing their own political participation and demanding different rights, the Egyptian youth presented a new challenge in terms of being included in national strategies for change. During the 18 days of the uprising, the youth changed the dominant image of young people from being the problem into being the hope of the country (Shahine 2011). The way the youth had managed to mobilize and bring about change had for many been unthinkable, and even fewer had imagined that the Egyptian people could oust an autocrat in only 18 days (ibid.). This thesis thus asks: *What were the most important motivational factors for the Egyptian youth to participate in the 25th of January 2011 revolution?*

In order to understand what motivated the Egyptian youth to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square, it is essential to understand the factors behind their motivation. I propose three direct hypotheses to answer the research question. *Firstly*, the Egyptian youth wanted to protest against the political, economic and social order. *Secondly*, the youth were motivated by the upheavals in Tunisia. *Thirdly*, the youth were motivated by the issues and circumstances around the killing of Khaled Said.

In this study, the research question is addressed through these hypotheses in the form of a case study by using a qualitative approach. The political contention in Egypt laid the basis for a social movement, which gave way to a revolution (Zohar 2011). By applying a conceptual framework from social movement theory, specifically framing consensus and mobilization, political opportunity structures, and street politics, this study attempts to explain what paved the way for the Egyptian youth's participation in the 18 days of protest in Tahrir Square.

Following this introduction, *Chapter 2* provides a background for the social and political conditions of the Egyptian youth during the regime of Mubarak. *Chapter 3* defines *social movement*, *contentious politics*, and *street politics*, how these terms can be understood in the political and cultural context in Egypt, and why they are used. The chapter also points out the contested concept of the term *revolution*, and explains why the uprising in Egypt can be called a revolution. Furthermore, the three hypotheses are presented. *Chapter 4* presents the method and research design applied in this study. In *Chapter 5*, each of the hypotheses is examined systematically, before being discussed and analyzed. In addition, throughout this chapter the findings are connected to the theory in chapter 3. Finally, *Chapter 6* provides some conclusions that are drawn from the analysis, and presents some methodological remarks. Additionally, I suggest a number of theoretical implications regarding youth as a category, and political implications concerning the situation of the Egyptian youth.

Chapter 2:
The social, political and economic conditions of youth before the uprising

Egyptians are like camels: they can put up with the beatings,
humiliation, and starvation for a long time but when they rebel
they do so suddenly and with a force that is impossible to control.[1] *– Alaa Al Aswany*

2.1 Nepotism and corruption

Although there have been several protests in Egypt before (Bush & Ayeb 2012), many have wondered why Egyptians waited so long to rebel, when all the conditions in the country were screaming for a revolution. According to Huntington, Revolutions are "more likely to occur in societies which have experienced some social and economic development and where the process of political modernization and political development has lagged behind the process of social and economic change" (Goldstone 1993:39). Egypt serves as such an example.

For thirty years Hosni Mubarak had monopolized power through rigged elections, and the Egyptian people feared that he was trying to install his son, Gamal Mubarak, as his successor (Bush & Ayeb 2012:7; Shenker 2009; Brown et al. 2007; Souare 2008; El Mahdi & Marfleet 2009). Although there had been clear attempts to strengthening "civil society" activities, the different state agents continued to repress the economic claims of the Egyptian people "in the pursuit of brutal privatization and speculative projects of oligarchic economic restructuring" (Singerman et al. 2006: 5). The government minimized its role as a welfare state and encouraged investments in the market, which led to the appearance of new forms of negotiating and contesting social structures. Changes in class structures widened the gap between classes, regions and

[1] Al Aswaany, Alaa (2011: viii)

social groups with rising poverty and unemployment. Not only did this lead to the increasing of elite communities around the city, the poor urban neighborhood and slum areas grew also (Denis 2006).

The existence of nepotism could also be found in the society. It has been reported that there have been unclear rules regarding the selection process of public officials, and that the public sector employees' children were prioritized, regardless of their qualifications (Transparency International 2009a). Further, favoritism and informal relationships have also affected the implementation of judicial decisions (Global Integrity Report 2010). Nepotism has been rife as well as the development discourse in the country. It became widely accepted as a "fact of life" (Transparency International 2009b), which shows how nepotism has infiltrated the society.

The level of corruption was pervasive at all levels of government and viewed as unprecedented in the history of Egypt (Al Aswaany 2011; Freedom House 2010). In addition, the political system in Egypt was designed to ensure that the ruling National Democratic Party had the solid majorities at all levels of government (Freedom House 2010). Al Aswaany (2011) uses the concepts of nepotism and corruption to describe the order of things in Egypt. Corruption took many forms in order to get things done, where one of them was bribery in different public sectors, such as police, customs and education (Al Aswaany 2011: vii; Anderson 2011). Although there were legal regulations that governed bribery offered to civil servants, they were not effective in practice. Illegal acts made by civil servants were – and still are – a common practice in the Egyptian public services. Civil servants would accept gifts, hospitality and facilitation payments, and in return they speeded up the governmental action processes (U4 2012:6, Transparency International 2010, Freedom House 2011).

2.2 Civil liberties and previous movements

The Emergency Law in Egypt, which has existed since 1958, gave security officials the right to prohibit or disperse rallies that were election-related, demonstrations, and

public meetings. People also risked being detained indefinitely without charge. The authorities used these powers before the parliamentary elections in 2010 by preventing gatherings and arresting individuals exclusively for exercising their rights to freedom of association, assembly, and expression (Human Rights Watch 2010). Independent media outlets were closed down, security officers targeted bloggers, and journalists who criticized government policies were subjected to attacks, police harassment and imprisonment (Human Rights Watch 2011, Freedom House 2010, Transparency International 2010). Civil society was constrained, and a combination of legal restrictions, insecure political contexts and a lack of organizations resulted in little public debate. Thus, the civil society's opportunities to influence public policies were few (U4 2012: 4). Nevertheless, Egypt has a long tradition of court systems and institutions (Sherif 1998).

As neoliberal economic strategies were introduced in the country, many sectors were privatized. This led to a series of protest in Egypt, especially since 2004 (Bush & Ayeb 2012; El Mahdi 2012; Khalil 2012). Many felt an uncertainty concerning their life conditions with the attempts of privatizing industry, energy, water, health, education, etc. (Clement 2009). Thus, the rise in prices, wage reductions, and the fear of getting fired led many to protests.

In December 2004, *Kefaya*,[2] an informal movement, held the first demonstration that explicitly called for Mubarak to step down. The movement mobilized the Judges' syndicate, which was the only union that was free of government control (El Mahdi 2009: 1034). The regime responded heavy-handedly and Ayman Nour, who was the leader of the movement, was arrested and charged for election fraud, and therefore sentenced to five years in prison (Farag 2006, MacLeod 2009). Certain political movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, were excluded from the political alliance, and Kefaya did not succeed in including the wider Egyptian population. This allowed the Mubarak regime to appoint the smaller political parties and weaken the movement for change (El Mahdi 2009: 1030, Khalil 2012: 45). However, the

[2] Kefaya means 'enough' in Arabic.

movement set the stage for future events and changed the game in a crucial and permanent way by shattering "the mystique around the Mubarak name" (Khalil 2012: 45-46).

The workers' strikes were other instances that involved cooperation between large groups in the society. The strikes raged throughout the country in 2006, 2007 and 2008, and were led by the textile workers in Mahalla al-Kubra. All of the participants fought for a higher minimum wage, health benefits and job security (Morrow & Omrani 2007). Thousands of students, unemployed and textile workers from Mahalla al-Kubra gathered on April 6, 2008 to protest against high food prices, unemployment and police brutality (Ciezadlo 2011: 233). This protest led to the creation of the April 6 Movement[3], and emerged out of a need to support the workers' movement in 2008 (Khalil 2012: 51). A group of young activists used social networks to publish the workers' demands, and promote national solidarity by holding a national strike (Jilo 2011). Although the workers managed to create unity within the factories, they had still been unable to reach the political arena. Even though movements like Kefaya had managed to break political barriers, they had failed to develop into more than a middle-class phenomenon. The strikes managed to combine Egypt's political and democratic grievances with the economic grievances (Khalil 2012: 54).

Things were consistently simmering throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century. NGOs were leaping and the number of online activists multiplied. The apparatus around Mubarak was getting weaker, and "the societal forces arrayed against him grew stronger" (Khalil 2012: 55). However, among the larger and non-politicized groups in the society, desperation and helplessness was growing (ibid.).

[3] The April 6 Movement also held a small protest on January 25, 2010 against police brutality and the Interior Ministry. This day was chosen because it was Police Day, a national holiday that commemorates the 1952 struggle of the Ismailia police force against the occupying British. The protest was violently broken up and dozens were arrested, which is the reason why the April 6 Movement wanted to hold a similar demonstration the following year.

2.3 The exclusion of youth in Egypt

Like many other countries in the Middle East, Egypt has been going through a so-called "youth bulge", a period where the numbers of youths [4] have increased significantly in comparison to other groups in the population (Assaad &Barsoum 2007: 8). According to Assaad and Barsoum (2007), it is a multidimensional process to understand why youth is being excluded, such as in education, work opportunities, potentials for forming families and civic participation. They all represent important stages in life pivotal for "including youths in society" (ibid.).

In Egypt, youths continue being among the most disadvantaged groups. They suffer from higher rates of unemployment, lower earnings, and have both limited job security and instability (Asaad & Barsoum 2007: 5). Herrera argues that "youth themselves are rarely consulted about their struggles for a lifestyle and livelihood or about the type of citizens they are or aspire to be" (Herrera 2010: 127). The exclusion of youth in Egypt has led to "waithood" (UNDP 2010: 3), where the young people are simply waiting for their lives to begin, because of long periods of unemployment, which forces them to live with their parents and makes them financially unable to get married. According to Roudi-Fahimi et al. (2011), 90 percent of the unemployed in Egypt are youth, whereas the situation is especially difficult for unemployed young women. In Egypt, the gender gap is among the highest in the world[5] (UNDP 2010:94). There are few opportunities for young women to participate in public life. In a survey conducted by the Population Council among youth in Egypt, more than 40 percent of the youth thought personal connections were more important than personal skills in securing a job (Population Council 2009: 101). This reflects the widespread corruption prevailing in the society.

There are a number of factors highlighting the absence of youth participation in the social, political and economic environment. The family is the primary source of financial security. It defines political membership and offers networking to crucial

[4] Like Jeffrey (2010), I apply the term 'youth' to refer to people between 16 and 30 years old.

[5] Egypt ranks 120 out of 128 countries in terms of gender gap, and has one of the lowest female labor participation rates in the world (UNDP 2010).

political resources, and religious identity (Joseph 1996: 15). In both Egypt and other Arab countries, the authoritarian hierarchy that has originated in the family (Krauss 1987) is controlled and dominated by men. The hierarchical structure does not only have to do with the difference between the genders, that the women are assigned a subordinate status. The families are stratified on the basis of both gender and age, where the young are subordinate to the old and the females to males (Barakat 1993: 102).

Social conditioning by the family, the legal systems, and the market create the roles to be played by both boys and girls in their society. In addition, they define their interaction in both public and private spheres (UNDP 2010: 94). Furthermore, in young people, there is a predominance of the culture of fear. Parents warn their children not to engage in any political activity, especially if it is in opposition to the regime (UNDP 2010: 65). Instead of being encouraged to express their own opinions, the youth are controlled in the framework of a hierarchical system that undermines their abilities, and prevents them from independent thinking and decision-making (UNDP 2010: 95). These factors also help to explain some of the negative trends in community values that prevail among young people. Intolerance to others' opinions, absence of a sense of belonging, individualism, selfishness and passiveness, are some examples (UNDP 2010: 221).

The educational system in Egypt is a further negative factor. Elementary education is compulsory in Egypt, and around 90 per cent of all school-age children were enrolled in the country's pre-university education system in 2008. However, the system as a whole is in trouble because of falling enrolments, poor teacher-student ratios and persistent gender inequality (Osman 2011: 222). The most dissatisfied are the young people who have received an education or academic training. Not only do they usually have a higher education and greater expectations than their parents, they also live under the same regime since their birth (Filiu 2011: 35, Muñoz 2000: 23).

Chapter 3: Theory

The first section of this theoretical chapter defines terms like *social movement*, *revolution*, *contentious politics*, and *street politics*. Further, an attempt has been made to explain how these terms can be understood in the political and cultural context in Egypt and why they are used. After this background section, I explain why youths' motivation to participate in the protests is chosen. Finally, three hypotheses are presented in order to explain which factors that may have motivated the Egyptian youth to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square: a protest against the political, economic and social order, the upheavals in Tunisia, and the issues and circumstances around the killing of Khaled Said.

3.1 Social movement as political struggle

Scholars argue that *social movements* are distinct social processes (Diani 1992; 2003; 2004; Diani & Bison 2004). These processes consist of mechanisms where individuals engage in collective action, which serves as the basis of social movements. To this end, the individuals in social movements are engaged in political conflicts that are "meant to promote or oppose social change" (della Porta & Diani 2006: 21), where the opponents are clearly identified. Collective action is often the only resource ordinary people possess to demonstrate their claims against their opponents (Tarrow 2011: 7). The actors are linked by informal networks and are in pursuit of common goals, while at the same time maintaining their autonomy and independence. They share a distinct collective identity, which is strongly associated with recognition of the creation of connectedness (Pizzorno 1996). The actors have a sense of common purpose and shared commitment to a cause. This enables activists to feel compatible and linked to other actors without having to be identical (della Porta & Diani 2006: 21). The people who participated in Tahrir Square were not identical. They were from different social classes, generations and genders. However, they had a common purpose and stood together under the slogan "bread, dignity and justice" (Naguib 2011; Henry & Springborg 2011: 136; Awad 2011: 128).

Following Tarrow (2011), this study focuses on the upheavals in Egypt as driven by social movements. Social movements are long-lasting and more or less structured collective actions based on common purpose and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities, where the goal is social change (Tarrow 2011: 9; Bayat 1997:7). While the original social movements were often generated or mobilized by clearly charismatic leaders, new social movements are self-generating and hold a vague or nonexistent leadership, underscoring identity and content (Bayat 1997:7). Through collective identity building, individual actors involved in collective action no longer pursue specific goals. Rather, they regard themselves as elements of larger processes of change (della Porta & Diani 2006:22). However, one can only call it a social movement when single episodes of collective action are viewed as components of a longer-lasting action, and when the engaged actors are aware of their actions by articulating their aims, methods and justifications (Bayat 1997: 7, della Porta & Diani 2006: 23). Once the actors recognize they have a common purpose and the fact that they are linked by ties of solidarity, the potential for a movement into action increases (della Porta & Diani 2006).

Social movements are seldom under the control of a single leader or organization (Bayat 1997:7). Rather, it is the changes in public political opportunities and constraints that create the most important incentives for triggering new phases of contention for people with collective claims (Tarrow 2011: 12). Bohn (2011) argues that there was no specific leader or organization that planned the protests in Egypt: "the people led this revolution automatically, without anyone saying anything." (Bohn 2011: 76). Bayat also argues, "Although revolutionaries might have engaged in plotting and preparing, they do not necessarily result from prior schemes." (Bayat 2010: 2). Further, it is doubtful that revolutions and social movements can ever be planned, as they are never predictable (Bayat 2010: 2; 2007: 200-201). Also, the political context is not only relevant to patterns of social movements. Its impact on resource level, external structuring theory, the development of the target and action repertoire has proven to be both pervasive and systematic (Kriesi 1996: 104).

3.2 The Egyptian uprising 2011

Revolution is a contested concept in the field of political science (See Goldstone 2001). Defining it constitutes a challenge, since the definition of revolution has changed as new events have come forth on the stage of world history. The term is also a contested concept between revolutionary actors, on the one hand, and theorists on the other (Farr 1982: 688). Skocpol (1979:4) defines revolutions as "rapid, basic transformations of society's state and class structures … accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below". Skocpol's definition does not include matters such as revolutionary ideologies, bases for revolutionary mobilization, and the possibility for multiclass coalitions, as these where not seen as central features for revolutions (Goldstone 2001: 140). By contrast, McCaughrin (1976) is interested in the changing properties of revolutions, anticipating both new causes of revolution as well as a new concept of revolution. He foresaw transformations in the means, aim, focus and scope, implying that the concept would also include upheavals that are less violent, and less predicated upon society-wide mobilization (McCaughrin 1976: 643).

The world has witnessed many revolutions that have challenged the class-based understandings of revolutions (Goldstone 2001: 141). Skocpol's rather simple state- and class-based conception of revolutions is therefore no longer adequate. In order to include events ranging from the relatively peaceful revolutions that have overthrown communist regimes to violent Islamic revolutions, Goldstone (2001: 142) provide a broader definition of revolution: "an effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in a society, accompanied by formal and informal mass mobilization and noninstitutionalized actions that undermine existing authorities". DeFronzo (1996:10) has a similar definition, but emphasizes that politically savvy dissident elites guiding the revolution are critical for a revolution to come about.

Scholars discuss whether the uprising in Egypt can be regarded as a revolution, and whether the removal of Hosni Mubarak can be treated as a *successful* revolution (Hasan 2011). However, this study argues that one should rather see revolutionary

movements as split into fractions, with the ousting of the existing regime as their sole common objective (Haass 2011: 117; Tarrow 2011: 159). Even though Mubarak's departure was a significant development that terminated a prolonged era of Egyptian politics, it was not decisive. Rather, it marked the end of the first phase of the Egyptian revolution, with the struggle for Egypt's future waiting ahead (Haass 2011: 116). Furthermore, the revolution should be seen as a process, and not only as an event (Goldstone 2011: 340; Soueif 2011; Stites 1978). According to Alexander (2011: x), it is awareness, whether it is internal, subjective or collective, that causes revolutionary movements to progress. During the violent clashes in Tahrir Square on 28th of January, a journalist from Al Jazeera, in a television reporting in Arabic, described the awareness that was reflected in the street (Al-Bushra 2011). Following the broad definition of revolution that Goldstone (2001: 142) provide, the upheavals in Egypt should be called a revolution, as ordinary people made an effort to transform the justifications for the political authority in the country through mass mobilization that undermined the existing authority. Additionally, the informants interviewed for this study applied the term 'revolution' (*Thawra)*[6].

3.3 Contentious politics

There is a peculiar interrelationship between political opportunities, contentious politics and social movements. According to Tarrow (2011: 6), *contentious politics* occur "when ordinary people join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents" around their claims. When participants perceive and respond to changes in political opportunities and threats, contentious politics emerges, and the way will be paved for challenging the status quo (Tarrow 2011: 16). However, people do not run the risks and pay the costs of engaging in contentious politics unless they have a good reason to do so (Tarrow 2011: 11). Not only do the people need to have a common purpose, they also need to *recognize* their common interest, which increases the potential for putting a movement into action (ibid.).

[6] Thawra means 'revolution' in Arabic and was frequently used by my informants during the interviews.

3.3.1 Framing

Framing is a process where states of affairs are interpreted, defined and redefined jointly by social actors, media, and members of society (Tarrow 2011: 144). By framing contentious politics, movements reflect, capture, and shape emotions to mobilize followers, and thus construct collective identities (Tarrow 2011: 143). According to Tarrow (2011), people revolt when a target for grievance is identified and empowered by a sense of injustice. By embedding specific grievances in framings that are emotional-laden, movements are capable of convincing participants that their cause is just and important (Tarrow 2011: 26).

According to McAdam (1999:51), people must collectively define their situation as unjust before collective action can get underway. However, it is not easy to convince people who are normally passive that the "indignities and inequalities of everyday life can be challenged" (Tarrow 2011. 145). By inscribing in frames that identify an injustice, the responsibility for it is attributed to others (Tarrow 2011: 145). Through collective action, the social condition that was previously seen as unfortunate yet tolerable can be redefined as unjust and immoral (Snow & Benford 1992: 137). However, the possibility to participate in a collective action that might be both risky and beneficial may in itself be an incentive for people whose lives are stuck in toil and desperation (Tarrow 2011: 29).

3.3.2 Political Opportunities and Threats

According to Goldstone and Tilly (2001:182), opportunities are the perceived probability that social protest actions will lead to success in achieving a desired outcome. Opportunities are increased when changes occur in the balance of political and economic resources between a state and its challengers "that shift domestic or outside support away from the regime" (Goldstone & Tilly 2001: 182-183).

Threats are not directly related to the prospects of success. Rather, it relates to the risks and costs of action or inaction (Tarrow 2011: 160). Goldstone and Tilly

(2001:183) argue that " a group may decide to bear very high costs for protest if it believes the chances of success are high, but the same group may decide to avoid even modest costs of protest if it believes the chances of succeeding are low". However, it is not the shifts in the prospects of success alone that shapes decisions regarding collective action, but "how threats and opportunities combine" (Tarrow 2011: 161). When ordinary citizens experience threats and perceive opportunities, when potential allies are revealed, the vulnerability of opponents is exposed, and collective identities are triggered into action around common themes, then contentious politics is produced (Tarrow 2011: 33, 160).

3.3.3 Making Opportunities

The challengers do not necessarily need to understand the political opportunity structures to seize the moment and start a process of change. According to Tarrow (2011), challengers with mobilization capacity, resources and strong dissatisfaction pave the way for those with fewer resources and less capacity. The "early risers" (Tarrow 2011: 167) reveal their opponent's vulnerability and expose them to attack from weaker players by challenging the authorities. This expresses why the social movement that developed into a revolution in Egypt started with young people from the middle-class and not with the general public. An essential factor when mobilizing the people to join the demonstration was the shrinking middle-class (Ez-Eldin 2011; Shahine 2011; Henry & Springborg 2011). Not only did the revolution manage to mobilize the middle-class to seek freedom and jobs, it also energized the poor who joined in the protests a few days later to demand bread, dignity and justice (Henry & Springborg 2011: 136, Naguib 2011).

Contentious politics creates new opportunities for others. Not only does it construct and develop requirements, it also lays the basis for political mobilization: "The opening opportunities provide external resources to people who lack internal ones; openings where there were only walls before; alliances that did not previously seem possible; and realignments that appear capable of bringing new groups to power" (Tarrow 1998: 89). Although this movement started with the middle-class (Ez-Eldin

2011; Shahine 2011; Henry & Springborg 2011), the struggle developed in a discourse that appealed to everyone in Egypt, regardless of their ideological positions (Balata 2011: 64; Gause 2011: 207). Furthermore, political opportunities must be seen as product of a given environment, not as being owned by any particular side (Rucht 1996: 185). According to Balata (2011), there are two reasons why cooperation and mass mobilization succeeded in Egypt. Firstly, there was no single political party or group taking ownership of the demonstration on 25th of January or the subsequent protests. Secondly, they learned from their past attempts of cooperation across groups and their long history of oppression that it would be more profitable to abandon any political and ideological differences, and instead concentrate on their common interests – to bring about a political and economic change in the country (Balata 2011: 69).

Contentious politics arises where there is a potential for space to open up as a result of political and economic repression, social inequalities, and an increasing injustice (Tarrow 2011). The informants told how the Egyptian youth were desperately seeking higher living standards, and the potential for change soon resonated when they witnessed the former Tunisian president Ben Ali being forced to leave his throne, which will be discussed in greater detail in the analysis chapter. At this period of time, there had been several processes of political deliberalization characterized by economic inflation, intensified conflict, including a tension around the upcoming presidential elections (Shehata 2011). The concern that Gamal Mubarak would take over the presidency (Bush & Ayeb 2012; Shenker 2009; Brown et al. 2007; Souare 2008; El Mahdi & Marfleet 2009), as well as numerous other factors and incidents, caused the youth to see the necessity of change. Therefore, one can say that both domestic factors and political opportunities lead to the existence of contentious politics in Egypt (Balata 2011: 65).

3.4 Street politics

Bayat (1997) has constructed a theory of informal politics, which he calls *Street Politics*. Bayat defines 'Street Politics' as a set of conflict between a populace and the

authorities created and expressed in the streets. Here, the street serves as a place where those lacking institutional settings to express discontent, can express themselves collectively. Among the people belonging to this group, are the young and unemployed (Bayat 1997: 15). The clusters consist of different actors without institutions, ideology and evident leadership.

According to Bayat (1997), there are two key factors that transform the street into an arena of politics. Firstly, the use of public space is seen as a contestation between the populace and the authority. The state expects their users to operate passively to rules by the state. Secondly, any collective political mobilization requires the actors to organize, communicate and – to a certain degree – do networking, either formally or informally. The street is a public place that makes it possible for people mobilize through passive networks. Here, the individuals can communicate instantaneously and recognize their common identity, which is mediated through space, and they can engage themselves, often instantly, in collective action without the help of active networks and organizations (Bayat 1997: 16-19).

During the Mubarak regime, unauthorized political demonstrations were illegal. Although the state may have been able to restrict deliberately organized demonstrations, it was incapable of prohibiting the people to use the physical and social space of the street. As Bayat (1997: 19) states: "The more open and visible the public place, the broader the operation of passive networks and therefore the possibility of collective action becomes". Tahrir Square, The Liberation Square, being both an open and visible public place, became both the primary destination for the protesters in Cairo, as well as serving as a political arena for the Egyptian people. This was a place where the people could act collectively to win back their ability to exert influence against state oppression and the suppression of the will of the people (Atassi 2011: 32).

When a large number of people act collectively, it has a normalizing and legitimizing effect on the acts that would otherwise be deemed illegitimate (Bayat 2010: 20). Thus,

the larger the number of protesters asserting their presence in the public space, such as Tahrir Square, the more the Mubarak regime will be undermined. Although this was a leaderless revolution consisting of people acting individually and separately, it does not mean that the effects of their actions faded away. Rather, they may have generated "a more powerful dynamic than their individual sum total" (ibid.).

3.5 Exploring the youth's motivation to participate

When the general public talks about the revolution in Egypt and the different factors leading to the upheavals, they have mainly focused on the Egyptian people as a whole. However, it is important to differentiate between groups within the Egyptian people, since the Arab society is in the throes of a generational conflict (Muñoz 2000), where politics is controlled by the older generation (Osman 2011: 223;Ibrahim & Wassed 2000; UNDP 2010;). Another important reason for studying youth is the absence of youth as a social category in the various social movement debates (Bayat 2010: 116). Although some scholars have been focusing on youth in the Middle East since the 1990s, their perspective has largely been on the labor market (Muñoz 2000; Meijer 2000; UNDP 2010; Herrera 2010). The study of youth as political actors, however, has been almost non-existent (Bayat 2011a.). In accordance with Jeffrey (2010), this study defines the term "youth" as people between 16 and 30 years old.

Egypt is, like many countries in the Middle East, in the midst of a growing birthrate bulge. More than one-third of the population is between 15 and 29 (Shehata 2011: 140). According to the World Bank, the Middle East has, on the one hand, the fastest-rising levels of schooling and, on the other, the highest level of youth unemployment in the world (World Bank 2011). The youth in Egypt have been denied outlets for political and civic participation because of constraints on the political life and civil society (Shehata 2011: 141), where over fifty percent are poor (Egypt Independent 2012). The fact that there are clear and deep-rooted generational differences in the Egyptian society makes it interesting to take a closer look at the youth, in order to find out which factors motivated them to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square.

There are many factors that may have motivated the youth to participate in the upheavals. However, based on my literature review and fieldwork, there are three possible approaches that may offer a direct and broad explanation for the Egyptian youth's motivation to take part in the protests. I want to explore these approaches, and have therefore made three hypotheses:

H1: The youth wanted to protest against the political, economic and social order.

H2: The youth were motivated by the upheavals in Tunisia.

H3: The youth were motivated by the issues and circumstances around the killings of Khaled Said.

3.5.1 The political, economic and social order

Both women and men who were interviewed for this thesis spoke about the social order in their society. Hierarchical structures are deeply rooted in Egypt, and affect all parts of the society. In the family, the hierarchical structure is based on gender and age, and requires the young to obey the old and fulfill their expectations (Barakat 1993: 106). The lack of jobs makes it difficult for young men to save money to buy their own apartments, which means that they need to live at home with their parents. Thus, young people are socialized into dependence and escapism (Barakat 1993: 105), and live in a state of "permanent infantilized arrested development" (Khalil 2012: 58-59). 45 million young Egyptians are under thirty-five years of age, including the largest group of adolescents in the country's history (Osman 2011: 213; Shehata 2011: 141). While accounting for a large proportion of the population, the unemployed youth are also most affected by social exclusion (Muñoz 2000: 21). Even though they may be both trained and qualified for a job, they are compelled to prolonged unemployment, living with their parents and postponing both adulthood and wedding plans (Filiu 2011: 35).

The young feel insecure in almost all aspects of life. They are hardly free to make their own decisions. Any meaningful social participation is looked upon with disfavor

because of their sociopolitical environments (UNDP 2010; Assaad & Barsoum 2007). Not only does the abuse of their rights drive the Egyptian youth to reject the governing regime, it also causes them to reject the entire society because they feel imprisoned and humiliated (UNDP 2009). The young people feel let down and marginalized by their society, and do not identify with the political thinking and behavior of their elders (Muñoz 2000: 23). The young generation's contribution to public policy has not been welcomed in decision-making circles (Osman 2011: 223). Furthermore, significant fractions of the Egyptian youth have resented the paternalistic tone employed by president Hosni Mubarak for nearly 30 years (Stacher 2011: 102, Filiu 2011: 35). In addition, youth have been addressed as a group that needs both guidance and deviation from the national discourse (Ibrahim & Wassed 2000: 162). Therefore the young people feel like outsiders in their own country (Filiu 2011: 35).

3.5.2 The upheavals in Tunisia

Angrist (2011) writes about how under dictatorships, people act as if they were content with the status quo. They do so because they fear the wrath of the security system. However, when the cost of pretending the status quo to be acceptable becomes intolerable for some of the citizens, sudden and surprising mass protests can erupt. This will again trigger similar actions by others, who will decide to join the opposition when witnessing the great number of others who feel as they do and are willing to show it publicly (Angrist 2011: 77).

The Jasmine Revolution[7] in Tunisia in mid-January 2011 had an important impact on the outbreak of protests in Egypt. It demonstrated to the Egyptian people that even a police state such as Tunisia can accomplish political change through a public and peaceful mass movement (Shehata 2011: 138, Khalil 2012: 123). The unacceptable realities of the Egyptian people re-politicized the population who had been politically desensitized (Khalil 2012: 123).

[7] The name "Jasmine Revolution" originated from the Tunisian Journalist Zied El-Heni, it is named after Tunisia's national flower and in keeping with the geopolitical nomenclature of "color revolutions".

The revolution in Tunisia gave the Egyptian youth the courage and belief they needed to think that they too could bring about change in Egypt (Ghonim 2012: 131). The youth activists tried to re-think their former demonstrations and learn from past experiences (El Mahdi 2012; Balata 2012). Several attempts had been made in Egypt in the past to rally support for change (Khalil 2012). However, the activists' repeated defeats in the past when confronted with the brutality of Mubarak's regime, and their constant trying and failing, made them want to try something totally new (Filiu 2011: 38, Bohn 2011: 76). Although social networks were used as tools to mobilize the Egyptian people, several activists went into the streets and walked in them in order to gather people and increase their numbers before the rally in Tahrir Square (Bohn 2011: 76; Khalil 2012: 144).

3.5.3 The issues and circumstances around the killings of Khaled Said

On June 6, 2010, Khaled Said, a 28-year old, was brutally murdered by state security forces outside a café in Alexandria. Images of Said's face started circulating, and earned severe condemnation from the Egyptian free media and the civilians (Khalil 2012: 75-77). This incident caused the discussions about police brutality to resurface among the youths in Egypt (Khalil 2012: 79-81). Widespread demonstrations took place, and at least 55 protesters in Cairo were arrested by the security officers (Human Rights Watch 2010, Chick 2010, Giglo 2011). Khaled Said's death became especially important for the Egyptian youth because he became a symbol during the revolution.

Bohn (2011) indicates that the rights of the Egyptian youth had been minimal before 25th of January 2011 revolution. Corruption existed in every field, including in the elections, and there was no freedom of expression (Bohn 2011: 76). The police were the most frequent points of contact between the people and the regime (Trager 2011:82). They were abusive and invented violations, frequently confiscating licenses, and the citizens had to bribe the police officers (Anderson 2011: 325). The police brutality in the country had become unbearable for many young Egyptians, and the

killing of Khaled Said, was the final straw (MacLeod 2011: 88-89, Anderson 2011: 325). The death of Khaled Said was a culmination of many years of struggle for several rights; the right to organization, to gathering, to democracy, social and economic rights, to a minimum wage and to the right to strike (MacLeod 2011: 119).

Chapter 4: Method

Based on the study's topic and the research question, qualitative research design has been used. By using qualitative data, that is to say text, it becomes possible to better understand the meaning given of a phenomenon. Quantitative research is advantageous when the aim is to study the extensions and relationships between variables (Bryson 2006: 64). Qualitative study, however, offers more space for getting under the skin of these phenomena, describe them and understand what they imply for the individuals involved (Repstad 1998). When we want to explain a social phenomenon, we must use the individuals as a starting point (Gilje & Grimen 2002: 202). Individuals are created by the social systems in which they find themselves. They are products of the social systems in which they live and work (Gilje & Grimen 2002: 215). Furthermore, a qualitative approach is suitable for an open and exploratory research design, where the phases of the research question, interviews, analysis, interpretation, and report writing interact throughout the process (Thagaard 2003: 27). The main material of this study consists of semi-structured interviews with young people who participated actively in the protests in Tahrir Square, as well as a small number of interviews with area specialists. In addition, I used scientific literature and documentation on social movements in general, and the protest in Tahrir Square in particular.

4.1 Research design and approach

This research consists of a single case study: The upheavals in Tahrir Square in Egypt in 2011. *Case studies* are often based on an in-depth investigation of "an instance of a class of events" (George & Bennett 2005: 17) or of a single individual group. The study focuses on one "instance" in Egypt, namely the upheavals in Tahrir Square in 2011. Case study is commonly defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin 2003: 13). In this research, the "contemporary phenomenon" that has been studied is social movement and the factors that motivated the Egyptian youth to take part in the 18 days long protest in Tahrir Square. By using the case study method, one has the opportunity to

use a variety of data and going more deeply into the cases in question. The possibility of using multiple sources of evidence, is also recognized as one of the main advantages of the case study method, and increases its quality substantially (Yin 2003: 98).

In order to explore the three hypotheses and unravel "the complex interaction between variables" (Schmitter 2006: 7) of the perspective of the Egyptian people, I will use a *qualitative* approach. There is a link between the choice of case study and the qualitative approach. Case studies have, according to George and Bennett (2005: 20), a "powerful advantage in the heuristic identification of new variables and hypotheses through the study of deviant or outlier cases and in the course of fieldwork". This applies to both archival research and interviews with participants, area experts and political activists. Therefore I have made three hypotheses for the empirical investigation, which is based on fieldwork and interviews with relevant participants. There has been limited focus on the Egyptian youth during the protests in Tahrir Square in 2011. This study examines the foundations of social movements, seeking to understand the factors that motivated the Egyptian youth to take part in the protests. According to Bryman (2004: 267-268), a qualitative approach is based on an interpretivist epistemological position that seeks to understand the social world through the interpretations of its participants. Through qualitative research, it is impossible to "freeze" the social settings and circumstances of a study so that it can be reproduced (Bryman 2004: 273). The goal, however, is to minimize errors and biases (Yin 2003: 37). In order to reduce the possibility of systematic bias in my case, I have used relevant secondary literature and other sources to enhance the level of reliability (Yin 2003: 99).

I believe the qualitative method offers a better approach for in-depth study of the youth's opinions in terms of different political, cultural, social and economic factors, and how this motivated them to take part in the protests. In this research we know the outcome: the Egyptian youth who took part in the protests wanted the fall of the Mubarak regime. However, we do not know *which factors* motivated them to take action. The factors will therefore be studied in order to understand what changes in

the society the Egyptian youth really wanted. Since little research has been done on the rationale behind the perspective of the Egyptian youth, this study has an explanatory purpose.

Since this research is an in-depth analysis, the focus is on a single group in the Egyptian society: the higher educated youth, respectively young people from the middle-class between 16 and 30 years old, who took part in the protests in Tahrir Square between 25th of January and 11th of February. There are several reasons why this target group has been chosen. First, it is expected that this group would have a clearer aim and reason for taking part in the protests. This group is higher educated, has access to many sources of media and has knowledge about civil rights. The thinking processes of these people provide important information about the future of Egypt: what role does the thinking process of the youth play in the society and what effect can it have on their country. Secondly, the educated youth played a significant role in the revolution (Shahine 2011; Ez-Eldin 2011; Henry & Springborg 2011). They were an important group who participated from the start of the revolution in the protests on the 25th and 28th of January and demanded political change (Joya 2011: 370). Thirdly, they belong to the group of the "new generation" of Egypt who can develop and build up the country, since they are the higher educated people. The fourth reason, which is a practical reason, is that many people from this group can speak English. The interviews had to take place in English, since I do not speak Arabic.

It is generally held that we cannot generalize on the basis of case studies because it is not possible to say anything in general about a larger group of instances on the basis of only one single instance. Although case studies are not statistically representative, they may be *analytically* representative. It needs to be noted that focusing on one particular group will not generate results that can be generalized over the whole Egyptian society. This again is not the aim of this research. Rather, the aim is to learn more about the most important factors that were the driving force in the youth's decision to take active part in the 25th of January 2011 revolution. Therefore, the results of this research can provide analytical representativeness.

4.2 Qualitative interview

4.2.1 Interview as a research method

Since this study has an explanatory purpose, all interviews have been semi-structured. In an explanatory interview, unstructured or open-ended questions are implemented in order to "understand the context" and "to develop familiarity" (Frey and Fontana 1991: 180). One of the advantages in using semi-structured interviews is that one can meet the informants with openness to their opinions and thoughts on the subject. This will pave the way for a certain degree of independence in relation to the interviewer's own life-world, but also for the theory one has chosen to use. The interviews were formed as a conversation in which the questions and responses were standardized, with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the interviewee's life-world in order to interpret the significance of the described phenomena (Kvale 1996: 124-125).

The interview questions are based on the three hypotheses I made after a perusal of secondary literature, and were divided into a number of topics that can answer the research question and can be used in the further processing of the analysis (Bryman 2004: 321). Collected background material has been used to divide the interviews into a number of topics for the interview guide. The background material was found in connection with the review of existing literature in the field, and takes into account the various factors that may have been crucial for the youth's motivation in participating in the protests in Tahrir Square. The background material has also been applied to design the interview guide, in addition to having been actively used in the subsequent analysis of the field.

The interview guide was both instructive and ensured that relevant topics and sequences were identified and discussed in the interview. As Kvale states, "the questions relate to the topic of the interview, to the theoretical conceptions at the root of an investigation, and to the subsequent analysis" (Kvale 1996: 129). However, I related openly to the interviewee's ideas and thoughts on the subject. The information that the interviewees have on the subject makes it possible to have a conversation that turns into knowledge of the research question (Brinkmann & Tanggard 2010: 30).

Another advantage of the qualitative research interview is that interviews can be developed along the way, and knowledge can thus be amplified (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 43).

4.2.2 Interviews

In this qualitative study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 19 informants, which were an important part of the primary data collection. Since there is a lack of research on the reason why Egyptian youth decided to participate in the upheavals, I wanted to hear the perspectives from the people themselves. I interviewed 17 Egyptian youths between the age of 19 and 30, of different backgrounds and political shadings that participated during the 18 days long protest in Tahrir Square. Out of the 17 informants, only four of them were female. This is representative for the gender differences in Egypt. Although I only managed to interview four girls, it was important to get their views and opinions on the topic studied in this thesis, as well as their experiences, which were often quite different from those of the males. The interviews have offered invaluable insights towards a deeper understanding of what motivated the Egyptian youth to participate in the upheavals. In addition, I had two in-depth interviews with area specialists in order to gain a broader perspective and deeper insight into the problem, beyond the information provided by the secondary literature. My conversations with them have provided me with a more accurate and comprehensive outline of the case examined in this study. Also, by interviewing the youth participants as well as the area specialists, attempts have been made to distinguish between facts and opinions.

Most of the interviews were conducted in Cairo, the largest and most important city of Egypt, in the month of September 2012. One of the interviews was conducted by using Skype,[8] and one of the informants answered some questions via e-mail. All interviews were conducted in English. After inquiring among Egyptians via

[8] Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice and video calls and chat over the Internet.

Facebook[9] and Viber[10] before travelling to Cairo on how I should schedule meetings with Egyptian youths, I received several pieces of advice. Firstly, planning meetings far in advance is challenging in Egypt, as people mostly do not live by a clearly set schedule. Secondly, even though most Egyptian people of the target group do have access to the Internet, it is more effective to make appointments by phone instead of e-mail or social media. Thirdly, Cairo is a large city where it can take several hours to travel from one district to another. For informants it might take too much time and effort to reach a set location. This was especially difficult for the girls, as they face sexual harassment on a daily basis in the streets, which was an additional stress factor.

Informants were recruited through four friends who have been former exchange students in Cairo. Each of them suggested one or two people who they knew had participated during the upheavals in Tahrir Square, from which a "snowball effect" could be generated. In this way I could "borrow" the trust of my intermediaries and let them pass on my request informally to the young people asking them if they were willing to be interviewed. Once the intermediaries gave the go-ahead, the informants were contacted via social media such as Facebook and Twitter[11]. Through the "snowball effect", people from different social groups were targeted, which made a variety of informants possible. In addition, two informants were recruited via a former interviewee.

Appointments were made by phone and text messages once I had arrived in Egypt, and the locations of the interviews were determined in agreement with the informants. Most of the interviews were held in public coffee places in different middle-class neighborhoods in Cairo, and in the homes of the informants. As an interviewer one should "be prepared to meet interviewees at a time and in a place convenient to them" (Thomas 1993: 87) and "…establish an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe

[9] Facebook is a social networking site that allows you to make connections, share interests, and join groups.

[10] Viber is an instant messaging application for smartphones where you can text messages, send images, video and audio media messages.

[11] Twitter is an online social networking service and micro blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets".

enough to talk freely about his or her experiences and feelings" (Kvale 1996: 125). The public locations were not an obstacle for the interviews, as the interviewees did not have any problems with stating their opinion in public. It was remarkable to see the openness of the informants in a post-dictatorial country. Furthermore, none of the informants had any problems with being recorded by a voice recorder, which was used to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions of the interviews. There were two settings for the interviews: most of the people were interviewed individually and in one interview, two people were interviewed at the same time. Interviewing two people at the same time turned out to be useful because it revealed an interesting discussion between the participants.

None of the interviews were alike. They had different lengths and shapes, different interviewees initiated different topics and various aspects were discussed. The interviews with the girls were often longer than the interviews with the males. For some of the informants, the interview would probably have been easier if it had been conducted in their native language, and some language problems had to be dealt with along the way. Having to work with the language also gave me an opportunity to discuss the meaning of the different statements. Talking without an interpreter made the interviews more flexible and enabled the informants to talk more freely around the various topics. However, what came up in the interviews was only what the informants themselves chose to tell me, which was their subjective understanding of their own thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears and thoughts about the society. Kvale (1996) emphasizes that the subjective way in which people understand the world, is a social reality that is truer than many attempts to extract knowledge about the world as something separate from the experiences of those involved. Through this phenomenological scientific view it is possible to understand young people's descriptions as key fragments and bricks in the understanding of the underlying factors behind the revolution in Tahrir Square.

4.2.3 The interview situation and the interviews' validity

None of the interviewees had seen the interview guide before the interview. However, all of the informants were informed about the possibility of anonymity in connection with the interviews before the interview commenced. The informants were open to the topics when they were informed that they would receive the transcribed interviews, so that they would have the opportunity to read through their quotes before the thesis deadline.

Not all the information given through the interviews has been used in the analysis. At times, the informants gave detailed information about their personal lives and about cases of ill treatment and torture by the police and the former regime in Egypt. However, parts of the omitted information emerging from the interviews were used as background information regarding the attitudes of the interviewees. For that reason, I have chosen not to publish the transcribed interviews and the associated audio files. It was in order to create the necessary confidence between the interviewer and the informants, but also to take their safety into account. The quotes in the analysis are used with the purpose of illustrating key points.

4.2.4 Analysis, interpretation and report writing

All interviews were recorded on audio recorder and transcribed during the time of fieldwork. This job increased my knowledge of the material and became part of the interpretation process. In the further analysis, I did not use any other means than the usual word processing and printing. I coded the interview texts by sorting parts of the text under various topics from both theoretical perspectives and topics that the youths brought up. The interview guide was the same for all informants through a standard edition that I designed before travelling to Cairo.

An important ethical issue in report writing and interpretation work is the informants' rights to be portrayed the way they see themselves. All interviewees have therefore received the transcribed interviews, and thus had the opportunity to comment on

things that were – in their opinion - unclear in the interviews. For the social scientist, it is also important to see connections and to theorize beyond the specific representation the informants give of themselves, as opposed to a purely journalistic representation.

My attempts to interpret what the interviewees tell me, implies a move away from their understandings. When I have also tried to draw in theory and concepts, I move yet another step away. While this may provide insight into the social contexts and processes, it may be at the expense of the self-perception of those I have talked to. I have tried to solve the problem by distinguishing as clearly as possible between my interpretation and the person's statement. However, the dilemma between production of knowledge, my perspectives and the person's integrity cannot be completely solved. In report writing there is also an ethical issue related to how information appears, and how it can be used. The youth informants I interviewed will therefore remain anonymous in this research in order to take their safety into account, and are therefore given fictitious names. Asmaa Mahfouz is the only exception, as she has chosen not to be anonymous. The area specialists will be presented by their names.

4.3 Operationalization of the hypotheses

The first hypothesis suggests that the youth participated in the protests because they wanted to protest against the political, economic and social order. The role of the family and the generational differences are deeply rooted in all parts of the society in Egypt, and have therefore a strong impact on the lives of the youth. In order to find out whether the youth wanted to protest against the social order, we first need to examine how the young people perceive the differences between the older and the younger generation in Egypt, and to what degree this motivated them to protest. Secondly, we need to find out their families' views on the Mubarak regime, and if there were divisions in the family that may have had an impact on the youths' decision to protest. Further, questions need to be asked about the youths' living and working situation during the regime of Mubarak in order to get an indication of whether they were motivated by the political and economic order. The answers to

these questions will decide how much impact the first hypothesis has on our perception of what motivated the youth to participate in the protests, and therefore how this hypothesis should be weighted.

The second hypothesis holds that the upheaval in Tunisia was a motivation for the youth to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square. In order to avoid mutually exclusive answers from each of the informants, the questions about Tunisia's impact on the Egyptian youth have to be open. Therefore, the emphasis of the questions has to be on the *role* played by the upheavals in Tunisia. The more extensive the answers, and the more importance the informants ascribe to this subject, the more this hypothesis is strengthened.

According to my third hypothesis, the youth were motivated by the issues and circumstances around the killing of Khaled Said. It is important to emphasize the symbolic effect of the death of Khaled Said on the young people, since they identified themselves with his situation. Therefore, the questions regarding the youths' personal life conditions are supposed to be closely linked to their experience and understanding of the significance of Khaled Said's death. Firstly, we need to ask what thoughts the informants had about the rights of youth in Egypt prior to the fall of the Mubarak regime. To this end we can see how, and to what degree, their descriptions of the youths' situation include topics such as bribery, brutality, and police harassment. Secondly, the questions regarding this hypothesis need to be asked in a wide-open way so that the informants can speak freely, without being led by the questions. Thus, the questions should lay emphasis on topics such as the rights of youth, their role in the society and whether they are treated with respect in that society, and not ask *directly* about the issues and circumstances related to the killing of Khaled Said. However, the more open the questions, the more likely it is that you may get answers pointing in various directions, such as unemployment, family structures, religion, and education. In that case, the hypothesis is weakened. Nevertheless, if the answers to the questions clearly indicate that the issues and circumstances around the death of Khaled Said were a motivating factor, then the hypothesis is strengthened.

Chapter 5: Analysis & Data

The empirical case analysis is conducted as follows: I will first examine each of the hypotheses systematically in order to determine whether they are plausible or not. Then I will discuss and evaluate the hypotheses. The findings will be connected to the theory in chapter three throughout this chapter.

5.1 Hypothesis: Protest against the political, economic and social order

5.1.1 "We didn't have a dream"

When I asked my informants if they could describe the rights of youth during the Mubarak regime, one of them said: "It's simple: the only right you had was to remain silent" ("Abdelrahman" 2012 [interview]). A great majority of the informants described the youth's situation as hopeless. Although there were high rates of unemployment in all of the social classes in the society, the unemployment rate was highest among the *educated* youth, especially those who have a university degree (Goldstone 2011: 336; UNDP 2010: 61; Muñoz 2000: 20): "The more educated you were, the less likely you were to find a job that you were expecting" (Barsalou 2012 [interview])[12]. This is true in many societies, also in Egypt. Regardless of how much education they had, and how hard they worked, the youth I interviewed said they were not treated with any respect in the society. It was common for people who did not have as much experience or education to get good jobs because they had connections or their family had money (Shahine 2011). As one of my informants said, "You didn't get a job based on qualification. There were no standards, and that's why we didn't have a dream" ("Mokhtar" 2012 [interview]). Further, it was – and still is - easier for the older generation to get a job, simply because they are older (UNDP 2010; Ibrahim & Wassed 2000). "Nasser was young when he was president. Therefore he had to have an older person next to him, which was Mohammed Naguib. This is a cultural issue" ("Mourad" 2012 [interview]), as one of my informants pointed out. The society

[12] Judy Barsalou is a visiting scholar at the American University in Cairo.

in general, and the older people in particular, do not accept the fact that younger people can be more qualified for a job than someone from the older generation (UNDP 2010).

Several of the youth interviewed said they had decided to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square, simply because they did not have anything else to do, in the sense that they were staying at home because they were unemployed, felt disconnected to the society and were afraid that there was never going to be a change in their country. The Tahrir Square thus served as a place, which Bayat (1997: 15; 2011b) calls 'Street Politics', where they could express their discontent collectively. For many of them, their living situation had become so unbearable that they were willing to risk their lives. The social conditions that were previously regarded as unfortunate yet tolerable had now been redefined as unjust through collective action. "We were willing to give up our lives in order to improve the country. We didn't have any respect in the society, no opportunities. We were undesired, so what did we have to lose?" ("Noura" 2012 [interview]).

In contrast, the older generation was mainly focusing on how to survive. They had to take care of their family and their only concern was how to get money in order to bring food to the table (Barsalou 2012 [interview], Hakim 2012 [interview][13], "Noura" 2012 [interview]). One informant pointed out that the Mubarak regime succeeded in making the citizens circle around him. He made people struggle and therefore only think about themselves and what they should do in order to survive. The older generation was not concerned about politics. Rather, they were focusing on the problems in their life. "My parents didn't agree with Mubarak, but they didn't despise him. They were thinking, "We will live with his regime, no problem." They were focusing on surviving, that's it" ("Anwar" 2012 [interview]), as one informant pointed out. Many of the older people never thought they would see the fall of the Mubarak regime. Although Mubarak was unpopular among many, the people had difficulty in believing that the oppositional groups could topple him and his regime

[13] Randa Hakim is a Communication and Media Adviser at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Cairo.

(Cook 2009: 57-58). In other words, the citizens did not perceive the probability that collective action would lead to success in overthrowing the regime. This is typical for closed systems, where "contention is restrained by fear of repression" (Tarrow 2011: 165).

According to Alexander (2011: 8), it was neither sectional nor individual interests that drove the revolution. Rather, it was a shared commitment to reconstructing the community, where the desire to reform the country was what brought them together. The protests in Tahrir Square can be viewed as the youths' "repertoire of contention" (Tarrow 2011: 39), where the shared interest was an immediate change. As Asmaa Mahfouz said, "We, the younger generation, *had* to take our rights by our hands. We did not question it, and the revolution was the best way to make it happen" (Mahfouz 2012 [interview]). Thus, the youth can be regarded as the "challengers" (Tarrow 2011: 167) who express a strong dissatisfaction and helped lay the basis for political mobilization. As the youths' regarded their lives as stuck in drudgery, the possibility to participate in collective action was an incentive in itself, even though it could be risky. Moreover, the youth can be regarded as the "early risers" (Tarrow 2011: 167) who had the capacity to mobilize and make claims on the authorities, whereas the older generation can be viewed as the "resource-poor group" (ibid.) with less capacity.

5.1.2 "There is a small Mubarak sitting in every system of the society"

When I asked my informants how they understand the difference between the older and the younger generation, one of them answered:

"It's actually very simple. I was once arguing with my mom and she told me a sentence that really sums everything up: "What you say is wrong with a slight possibility of being right, and what I say is right with a slight possibility of being wrong." (Abdelrahman, 19 [interview]).

Egypt is still a very hierarchical society, where hierarchy is a function of age, gender and class (Barsalou 2012 [interview]; Hakim 2012 [interview]; UNDP 2010: 95). Family plays a very important role in the Egyptian society. They are tightly knit, and often provide a big level of both social and financial support (Bayat 1997: 96). At the same time, families can be relatively conservative. Young people coming from those

kinds of families are more likely to be regulated by the older generation in the family. Especially young girls – regardless of religion – are closely watched by their family members (Barsalou 2012 [interview]; UNDP 2010; Assaad & Barsoum 2007). During the Mubarak regime, there was a very "intrusive interest in regulating social behavior" (Barsalou 2012 [interview]), and women were considered "second-class citizens"(Bayat 2010: 96) in many areas of public life. All of the females interviewed for this thesis stated that the social order was a factor motivating them to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square. They wanted to see a change in the society between the rights of men and women. One informant said:

"My family has always told me what to do and what not to do. I always have to ask my father if I can do something or not. If he says no, then that's final. And when I get married, I need to ask my husband for permission. Sometimes the men say no because they have the power to do so. I was hoping that women would gain more respect in the society through the revolution in Tahrir." (Asmaa Mahfouz 2012 [interview])

Some of the parents disapproved their participation in the revolution, especially in the beginning. "When I told my father that I wanted to participate in the revolution, he started screaming at me and locked me up in my room for three days" ("Sonya" 2012 [interview]), as one of my informants told me. Interestingly, the female informants understood their parents' reactions, even though they disagreed with them. Many parents insisted that it was for their own safety. However, the informants thought that it also had to do with the fact that their parents were afraid to lose both face and their jobs if it became known that their sons and daughters protested against the social and political order in the society. Thus, their parents wanted to avoid even modest costs of protest because they perceived the risks and costs of collective action as higher than the chances of success. Their fear of repression may have constrained them from acting collectively, even though the threats turned out to be more seeming than real. Moreover, it is not easy to convince people who are normally passive that their injustices can be challenged. "It's like there is a small Mubarak sitting in every system of the society" ("Basel" 2012 [interview]), one of the informants said.

On 18 January 2011, one week before the protest, Asmaa Mahfouz, a veiled young woman who was then twenty-six years old, made a statement on Facebook, saying

that she would not wait until the 25th of January to make a change (Khalil 2012: 130-131). She wrote down her cellphone number and urged people to go with her to Tahrir Square that evening. Only a few people showed up. No one in the square paid any attention to her chants, until the police showed up and wanted to arrest her: "People came and talked with the police, apologizing on my behalf and saying that I was crazy, so that they wouldn't arrest me" (Mahfouz 2012 [interview]). That night she decided to post a video on YouTube in order to make herself heard. Instead of directing her anger at the government and the police, she spoke directly to the men – especially Muslim men – to prove their manhood to her:

"I told them: "If you think of yourself as a man, come out. Whoever says that women shouldn't go out to protest because they'll get beaten, let him have some honor and manhood and come out in the street on January 25. If you have honor and dignity as a man, then come out and protect me and the other girls at the protest."(Mahfouz 2012 [interview]).

At the end of the video, she quoted the Quran, section 13, saying "God will never change the condition of a people until they change what is in them." In this way, Mahfouz used both religion and courage as a way of convincing Egyptian men to take to the streets. By showing that she was a tiny, veiled, fearless and angry young woman she dared the men to prove that they had as much courage and dignity as she had. She wanted to tell all people that they should not be afraid if they stood together, and that there would be hope for change in the society if people took action: "You can't wait for other people to take to the streets. You have to start by yourself." (Mahfouz 2012 [interview]).

According to Gamson (1992: 73), the challengers must share the injustice frame in a public way so that it can be collectively adopted. Through the video manifesto, Mahfouz inscribed grievances publicly in frames that identified an injustice and attributed the responsibility for it to others. By putting issues on the agenda that other people identified with, she broke a barrier, which paved the way for others to participate and make their demands heard (Tarrow 2011: 167). Although it is difficult to know *how much* impact Mahfouz's video had on people to dare showing up for the protests, she was mentioned as one of the reasons by several people in the first week of the revolution (Khalil 2012: 132). She became an inspiration to Egyptian women,

and a direct challenge to the men's "prized self-perceptions of what it meant to be a man" (Khalil 2012: 133). In other words, Asmaa Mahfouz can be regarded as what Tarrow (2011: 167) defines as one of the "strategically more savvy" challengers with mobilization capacity that seized the moment and took part in starting a process of change, and expanded the opportunity for others.

5.1.3 "The system must change before the people will change"

Since the Egyptian Republic's first autocrat, Gamal Abdel Nasser, came to power, there has been lack of modern institutions that could channel citizen participation peacefully (Fukuyama 2011). The combination of widespread corruption, patronage, nepotism and economic reform did not benefit the majority of the Egyptian people, and contrasted sharply with the almost complete absence of political change (Haass 2011: 115). The political space available to Egypt's opposition in the public sphere was closed, as it had also been several times previously during the leadership of Nasser and Sadat (Cook 2009: 66). People were taught not to think or act. In this way, the autocracy had succeeded in preventing oppositional political performance from occurring (Alexander 2011: 36-37). The fear of repression, which exist in closed systems and dictatorships (Angrist 2011: 77, Tarrow 2011: 165), restrained the Egyptian people from contention. Thus, the people did not run the risks and pay the costs of engaging in social protest actions because they believed that their chances of succeeding were low. As one informant expressed: "Egyptians are kind. We accept things in order to survive. The system made us so weak. They really tried to kill our souls" ("Basel" 2012 [interview]).

In interviews, the informants described that the citizens in general, and young people in particular, were excluded from politics. Young people were not welcomed to any type of public policy or decision-making during the regime of Mubarak (UNDP 2010: 222; Samad & Mohamadieh 2011: 113; Osman 2011; 223). The Egyptian people did not feel that they were united. Instead, the youth felt they were alienated from their own society (UNDP 2010: 111; Meijer 2000: 1), which made them reach a point where they did not care anymore. "We were thinking that this was Mubarak and his

regime's country, and we were just living there. He didn't respect our minds. We had enough and stopped caring" ("Mourad" 2012 [interview]), one informant pointed out. Not only were the Egyptian youth alienated from their own society. They were also humiliated, which alone can be a powerful motivator (Haass 2011: 115). One of my informants said that seeing how the society treated them, simply because they were young, made them feel very humiliated, and that this motivated them to join the protests in Tahrir Square. Interestingly, several of the people who were interviewed expressed that they did not only join the protests to regain their own rights. Rather, they were demanding rights for all people, including the poor. This contradicts the negative descriptions of Egyptian youth as being "selfish, individualistic and passive" (UNDP 2010: 221).

Although there were several political demands made by the Egyptian people who participated during the 18 days of protest in Tahrir Square (Khalil 2012: 135-136; Atassi 2011; El Mahdi 2012), a majority of my informants believed that they all were united under one goal from the first day, which was the downfall of the Mubarak regime. "Mubarak was just a symbol of the regime and what was happening, and overthrowing him was just the head of the goat" ("Sadek" 2012 [interview]), as one informant uttered. By framing the political issues in a way that appealed to a broad audience, the people in Tahrir Square also managed to trigger ordinary citizens into action around a common theme they all agreed upon: *Isqat Al-Nizaam* (the downfall of the regime) (Khalil 2012: 144; El Mahdi 2012: 144; Shehata 2011: 137).

Interestingly, some of my informants pointed out that many people from the older generation that were present in Tahrir Square disapproved the formulation of this demand. They sympathized with Mubarak as a person, saying that he was an old guy, and that it was the people *around* him that were to blame. Therefore, some of the young people in Tahrir Square came with a statement, urging people to chant that they wanted the end of the *regime*, not Mubarak. "We did that so all people could gather under it, not only the people who wanted the downfall of Mubarak, but also include people who were against the calling of his name" ("Basel" 2012 [interview]), one

informant said. Through this inclusive, yet strategic, approach, the different demands were merged into one main slogan (Khalil 2012: 144; El Mahdi 2012: 144; Shehata 2011: 137). In this way, the political issues became framed in specific grievances in a way that allowed for participation of all Egyptians, regardless of class (El Mahdi 2012: 144), and the people managed finding a "common purpose" (della Porta & Diani 2006: 21) without being identical. Thus, the revolution in Egypt began when the people, who had earlier been described as both apathetic and apolitical (Shehata 2011: 141; Bayat 2011b: 51; El Amrani 2011: 148), found their voice (Alexander 2011: 23), through articulating their collective claims.

For several years, Mubarak had managed to divide the Egyptian people by treating people differently, be it Muslims versus Christians, the old generation versus the younger generation, the rich versus the poor (Cook 2009). The informants said that Mubarak did not care about gathering the people in order to get support, "he had his family and the people who worked for him, and that was enough for him to stay in power" ("Mourad" 2012, [interview]). However, the people who were gathered in Tahrir Square represented all parts of society, and were asking for the same demand: the downfall of the regime (Khalil 2012: 144; El Mahdi 2012: 144; Shehata 2011: 137). This appealed to everyone in Egypt, regardless of his or her ideological position (Gause 2011: 207; Atassi 2011: 33). The slogan unified the groups that wanted a regime change without necessarily systemic changes that would jeopardize their interests (El Mahdi 2012: 144), and thus laid the basis for political mobilization. The state's "capacity for repression" (Tarrow 2011: 160) declined when the people in Tahrir Square were allied as one group.

On the night of 10 February, the people in Tahrir Square believed that Mubarak would announce his resignation during his much-expected speech (Filiu 2011: 39). The president talked to his "fellow citizens, sons, the young men and women of Egypt", saying:

"Today I address Egypt's youth in Tahrir Square and all throughout Egypt. I am speaking to you all from the heart, as a father to his sons and daughters, and I tell you that I am proud of you as a symbol

of a new Egyptian generation calling for change for the better, and holding on to change and dreaming of the future and fashioning it" (CBC News 2011).

Further on in the speech, he gave his promise that neither he nor his son, Gamal, would run in the next presidential elections, and that he would be staying in office until September 2011 (El Mahdi 2012: 144). Mubarak's paternalistic tone made the people in Tahrir Square react very differently (Filiu 2011: 39-40). Some of the informants said that the older generation had wanted to see gradual change. "They were always trying to be good in their positions, thinking that this is going to change the system, which is never right. The system must change before the people will change" ("Basel" 2012 [interview]).

For the older generation to hear that Mubarak and his son would not run for election was more than they expected. According to several of the informants, the older generation were moved by his speech and believed him, some even wanted to give him another chance. "My mom called me and said that we should be satisfied with the accomplishment and go home" ("Noura" 2012 [interview]), one informant told me. However, the reactions from the younger generation were entirely different. Mubarak's tactic of talking to his people like they were his sons had provoked the youth even more (Filiu 2011: 39), and made them decide it was better to "stay in Tahrir and die with dignity" ("Noura" 2012 [interview]). As one informant expressed, "we, the younger generation, were fed up. We were done with emotions, we just wanted him to step down" ("Sayid" 2012 [interveiw]). However, according to several of the informants, many of the young people in Tahrir Square started chanting, urging people not to go home. Mubarak's promise to not run for election was not enough, people should not go home before the *whole regime* resigned from their positions. Through his speech and his promise not to re-run for election, Mubarak had revealed the decline for the regime's capacity for repression. This made the challengers – the youth in Tahrir Square– see opportunities to "advance their claims" (Tarrow 2011: 160), which was also illustrated later during the 18 days of protest, when more demands were presented by the citizens (Khalil 2012: 136; Shehata 2011: 143). Thus, the combination of opportunities, threats and the declining capability for repression by the authorities enhanced the possibility of regime change (Tarrow 2011: 161).

5.2 Hypothesis: The uprising in Tunisia

5.2.1 "The answer is Tunisia"

When being asked from where the Egyptian youth got their motivation when they decided to participate in the protests, a great majority of the informants answered that it was first of all the revolution in Tunisia. Many of the interviewees sat glued to their TV screens as they watched the Tunisians celebrate their triumph: "I was watching the news and crying. I couldn't believe what was happening over there" ("Mokhtar" 2012 [interview]). As political opportunities may not always be apparent, they must be perceived and attributed to becoming the source of mobilization (McAdam et al. 2001; Meyer 2004). Even though the objective reasons for a revolution were present in the country, the upheavals in Tunisia helped to accelerate the Egyptian revolution (MacLeod 2011: 90). The Tunisian people serve as what Tarrow (2011: 167) call the "early risers" for the Egyptian people, by making claims and exposing weaknesses in authoritarian regimes that were not evident before it had been challenged. In this way, the Tunisians showed the Egyptians that a revolution was possible, and that a sustained public and peaceful movement could overthrow a dictator (Atassi 2011; Ghonim 2012): "The uprising in Tunisia gave us the tool to believe that we can also make it. It made us feels that it was possible" ("Basel" 2012 [interview]).

When the informants were asked about what role they think the upheavals in Tunisia had played for the participation of the Egyptian youth in the protests in Tahrir Square, their answers differed. Some of the informants pointed out that they did not think that the revolution would have happened, if it had not been for the upheavals in Tunisia. One informant said:

> "Before the success of the revolution in Tunisia, I was thinking, "Maybe we can make a revolution, a protest one day." I wasn't sure. But when I saw the success of the revolution in Tunisia, I decided to protest as well" ("Ismael" 2012 [interview]).

Others said that they thought the revolution in Egypt would have taken place regardless of what had happened in their neighbor country. However, all of the informants pointed out that the upheavals in Tunisia had shown them how to

overthrow a regime. “I shared a picture of the Tunisian flag on Facebook. Under it was written, “The answer is Tunisia” (“Basel” 2012 [interview]), one informant said.

Goldstone & Tilly (2001: 183) argue that “a group may decide to bear very high costs for protest if it believes the chance of success are high”. Not only did the Tunisian people’s success in overthrowing a dictator demonstrate to the Egyptian people the effects collective action could have. It also gave the Egyptian youth extra courage and the belief they needed in order to act (Ghonim 2012): “Tunisia showed us that you can make it, that you could demand your rights. When we looked at them we knew it was possible to have a different society. Tunisia showed us the way” (“Tarek” 2012 [interview]).

5.2.2 Tunisia: the element of surprise

According to Tarrow (2011: 164), people may be constrained from acting collectively by threats of repression. Tunisia played a fundamental role in the positivity of change, and made many Egyptians discover how *weak* those authoritarian and autocratic regimes actually were, by showing that the threats of repression were “more apparent than real” (Tarrow 2011: 164). According to the informants, the greatest achievement in the wake of the upheavals in Tunisia was that they were no longer afraid. The Tunisian revolution awakened the idea that the people would have the ability to topple an authoritarian regime (Khalil 2012: 123; Ghonim 2012). By overthrowing Ben Ali, the Tunisian people had exposed the vulnerability of authoritarian regimes. In this way, the Tunisian people became what Tarrow (2011: 160) defines as an “external resource”, that made the Egyptian people see an opportunity to put and end to the injustices also in their own country, and thus lowered the cost of collective action. As one informant expressed: “We were not afraid of our dictator anymore” (“Abdelrahman” 2012 [interview]).

Many of the informants mentioned that they had realized that their country had many similarities with Tunisia. Having a “common purpose and a shared commitment to a

cause" (della Porta & Diani 2006: 21) made the Egyptian and Tunisian youth feel compatible and linked to each other. Firstly, both of the countries had aging autocrats (Angrist 2011). Secondly, both had military regimes that were suffering from nepotism, where a single family and those who had close connections to them were involved in most aspects of public and economic life (Trager 2011; Khalil 2012). Thirdly, both countries had developed into ruling systems, indifferent to their citizens' needs and desires (Khalil 2012: 127-128). As one informant stated: "The system was the same. It just changed shapes. But the system of oppression was the same"("Basel" 2012 [interview]). Additionally, it made the Egyptian people perceive "the probability that social protest actions will lead to success" (Goldstone & Tilly 2001: 182), and that they also would be capable of overthrowing their own regime.

Decisions regarding collective action are shaped by how threats and opportunities combine (Tarrow 2011: 161), and where the attitude toward risk depends on whether the outcome is perceived as a gain or a loss (Quattrone & Tversky 1988:722). A few of the interviewees mentioned that the Egyptian people started paying more attention to what was happening in their country, as a direct result of the upheavals in Tunisia. Once they witnessed the fall of Ben Ali, the Egyptian people woke up and started paying attention, even those who were not interested in politics (Khalil 2012: 123). That was considered impossible, never likely to happen. So "if it could happen there, it could happen in Egypt" (Barsalou 2012 [interview]). By succeeding in claiming the downfall of Ben Ali, the upheavals in Tunisia could be regarded as the "master frame" (Tarrow 2011: 167) of the Egyptian revolution, since they could identify with the issues of their neighbor country. Although contention had been largely restrained by fear of repression in Egypt, this fear now focused on the risks and costs they would continue to face if they did not take action, now that they had witnessed the Tunisian people succeeding in overthrowing an autocrat. Thus, the combination of the threats the Egyptian people were facing in their country and the opportunities that were presented to them through the success of the Tunisian revolution helped shape the youths' decisions in taking collective action.

Another issue mentioned by some of the informants was the fact that there had always been a sense of brotherly Arab competitiveness between the two countries. Several of the informants told that Egyptians have always been considered both the cultural and political leaders in the Arab region. "I was thinking: "If *they* made it, then why can't we?" We're Egyptians! We can do anything if we put our minds into it" ("Sadek" 2012 [interview]). Witnessing the Tunisians accomplishing what the Egyptian people had not yet managed to do had reawakened their competitive pride, almost as though liberation were an African Cup match (Khalil 2012: 145). "Having such a successful prototype encourages you to think that you can achieve the same" ("Fouad" 2012 [interview]), one informant pointed out.

5.2.3 The role of the social media

Internet activism, such as social media, has become a technique that is familiar in various movements. This technique has both transformed the strategy of protest movements and made collective action more reflective (Carroll & Hacket 2006: 89). Joseph (2012: 146) defines *social media* as a group of Internet-based applications and platforms that allow for interactive participation by users, as well as allowing the creation and exchange of user generated content. People share information on social networking sites, where Facebook and Twitter are among the most popular (Joseph 2012: 148). The conversations on social networks are not merely limited to one-to-one conversation, but enables conversation from many-to-many (Zakaria 2011).

Communication and learning serve as important mechanisms for mobilizing around opportunities (Tarrow 2011: 164). Many of the informants mentioned the importance of social media before and during the protests. Through social medias such as Facebook and Twitter, Tunisian and Egyptian youth started writing to each other, thus creating wide-ranging networks, which extended into the virtual world (Ghonim 2012; Joseph 2012; Atassi 2012). Through contact via the social media, framing and identity construction was created among the youth, which are important elements in creating solidarity between the movement participants and activating them (Tarrow 2011:143). The Tunisian youth encouraged the Egyptian youth. One informant said:

"The Tunisians started writing to us in our groups on Facebook. All the information came from them. This was such a great motivation for us. We were overwhelmed by the support we got" ("Noura" 2012 [interview]). Several of the informants pointed out that the Egyptian youth learned a lot from their neighbor country. Tunisian youth gave specific and practical advices on how to succeed in overthrowing their regime (Joseph 2012):

> "We were following every single step via Facebook. They wrote what we should do and what not to do. They told us how to cope with tear gas by putting coca cola or vinegar in our faces. How else should we know these things?" (Mahfouz 2012 [interview]).

The advices given by the Tunisian youth can be seen as what Tarrow (2011: 160) refers to as "external resources", which helped the Egyptian youth to cease their compliance. The advices helped them identify their opportunities, and it also increased the Egyptians' opportunities for contention. In addition, they helped to demonstrate the utility of collective action that the Egyptian youth could copy or develop further.

According to Atassi (2011:32), modern means of communication did not only enable young people to think collectively. They also made it possible for the revolution to take place in genuine freedom. Through social media the Egyptian youth were able to enjoy freedom of speech, which they had been prevented from in other areas (Atassi 2011: 32; Shahine 2011: 2; Shehata 2011: 142): "We were no longer afraid of protesting for our rights" ("Hazem" 2012 [interview]). Thus, the social media served as a place where the Egyptian youth could frame their grievances and dignify their claims, get in touch with others, and produce a collective identity, which helped shape the form of the uprising (Idle & Nunns 2011: 19).

Although social media played a significant role for the Egyptian youth both before and during the protests in Tahrir Square (Ghonim 2012; Joseph 2012), some of the informants emphasized that the means of communication was not the *reason* for the revolution to happen. Rather, it was an important *tool* for exchanging information between the Tunisian and Egyptian youth that served to expand their opportunity for

contention (Shahine 2011: 2; Shehata 2011). One informant expressed, “If we hadn’t had the social media, we would have found another way of communicating and exchanging ideas. Revolutions have happened before, and social media didn’t exist then, but they still succeeded” (“Noura” 2012 [interview]). Furthermore, social media are not decisive, as they can both be repressed and employed by governments (Haass 2011: 115).

Tarrow (2011:30) argues that it is when people meet face-to-face that collective action is activated and sustained. On January 27, the Mubarak regime shut down the Internet for five days in a futile attempt to stop the protests (Abdo 2011: 165; Stacher 2011: 100). Although this disrupted social media communications, some of the informants said they thought the Internet blackout backfired and increased the protest activity, because getting out in the street “was the only way to find out what was happening” (“Fadel” 2012 [interview]). In this case, the social media had served as a tool for “communication and networking among the actors” (Bayat 1997: 16). However, when the Internet and telecommunication systems were blocked, the people took to the streets of Qasr al-Ayum, Qasr al-Nil, and Talaat Harb that all gather in the large traffic circle at the center of Tahrir Square. The people that gathered in the streets of Tahrir Square started communicating instantaneously and recognizing a common identity, which was mediated through space, and engaged instantaneously in collective action. ”This proved that when we believe in something, we don’t need to mobilize and be organized in order to act” (“Fayza” 2012 [interview]), one informant expressed. Thus, the use of public space, such as the streets of Tahrir Square, made it possible for the youth to mobilize without the help of “an active network” (Bayat 1997:16.).

5.3 Hypothesis: The issues and circumstances around the killing of Khaled Said

5.3.1 "We are all Khaled Said"

The police in Egypt are known to be both corrupt and abusive (Anderson 2011; Human Rights Watch 2010; Freedom House 2010; Transparency International 2010; Abu-Fadil 2011). For years, local protests and strikes had been carried out by educated youth in order to draw attention to police harassment and state corruption (Rabbani 2011: 12; Shahine 2011: 2; Ciezadlo 2011:233). According to some of the informants, the police murder of Khaled Said spiked the activism and unrest that had been growing steadily for a number of years in Egypt. Therefore, the Tunisian revolution sprouted easily in Egypt because the conditions for a revolt were already present and deep-rooted (El Mahdi 2012: 134). Thus, the Tunisian revolution had underscored and enhanced the seriousness and injustice of the social conditions that were similar to the conditions in Egypt, which had earlier been regarded as unfortunate yet tolerable by the people. As one informant pointed out: "Political life in Egypt was more mature than the political life in Tunisia. We have had some previous moments since 2004, like Kefaya, 6th of April and [protests around the killings of] Khaled Said"("Fouad" 2012 [interview]). Not only can the efforts made by the actors in the previous movements be regarded as fundamental in breaking the barrier of fear (El Mahdi 2012: 145), as well as increasing the opportunity for political space to open up by making the "challengers see opportunities to advance their claims" (Tarrow 2011: 160). They can also be considered as "early risers" who opened up institutional barriers, expanded the opportunities so that the demands of other groups could pour, as well as demonstrating the advantage of collective action that could be innovated upon (Tarrow 2011: 167).

In June 2010, shortly after the killing of Khaled Said, a Facebook group was created with the name "*Kullena Khaled Said*" ("We are all Khaled Said")[14]. The page gained a significant amount of youth followers, attracting more than a million supporters, and became the focal point for a number of large protests against state abuses during the

[14] The Facebook group was created by Wael Ghonim, a young computer engineer from Egypt who worked as a Head of Marketing at Google in the Middle East &North Africa.

summer of 2010 (Shehata 2011: 142). By framing specific grievances, namely police brutality and oppression, the page succeeded in uniting young people around one premise. In this way, the youth managed to bypass some of the regime's constraints on political and civil life (Khalil 2012; Shehata 2011: 142). The Facebook group can thus be regarded as a place where collective identity was developed among the many members of the group, where the death of Khaled Said both served as a creation of connectedness, and a cause they shared and were all committed to (della Porta & Diani 2006: 22).

Social movements play an important role in "'naming' grievances and connect them to other grievances" (Snow & Benford 1992: 136). In this way, they construct "larger frames of meaning" (Tarrow 2011: 144) that will resonate with the cultural tendencies of the people. Just as Mohamed Bouazizi sparked off the protests in Tunisia that spread to the capital, the death of Khaled Said was called by some of the informants the tip of the iceberg for the Egyptian youth. Although the killing of Khaled Said did not affect the Egyptian people directly, some of the informants described it as a clear symbol of what was happening with the youth in Egypt. One informant said, "He was a young man from the middle-class, exactly like me, who had nothing to do with politics and was killed for no reason. He simply became a victim of police brutality that was directed against youth" ("Fadel" 2012 [interview]).

According to McAdam (1999: 51), people must collectively define their situation as unjust before collective action can occur. The informants stated that young people did not have any rights, and the youth in particular were continuously facing violence and control by the police (Anderson 2011; Khalil 2012; Shahine 2011). "We didn't have any rights. We were totally discriminated. It was total oppression" ("Basel" 2012 [interview]), one informant said. Thus, the killing of Khaled Said became connected to other grievances in the society, and constructed "larger frames of meaning" (Tarrow 2011: 144), as it became a symbol of what was happening in the country in general and to the youth in particular. According to some of the informants, police brutality could actually be seen as an appalling *state* brutality, since the police were

the most frequent points of contact between the people and the regime (Trager 2011:82).

Not only were the policemen known for their violence, which was often directed against the youth. They were also known for their corruption and bribery (Khalil 2012; Abu-Fadil 2011; Anderson 2011; Human Rights Watch 2010; Freedom House 2010; Transparency International 2010): "If I walked in the street at 2 a.m., the police officers would stop me for no reason whatsoever, search me and tell me to show them my ID. If I wanted the ID back, I had to pay them money" ("Anwar" 2012 [interview]). Some of the informants told that the youth were often the police men's "main target" when they were in the streets. "They did these things to show us who is in control" ("Fadel" 2012 [interview]), one informant said.

Interestingly, a few of the informants pointed out that there was a generational difference regarding the views on this issue. "The older generation didn't seem to care that much about the fact that the authorities and the police took more power", one informant said ("Basel" 2012 [interview]). Another informant mentioned that his father did not want to take part in the revolution, simply because he had contacts in the police department and the traffic department, and therefore "didn't need things to change" ("Sadek" 2012 [interview]). Convincing people that are normally passive that the inequalities of everyday life can be challenged is not simple (Tarrow 2011: 145). Moreover, contention is insufficient if individuals adopt a different interpretation of what is happening privately, because the challengers must share the injustice frame in a public way (Gamson 1992: 73). This example illustrates that there may have been lack of collective identity among the people to trigger into collective action around this issue any further than the protests that emerged right after Khaled Said's death. Therefore, the difference among the generations may have made it difficult for the Egyptian people to have police brutality and oppression as a common theme.

5.3.2 Death as a source of collective action

One of the informants said that the first protest he had ever attended was a protest against police brutality in the name of Khaled Said. "This protest made me optimistic and I really thought we could make a change. I got arrested, beaten up, and then the police released me. But I was happy. Before Khaled Said, I didn't have hope. I didn't think we could make a change in the country" ("Mokhtar" 2012 [interview]), he stated. Thus, the death of Khaled Said became what Tarrow defines as a "source of collective action" (Tarrow 2011: 45) having the power of bringing people together in solidarity and grief as something they have in common. Furthermore, funeral processions are often the only occasions where protests can begin in a repressive system – such as Egypt during the Mubarak regime – where public assemblies are banned (ibid.).

Even though there were several protests in both Alexandria and Cairo after the killing of Khaled Said, it never escalated to a big revolt before the upheavals in January 2011. According to Tarrow (2011: 45), death's moment is brief, and the ritual occasions in relation to the death is soon terminated. Therefore, death is seldom "the source of a sustained social movement" (ibid.). This could explain why the protests around the death of Khaled Said did not develop into a larger sustained mobilization against the authorities.

According to Quattrone and Tversky (1988: 722), "an individual's attitude toward risk depends on whether the outcomes are perceived as gains or losses". Although a majority of the informants stated that the murder of Khaled Said was directed to them as youth, they were still afraid to do something drastic. As one informant said, "Even though we hated the police, we were all very afraid of them" ("Sadek" 2012 [interview]). Thus, the youth avoided protesting because they believed that chances of succeeding through social protest actions were low. Another informant, however, claimed that the effect of Khaled Said's death on the Egyptian youth was similar to the impact of the upheavals in Tunisia. The death of Khaled Said made a lot of people who had not been interested in politics earlier wake up and pay attention to what was

happening to the youth in the society (Ghonim 2012; Khalil 2012): "They started thinking that it could be *them* who got killed next. That was a very strong motivation and a turning point" ("Fouad" 2012 [interview]). Since the death of Khaled Said was not directly linked to political issues (Khalil 2012:80-81), it became a case of significance for a larger amount of youth. The case of Khaled Said framed a specific grievance, namely police brutality and oppression, which made the youth recognize that they had a common purpose where the solidarity around Khaled Said's death linked them.

5.3.3 The significance of humiliation

Several of the informants believed that the excessive use of violence on the 25th and 28th of January in Tahrir Square made an increasing number of people decide to join the protests. One informant said: "We were not afraid anymore, we were very brave" (Mahfouz 2012 [interview]). Another informant told that the police's use of violence towards his friends for demanding their rights made him want to take part in the protests. "I decided it was time to act. You cannot watch people be humiliated like that for just demanding their rights" ("Sadek" 2012 [interview]). This illustrates that humiliation alone could have been a powerful motivation for a number of Egyptian youths to participate in the protests (Haass 2011). Thus, experiencing threats by the police that were present in Tahrir Square as well as witnessing what Tarrow refers to as "high levels of threat but declining capacity for repression" (Tarrow 2011: 160), since some people had passed the fear of protesting, made some of the youth decide to join the protests. Suddenly, fighting the regime was no longer exclusively for agitators. Rather, it became necessary in order to survive.

According to some of the informants, the case of Khaled Said made people not only regard the protests as only politics. Rather, they saw it simply as doing the right thing. "You have to choose a side. Either you're with the people, or you're with the police. When you see injustice and take sides, God will reward you" ("Mokhtar" 2012 [interview]), one informant uttered. The incident touched a deep and powerful societal nerve, which resonated among ordinary citizens, and thus helped politicize numerous

Egyptians who had never before considered attending a protest (Khalil 2012: 81). The death of Khaled Said became a "nationwide referendum" (ibid.) on the behavior of the police state under the Mubarak regime. As one informant pointed out, "Mubarak didn't have any support from the people, so he got support from guns. That's how he ruled and controlled the people" ("Mokhtar" 2012 [interview]). To this end, the case of Khaled Said may have served as a collective action frame, as it helped emphasizing and redefining police brutality as unjust and immoral, which had previously been seen as unfortunate but tolerable.

5.3.4 The demand for dignity and a decent life

Although some of the informants stated that the motivation for participating in the protests was not directly linked to the killing of Khaled Said, they emphasized that his death became a significant turning point. One of the informants described the life under the rule of Mubarak as a life without any rights, opportunities or dignity. For her it was the last straw when three young Egyptian men set themselves on fire in front of the Parliament Building, two blocks from Tahrir Square, as an expression of discontent. "I was so angry! There were no rights for youth. Youth were like shadows in the society. All their dreams had vanished. It wasn't only about Pyramids anymore. It was time to react", she stated ("Fayza" 2012 [interview]). One of the informants explained that the three people had set themselves on fire because they had been angry and demanded dignity. These cases of self-immolation, the death of Khaled Said and other similar incidents had caused a great anger and frustration among many young Egyptians, and made them decide to take to the streets (Atassi 2011; Beydoun 2011; Traboulsi 2011). "We were gathered around one goal: we wanted change. Change of the regime and a change in the society. We demanded decent lives for everyone" ("Fayza" 2012 [interview]).

Several of the informants also expressed a great solidarity with the poor people in Egypt, and emphasized that the demand for dignity and a decent life should include people from all classes in the society. According to a majority of the informants, it was the middle-class who participated during the first days of protest. The working

class only decided to participate once they saw it as an opportunity for change because they were afraid to lose everything for a change that was not going to happen (Henry & Springborg 2011). In this case, the people from the middle-class can be regarded as the "early risers", as they were the first to challenge the authorities in Tahrir Square (Khaled 2012: 147; Rahman-Rabbani 2011: 234; Traboulsi 2011:17; Shahine 2011). By taking to the streets and protesting, they expanded the opportunity for others to join. Furthermore, they put issues on the agenda, such as the downfall of the regime, which all the people could relate to (El Mahdi 2012: 144; Khaled 2012; 144). "When they saw that the people were encouraging everybody to participate, they went. They had reached their limits" ("Basel" 2012 [interview]), one informant told. This corresponds with Bayat's description of "structurally atomized individuals"(Bayat 1997: 9) who decided to participate in street demonstrations once protests have reached a reasonable degree of legitimacy.

Some of interviewees mentioned that they were fighting for the rights of the poor people as much as for themselves. "I felt that I could be strong for these people and fight for their rights" ("Sadek" 2012 [interview]), one informant said. Another informant stated: "This was not about myself. I feel that all humans must have their rights. That's when I'm going to relax, when I see all human beings having rights" ("Basel" 2012 [interview]). This weakens my hypothesis that the issues and circumstances around the killing of Khaled Said had been a factor motivating the Egyptian youth to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square. However, even though the case of Khaled Said did not constitute a *direct* motivation for the young people to take part in the protests, it became a *focal point* for a number of large protests against state abuses, and thus a significant turning point.

5.4 Other underlying motivational factors

Although most of the informants stated that the upheavals in Tunisia motivated them to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square, some of them pointed out that there were also other factors that had motivated them. A large amount of protesters were marching in the streets all across the city, encouraging people that were walking in the

sidewalks to join them (Khalil 2012: 144; Bohn 2011: 76; Traboulsi 2011; Beydoun 2011; Atassi 2011). By chanting "raise your voice, he that shouts won't die" and "Join us, you won't go to jail", to people, especially the youth, that were witnessing the street protests, the protesters tried to tell them that fear was what kept them from changing (Khalil 2012: 144). Here, the street conveyed "collective sentiments and dissent" (Bayat 2011b: 50) expressed by the people who lacked institutional channels to express their discontent. Thus, collective action was the only resource they possessed to demonstrate their claims against their opponents. Seeing the large number of people acting collectively, had a normalizing and legitimizing effect on the acts that would otherwise be deemed illegitimate (Bayat 2010: 20).

One informant told that he was at work when he witnessed thousands of people walking in the street outside of his work place. "The fact that so many people took to the streets at the same time on the 25th of January motivated me a lot. I felt that I had to join them. This was the time" ("Mokhtar" 2012 [interview]). In this way, ordinary people recognized that they had a common purpose, and were linked by ties of solidarity. The thousands of people that marched in the street towards Tahrir Square showed the existence of what Tarrow (2011: 33) defines as "available allies" in the population, which made people perceive an opportunity to join the protests. Thus, through street politics, ordinary Egyptians found a way to express their views and interests (Bayat 2011b: 50).

5.5 Assessment of the findings

When Mubarak held his speech on February 10, 2011, a generational difference became apparent among the protestors in Tahrir Square. While many of the people belonging to the older generation were satisfied with his promise not to run for re-election, the younger generation continued demanding his immediate resignation. In this way, there were different attitudes among the people regarding Mubarak as a person, but an agreement about the regime. The declining capability for repression by the authorities combined with opportunities and threats enhanced the possibility of regime change, which made the youth see an opportunity to advance their claims. The

disappointment among the youth indicates indirectly that they had hopes of witnessing the downfall of both the president and the regime. This reaction illustrates that the protests against the political order had been a motivational factor. To this end, this finding strengthens the first hypothesis that the Egyptian youth wanted to protest against the political, economic and social order, *to a certain degree*.

Several of the informants stated that they joined the protests to demand rights for all people, including the poor. This illustrates that the protest against the political, economic and social order was an *underlying* motivational factor for many of the Egyptian youth to join the revolution. The upheavals in Tunisia and the death of Khaled Said touched a strong dissatisfaction with their own circumstances of life that points to the social conditions of the youth. In this way, the social conditions had now been redefined as unjust and immoral, while they previously had been regarded as unfortunate yet tolerable. By embedding specific grievances in emotional-laden framings, the youth became convinced that their cause was just and important. These elements also strengthen the hypothesis to a certain degree.

All of the four females interviewed for this study said explicitly that the social order was a factor that motivated them to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square. This may indicate that an aspect of the first hypothesis is strengthened. However, none of the thirteen male informants mentioned this as a specifically motivating factor. This demonstrates a gender difference between the informants, and therefore modifies this aspect of the first hypothesis.

The differences between the generations reflect the hierarchical structures in the society, where young people wanted a change in the social order far more than the older generation. Also, it illustrates that the people were not as allied as it might seem, as people must collectively define their situation as unjust before collective action can get underway (McAdam 1999: 51). This indicates that the urge to protest against the social order was more an underlying motivational factor rather than a primary

motivational factor. Thus, the strength of this hypothesis is modifies, as the findings show indications that partly strengthen and partly weaken it.

Tunisia demonstrated the weakness of autocratic regimes, thus making the Egyptian youth believe that they could bring about change. By succeeding in claiming the downfall of Ben Ali, the Tunisian people showed that the autocratic regimes' repression were more apparent than real. The upheavals in Tunisia became the "master frame" (Tarrow 2011:167) of the Egyptian revolution, since the young Egyptians could identify with the issues of their neighbor country.

All the youth interviewed for this study very strongly emphasized that the upheavals in Tunisia were a crucial motivational factor in their decision to participate in the protests. The support the Egyptian youth received from the youth in Tunisia through social medias such as Facebook and Twitter, where they were given specific and practical advice on how to overthrow the regime, was a motivation in itself. Additionally, social media became a tool for exchanging information. Through contact via the social media, framing and identity construction was created among the youth, which are important elements in creating solidary between the movement participants in the two countries. The awakening of the Egyptian youth when witnessing the downfall of Ben Ali was crucial, as well as the communication through social media. These factors constitute a significant strengthening of the second hypothesis, that the Egyptian youth were motivated by the upheavals in Tunisia.

Some of the respondents emphasized that if they had not had access to social media, they would have found other ways of communicating in order to mobilize. This was proven when the Internet and the telecommunication systems were shut down by the regime in an effort to restrain the mobilization among the people. The blocking of the Internet increased protest activity. This proves that collective action is activated and sustained when people meet face-to-face (Tarrow 2011: 30). Furthermore, it shows that "an active network" (Bayat 1997:16) was not needed in order to mobilize, because the street itself was transformed into a political arena.

The Tunisian revolution sprouted easily in Egypt because the conditions for a revolt were already present and deep-rooted in the country. The death of Khaled Said became a turning point, as it played an important role in "naming" grievances and connecting them to other grievances, and in this way constructed "larger frames of meaning" (Tarrow 2011: 144). To this end, his death helped spike the activism and unrest that had been growing among the Egyptian youth during the last decade. Khaled Said became not only a symbol of police brutality. His death also served to illustrate how strongly the youth experienced being passivized and redundant in the society, which strengthens the third hypothesis.

One of the informants mentioned that the protest against police brutality in honor of Khaled Said was the first time he had protested in public. This may indicate that the same has been the case for many other youths. The killing of Khaled Said made the youth wake up. Since the case of Khaled Said was not regarded as a direct link to political issues, more youth than previously dared to take action and protest. However, the protests around the killing of Khaled Said did not evolve into a larger mobilization against the authorities. The reason for this might be that death is seldom "the source of a sustained social movement" (Tarrow 2011: 45). In this way, the hypothesis regarding the youth being motivated by the issues and circumstances around the killing of Khaled Said is modified.

One could say that my first hypothesis serves to describe the *underlying factors* that were simmering in the country. The death of Khaled Said awakened the Egyptian youth, and became both a *turning point* and a *symbol* unifying them. These factors came to the surface, and the Egyptian youth dared to take to the street as soon as they saw that the Tunisian people had succeeded in overthrowing their authoritarian regime. The Tunisian revolution served as a model, both by demanding the downfall of the autocratic regime that the Egyptian people identified with, and by demonstrating the possible effects of collective action. Thus, my hypothesis number two, that the uprising in Tunisia motivated the Egyptian youth, is strengthened.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study has attempted to answer a key question, namely *what were the most important motivational factors for the Egyptian youth to participate in the 25th of January 2011 revolution?* In order to answer this question and to structure my thesis, three hypotheses were developed. *Firstly*, the youth were wanted to protest against the political, economic and social order. *Secondly*, the youth were motivated by the upheavals in Tunisia. *Thirdly*, the youth were motivated by the issues and circumstances around the killing of Khaled Said.

6.1 Findings

The findings of this study show that the three hypotheses neither directly contradict nor exclude each other. The study creates an understanding of what should be particularly emphasized in each of the hypotheses, and the mutual correlation between the different factors.

Regarding the hypotheses specified in the theory chapter, I find only limited support for the first hypothesis. Therefore, *the strength of the hypothesis about the youth wanting to protest against political, economic and social orders is modified.* Although the Egyptian youth in general and the girls in particular were motivated by the protest against the political, economic and social order, the findings from the conducted interviews reveal a gender difference in this issue, especially regarding the motivation to protest against the social order in the Egyptian society. This hypothesis can, however, serve as an illustration of the *underlying factors* that had been bubbling in the society, and not of the Egyptian youth's main motivation for participating in the revolution.

The second hypothesis was that the youth were motivated by the uprising in Tunisia. *I find substantial support for this hypothesis.* Through the Jasmine revolution, the

Tunisian people demonstrated that the repression of authoritarian regimes was more apparent than real, and that a revolution was possible. Thus, the upheavals in Tunisia broke the fear of the Egyptian youth, and made them perceive the probability that collective action would lead to success in overthrowing the Mubarak regime. The underlying factors bubbling in the country surfaced, and the Egyptian youth dared taking to the street as soon as they saw that the Tunisian people had succeeded in overthrowing their own authoritarian regime. The Tunisian revolution served as a model, both by demanding the downfall of the autocratic regime that the Egyptian people identified with, and by demonstrating the likely effects of collective action.

The strength of the third hypothesis regarding the issues and circumstances around the killing of Khaled Said is also modified. This factor cannot be considered a main motivation for the Egyptian youth to take part in the protests. However, the death of Khaled Said became a symbol of police brutality directed against the youth. His death became a *significant turning point* to all my informants, as it "named" grievances and connected them to other grievances, and thus constructed larger frames of meaning. His death made a large number of Egyptian youths pay attention to police and state brutality, because his case was not directly linked to the political issues in the country. In this way, it made the youth wake up, as they felt directly insulted by the incident. However, the protests around the killing of Khaled Said faded out, and did not escalate into a larger mobilization against the authorities.

6.2 Methodological remarks

When it comes to the methodological criteria of the reliability of a qualitative study, a key question is whether another researcher would have come to the same results if the study had been carried out at a different time. Bryman (2004:273) argues that it is impossible to "freeze" the social settings and circumstances of a study so that they can be reproduced. Nevertheless, the goal is to minimize errors and biases (Yin 2003: 37).

A potential problem concerning the reliability issue is the use of semi-structured interviews as data collection for this study. This may have made reliability more problematic, because coding and interpreting the obtained information from such interviews is challenging. I have done my best to keep this in mind. Furthermore, I have been aware of the possibility of systemic bias when assessing my interview data. Thus, some comments have to be made on the generalization of the results of the study. Firstly, as all the informants were higher educated youth from the middle-class, the findings cannot be generalized on youth as a group. The answers could have varied if I in my interviews also had included youth from the working-class. Secondly, as the interviews were carried out in English, the informants could not express themselves in their native language, which can have influenced the answers. In order to reduce the possibility of systematic bias in my study, I have used relevant secondary literature and other sources to raise the level of reliability, as recommended by Yin (2003: 99).

In this thesis, I have attempted to contribute to an understanding of why people participate in social movements. Although there exists a considerable amount of literature on this subject, there has been limited focus on youth as a category in social movement debates (Bayat 2010: 116), as well as the study of youth as political actors (Bayat 2011a).

However, a much broader category of data would be needed for carrying out a thorough analysis of why youth participate in social movements. One of the challenges in conducting this study has been the lack of empirical studies responding directly to my research question. Some general considerations have been made, as there has been only a limited amount of literature in support of these results.

A broad angle was chosen in response to the research question, and thus three different hypotheses were presented as possible explanations. However, the indicators given for the three hypotheses have not been measured in detail, as the extent of this

study has been limited. Nevertheless, my intention has first and foremost been to shed light on a research question that is still largely unexplored.

6.3 Implications

Since the end of the protests in 2011, an increasing amount of literature on the Egyptian revolution has been published. This shows that researchers have taken great interest in the subject. However, so far the perspective has mainly been on the people as a whole, rather than focusing on specific groups in the society. Not only would it be interesting to focus more on youth as a category, but also on the differences *within* this group. In addition, it would have been interesting to study the deprived youth and their life situation. Furthermore, more research should be done on the gender aspect, as it would help to explain the differences between young women and men in their stance to both the revolution and social challenges in the Egyptian society. Moreover, it would have been interesting to question the same youths who were interviewed for this thesis about what they think was achieved in the Egyptian society after the upheavals, as well as what effect youth can have on the future of their country.

If the youth continue to be excluded and thus stand in the shadow of the society, it will become highly problematic for Egypt. For this reason the Egyptian society ought to include the youth in the public debate and show that they are trusted by giving them responsibilities. In order for civic engagement to grow and for individual and community values to be focused upon, participatory mechanisms should be developed. In this way youth would have a greater say in the planning and implementation of matters that will impact their lives, especially on political platforms. For the future of Egypt, it is crucial that not only the government, but also families, learning institutions, political parties and religious institutions give young people *increasing attention* and *influence*.

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Appendix 1: List of Interviews

Area specialists

Barsalou, Judy; Visiting scholar at the American University in Cairo. Previously in charge of the Ford Foundation office in Cairo until 2011. Personal interview, 11 September 2012.

Hakim, Randa; Communication and Media Adviser at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Cairo. Personal interview, 25 September 2012.

Youth informants

"Abdelrahman" (19); Senior student in Marketing. E-mail interview 8 October 2012.

"Anwar" (27); Director of short movies and commercials, Personal interview, 27 September 2012.

Asmaa Mahfouz (27); Business and Administration Graduate from Cairo. Has five years experience in Sales and Market Administration, and is currently searching for a new job. Personal interview, 7 September 2012.

"Basel" (25); Communication Graduate from Cairo. Personal interview, 6 September 2012.

"Fadel"(27); Law Graduate. Personal interview, 26 September 2012.

"Fayza" (30); Media writer for a TV show. Personal interview, 8 September 2012.

"Fouad" (23); Student. Personal interview, 20 September 2012.

"Hazem" (29); Assistant director, work freelance. Personal interview, 15 September 2012.

"Ismael" (25); Pharmacist. Currently works as a casting director, and as a part-time actor. Personal interview, 5 September 2012.

"Khaled"(29); freelance photographer, Personal Interview, 24 September 2012.

“Mourad” (24); Student. Personal interview, 20 September 2012.

“Mokhtar” (23); Civil engineer. Personal Interview, 20 September 2012.

“Noura” (24); Unemployed, studied photography, experience from working in a call center. Personal interview 8 September 2012.

“Sadek” (23); Student, study food science and food processing technology. Personal interview 3 September 2012.

“Sayid”(22); Student, currently lives in India. Skype interview, 6 October 2012.

“Tarek” (22); Art student, part-time photographer. Personal Interview, 23 September 2012.

“Sonya” (22); Assistant director, currently unemployed. Personal interview, 19 September 2012.

Appendix 2: Interview guide

1.0 Background information

1.1 How old are you?

1.2 What is your study or occupation?

1.3 What is your civil status?

1.4 What is your religion?

1.5 What was your living situation before the fall of Mubarak's Regime?

1.6 What was your working situation before the fall of Mubarak's Regime?

2.0 The role of the family

2.1 What did your family think about your participation in the Tahrir Square?

2.2 Were they supportive?
(If yes) In what way?
(If no) What were their reasons for not being supportive?

2.3 Did they take part in the demonstrations? If yes, how?

2.4 Did any of your female family participants take part in the demonstrations? If yes, did you feel that you take care of them/look after them?

2.5 Were there some divisions in the family?

2.6 What did your parents think about your participation in the revolution?

2.7 Does anybody in your family have any previous history in participating in demonstrations or organizations?

2.8 Were there any members in your family who didn't approve of you being in the Tahrir Square?

3.0 Generational conflict

3.1 How do you understand the difference between the generations in Egypt?

3.2 Did you notice a difference between the older and the younger Egyptians who took part in the protests in Tahrir Square, and if so, in what way?

3.3 Do you think there was a big difference in the goals of the youth and the goals of the elders in Tahrir Square?

4.0 Level of activity

4.1 In what way were you active in the demonstration in Tahrir Square?

4.2 Was this the first time you participated in a demonstration?
(If yes) What made you participate now?
(If no) Can you tell me about your previous experiences?

4.3 Do you belong to a specific group or organization?
(If yes) Which group and why?
(If no) Is there a certain reason for that?

5.0 Ideals and visions

5.1 Where did you get your inspiration and motivation from when you decided to take part in the demonstrations in Tahrir Square?

5.2 What role do you think the upheavals in Tunisia played for the Egyptian youth before the demonstrations in Tahrir Square?

5.3 What kind of a society did you envision when you decided to demonstrate for change?

5.4 What changes were you hoping to see in the society?
5.5 What changes were you hoping that the demonstrations would lead to?
5.6 What kind of future visions do you have for yourself and your country?

6.0 Youth and rights

6.1 Can you tell me about your thoughts around the rights of youth (between 16 and 30) in Egypt before the fall of the Mubarak regime?

6.2 How do you feel that the role and importance of youth in the Egyptian society was before the revolution?

6.3 Do you think it was easy for youth to get a job, gain respect in the Egyptian society during the Mubarak regime?

(If yes) What do you think is the reason for that?

(If no) Why not?

6.4 How do you feel that the role and importance of youth in the Egyptian society is after the fall of the Mubarak regime?