Revolutionary Images: The Role of Citizen Photojournalism, the Citizenship of Photography and Social Media in the Iran Green Revolution and Arab Spring

by

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To my parents

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Abstract

This thesis is a discussion on the affective politics of images, with attention given to the communities and forms of citizenship they create, both digital and real, and their role in contemporary revolutions in the Middle East/North African Region. Employing Ariella Azoulay's (2008) theoretical framework of a civil contract of photography, this thesis locates and examines how a "citizenship of photography" is mobilized through current trends of citizen photojournalism and communication technology.

By exploring the citizenship and community building potential of images, digital and real, an account of the revolutionary possibilities of images is formed. Drawing on recent scholarship and theoretical frameworks in the field of visual studies, media studies, and citizenship, this thesis develops a complex narrative of how images become iconic, connect individuals, and become an integral component in contemporary revolutionary change.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols Used

MENA   Middle East and North Africa

NGO   Non governmental organization

SPJ   Society of Professional Journalists

CNN   Cable News Network

BBC   British Broadcasting Corporation

SMS   Short Message Service

RFI   Radio France Internationale

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

MMS   Multimedia Message Service

UAE   United Arab Emirates

TED   Technology, Entertainment, Design

Twitter Hashtag

@   Precedes name in Twitter Handel

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"The protests in the Arab World were galvanized by the images of citizens"

--Hamden, 2011

A man lies in bed. His head swaddled in bandages covered in crimson blood and yellowing puss. Under the bandages lies Mohammed Bouazizi. Bouazizi lit himself on fire and would later succumb to his injuries after weeks of agony. The December 17th self-immolation of Bouazizi, outside of the main government building in Sidi Bouzid would mark the beginning of protests stretching across the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) regions in late 2010 and 2011 (Rifai, 2011, Mohyeldin, 2011). By the end of the 2011, the protests would lead to unprecedented upheaval within the region, with multi-decade rulers ousted, put on trial, or even killed[1] (Blight, Pulman, Torpey, 2012).

The flame that Bouazizi lit "soon burned in capitals and cities across much of the Arab world" (Cottle, 2011). Images of his self-immolation[2], and the subsequent protests

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[1] See Blight, Pulman, Torpey, 2012 for an extensive interactive map that marks key dates, in specific country with news reports and information by following this link: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2011/mar/22/middle-east-protest-interactive-timeline

[2] The self-immolation images of Mohammed Bouazizi cannot be located and 'copy-cat' incidents labeled as Bouazizi's immolation are very difficult to verify, which leads to the conclusion that his final act was not in fact captured on film. Subsequently after the self-immolation of Bouazizi, there were numerous 'copy-cat' incidents that are sometimes mislabeled or used interchangalbly to illustrate Bouazizi's immolation.

taking place in and around Sidi Bouazid[3], soon spread from mobile phone to mobile

phone, and across the Internet via social media platforms, news sites and blogs. These

early videos of the Arab Spring, Bouazizi's burned body, and protests in the streets of

Tunisia would become an icon for the resistance throughout the region, *an icon of the*

Arab Spring.

The term *Arab Spring* represents a series of protests stretching across the MENA

region which predominantly took place in late 2010 and throughout 2011. These protests

"first in Tunisia, then in Egypt and a succession of other Arab states, including Morocco,

Algeria, Yemen, Oman, Bahrain and Libya, as well as Syria, Iran and Lebanon and, more

tentatively, Saudi Arabia" (Cottle, 2011), defined a so-called 'awakening' among citizens

of the MENA region where protestors rose up against their ruling governments to

demand more equality, freedoms coupled with and often democratic aspirations for their

ruling government (See: Blight, Pulman, Torpey, 2012). The protests are often

characterized by the extensive use of social media, which provided a principal

organizational tool for protestors and protests. These platforms facilitated a transnational

characterization to the protests, where disperse and loosely connected actions could be

linked and shared. However, the protests did not represent a homogenous regional wide

protest with a singular cause or grievance, but rather a series of loosely connected

protests and protestors who all had their own unique complaints, concerns and goals

(Anderson, 2011).

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[3] To view protest footage from the time Mohammed Bouazizi's self immolation
follow this link:
http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/01/201115141743297407.html

Understanding that the Arab Spring is not a homogenous event, this thesis

subscribes to the argument, posited by Hamid Dadashi, that the Arab Spring is

representative a larger, regional *narrative montage* (Dabashi, 2011). Dabashi, in his

opinion article, "Imagining the Arab Spring: A year later" explains the use of a narrative

montage within the Arab Spring where historic events are sequenced, edited and given "a

rhetorical consistency that banks on our dreams and thrives on our hopes" (Dabashi,

2011). Rather than focus on the specific political, economic, social and religious issues at

play, which would fill countless volumes of books, this thesis focuses on how images

created a particular narrative montage of separate, but interrelated images of events and

individuals within the Arab Spring and other contemporary Middle Eastern Revolutions.

As Dabashi puts it, the particular visual saliency of the protests, captured from a

multiplicity of perspectives and voices, "produce a sequence with significance, and …

gives a teleological meaning to otherwise disparate shots. From all the recent and current

incidents in the Arab world, distinct occurrences of histories proper to each nation-state

have morphed into a regional narrative that we have come to call the Arab Spring"

(Dabashi, 2011). The Arab Spring is defined by and through the ability for individuals

both inside and outside of the region to stitch together distinct images and events, and

reinvigorate them within a larger, more significant sequence of revolutionary upheaval.

At the core of this understanding of the Arab Spring are images, and at issue in my

analysis is how they are *captured, shared, and used to negotiate space and place.*

This thesis argues that images within contemporary revolutions offer a unique

perspective in understanding how individuals are mobilized, connected, and share ideas.

By focusing on images and not only the modes of their transmission encompassed by

platforms such as social media, a more nuanced understanding of the role images play in contemporary revolutions can be achieved. Images represent a multifaceted entity; images are representative of events which *have been*, which *are occurring*, and what can *be achieved*. They form a sort of visual narrative that is in total flux as it is used to different ends and by different individuals. This thesis provides an analysis of the affective politics of images, with attention given to the communities and forms of citizenship they create, both digital and real, and to their role in contemporary revolutions in the Middle East/North Africa Region.

Purpose of Study

This thesis develops an account of the formation of citizenship and communities, both digital and real, that are constructed through images, and it addresses how these facilitate change within contemporary revolutions. Through a cross comparative case study analysis (See: Howard, 2010), images of the Arab Spring in Tunisia are contrasted with the role undertaken by photography in recent uprisings in the MENA region, specifically the 2009 Iranian Green revolution. These two revolutions share similar traits, both in use of social media, central role of images and stated goals of protestors. However, both have experienced very different outcomes. This thesis proposes a means to understand the potential role of imagery in aiding the success or failure of certain contemporary Middle Eastern revolutions. By exploring the citizenship and community building potential of images, digital and real, I develop an account of the revolutionary possibilities of images. By drawing on recent scholarship and theoretical frameworks in the field of visual studies, media studies, and citizenship, this thesis develops a complex

narrative of how images become iconic, connect individuals, and become an integral component in revolutionary change.

In order to encapsulate the complex nature of photography and the means to capture both still and video images seamlessly and interchangeably, this thesis uses the term images to represent both. The notion of 'image' characterizes the evolving and multifaceted way through which images are now available as but not limited to: stills; videos; screen captures; and multiple still/moving images linked through a multimedia production complete with sound. This thesis notes that images as a term encapsulates these diverse, but often interrelated mediums of visual communication and production succinctly. The digital nature of modern images allows for the seamless transition between all of these in an instant and the use of multiple image formats.

The theoretical implications of this thesis are numerous. This thesis posits the need for a new theoretical framework that defines the nature of images, including its 'iconicness', how it is shared and its use, as an integral component of assessing a contemporary revolution's trajectory. And to an extent, the ultimate success or failure of that revolution. *Images provide the causal link between virtual and physical communities and citizenship*. Depending on the nature of this link, and the physical action images enact, a revolution's success may, to a point, be measured or explained by the role of images. This thesis furthers the theoretical understanding of images as a social negotiation, occurring within a citizenship of photography that affects both the construction of concepts such as space, place, an image's meaning and the community it fosters. This citizenship and community are located digitally and in the real. Lastly, this thesis reinforces the understanding of the viewer as an individual who using, Tom

Glocer's terms is "consuming, creating, sharing and publishing their own content online"(Glocer, 2006, p. 21). This individual is simultaneously an active participant of an event they capture and a witness, bound to a larger physical and virtual citizenship and community.

Research Questions

The primary research question of this thesis is as follows: What role do images play in the context of revolutionary movements—here, the Arab Spring and Iranian Green Revolution—and particularly in producing a citizenship and community of photography, both digital and real? This thesis attempts to answer the primary question by three secondary questions. Firstly, how has technological advances and shifting cultural and social attitudes towards mobile phone images shaped the development of the citizen photojournalist? Secondly, how did images create communities and citizenship, both digital and real within the Green Revolution; which images became important, iconic; and to any extent, can the 'failure' of the Green Revolution be explained by, in part, through an analysis of these important/iconic images? Thirdly, how have images worked to create communities and citizenship within them, both digital and real in the context of the Arab Spring; what images became important, iconic; and to any extent, can the 'failure' of the Arab Spring be explained by, in part, through an analysis of these important/iconic images?

These questions are anchored within numerous overarching themes, including but not limited to, the emergence of a large, active group of citizen photojournalists, the establishment of a citizenship and community bound through photography, and the

emerging role of new media and social media in publishing, sharing and establishing

images within revolutionary contexts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Literature Review: 'Demystifying' the Arab Spring in Academic and Popular discourse

Laura Anderson (2011), president of the American University in Cairo, a few months into the uprisings authored an article titled, "Demystifying the Arab Spring". Her stated goal was to disentangle the distinct events of the Arab Spring, which had become closely intertwined and discussed as one homogenous pan-regional event (Anderson, 2011). "Demystify" is a curious word to use in relation to the event as big and pervasive of the Arab Spring. However, the term is fitting given the near universal shock, disbelief, and *mystification* experienced by governments, academics, and journalists alike as the protests failed to be stopped, and slowly but surely began toppling multi-decade regimes across the MENA region. Even internet users located in the Middle East, who according to popular and academic discourse play an integral role in the revolution, were skeptical such an event could take place just a few years prior (Hofienz, 2007, p.73-74). In the continuing and evolving aftermath of the Arab Spring, numerous accounts have emerged to explain the revolution. Through reviewing the literature on the Arab Spring both academically and within the media, I will highlight some of the more pervasive themes that relate to the role of social media, grievance of protestors and role of images.

The role of the Internet and specifically social media continues to be the primary focus for most academics and journalists addressing questions concerning the Arab Spring. Often termed as a 'Facebook Revolution' or albeit to a lesser extent a 'Twitter Revolution,' the role played by social media has become an explanatory narrative regarding the cause and sustained nature of the protests (See: Pollock, 2011; Abou Elezz, 2012). Scholars have indicated that the early use of these terms in the media was marked

by their ability to explain the complex nature of the Arab Spring succinctly, and connect the causes to the users own experiences with social media (See: Cottle, 2011). However, by the first year anniversary of the uprisings in late 2011 and early 2012, a growing, self-critical discourse has emerged within the media, questioning the accuracy of such terms (See: Saletan, 2011; Morozov, 2011). The penetration of social media platforms within the region is often neglected or not located with quantitative data, which often leads to the convoluted nature of social media's role and impact. Given the difficulty of defining social media's impact within the Arab Spring, academics over the course of the past year have attempted to locate the impact and use of social media using a mixed qualitative-quantitative case study approach (see Cominos, 2011; Park *et al.,* 2011; Khondiker, 2011; Kavanuagh *et al.,* 2011; and Arab Social Media Report, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). These studies conclude that social media use was pervasive, but not the primary component that fueled the revolution. Social media platforms are a tool, which is employed by individual users who control how, when and why it is used. These studies focus on the use of Twitter, rather than attempt to establish trends, posts and penetration of Facebook use. Twitter, primarily through how tweets are organized and searchable by hashtags, can be aggregated with far greater ease then Facebook posts, thus offering a more effective means to map traffic, themes, and use on the platform. However, Twitter use still pales in comparison to the level of user penetration experienced by Facebook (Arab Social Media Report, 2011b), making assessment of social media platforms impact within the Arab Spring through Twitter problematic.

The use of social media within the uprisings is connected to the larger role played by the Internet within the Middle East. Academic scholarship in the years leading up to

the Arab Spring uprisings have mapped the use and role of the Internet and new media in general. Recent studies including, but not limited to, Philip Howard's (2010) *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Information Technology and Political Islam*, Jeffery Ghannam's (2011) "Social Media in the Arab World: Leading up to uprisings of 2011", Annabelle Sreberny's and Gholam Khiabany's (2010) *Blogistan: The Internet and Politics in Iran,* Mahjoob Zweiri's and Emma Murphy's (2011) *The New Arab Media: Technology, Image and Perception* and Denis G. Campbell' (2011) *Egypt Unshackled: Using social media to @#:) the System,* define the emerging role of the Internet. Academics, numerous NGOs and professional organizations are also attempting to locate the extent that citizens can even access or use social media, given social media has arisen as a new space for contestation between governments and their citizens (See: Reporters without Borders, 2012; OpenNet, 2011; Hofienz, 2007).

A second major theme that has emerged in characterizing the Arab Spring, is the role of protestors and the grievances that brought them to the street. The Arab Spring was not a revolution that appeared in an instant without prior simmering tensions amongst the individuals involved. Many of the protestors represented the lower and middle classes, who in many instances had experienced social, economic, and political inequality within their respective countries. These complaints included, but were not limited to, skyrocketing food prices (Lagi, Bertrand, Bar-Yam, 2011), lack of democratic or political freedoms, lack of upward mobility within society, lack of employment opportunities, and harassment from the states officials (Alexander, 2011). Scholars such as Lisa Anderson (2011) note the often contrasting and varying trajectories and underlying foundations to the different revolutions taking place. While they appear similar, Anderson argues that

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each is unique, with its own social, political, and economic foundation, which the protests rest upon. Academics noting the nuanced differences between the various revolutions within the larger Arab Spring, have developed country specific analyses of the events, for instance of, Tunisia (see: Ayeb, 2011; Hammel, 2011;) or Egypt (see: El Hamamsy, 2011; Kavanaugh *et al.,* 2011). Conversely, popular discourse within the media continues to link disperse events to a larger Arab Spring movement. However, taken as a whole or disaggregated within a specific country, media reports do offer nuanced information and insight into the various instances of protest in the region (Blight, Pulman, Torpey, 2012).

While many grievances existed far before the Arab Spring came to fruition, some grievances developed over the course of the protests. For instance, numerous scholars now point to the act of shutting down the Internet in Egypt as a galvanizing moment for protestors and the revolution there (El-Hamamsy, 2011), which pushed more individuals into the streets, some of whom were not as engaged with the protest previously. They took to the streets in order to find out what was happening first hand and to protest their denial to information gathering freedom over the Internet and or use of mobile phone networks. Interestingly, with all the focus on the use of social media and the newness of the tactics used, by protestors often employed components of what are deemed building blocks within traditional social movements: street protests, confrontation with authority both peaceful and physical, occupation of key squares or streets and an hierarchical organization of protestors and leaders who developed a core set of goals and direction.

The last theme that is currently emerging is the role of images in creating and sustaining the Arab Spring. Through the use of cameras, specifically on mobile phones, and the production of images as an act of witnessing, events that normally only a couple

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of individuals would see, can be viewed by millions. Had images of protests not been captured in Sidi Bouzid, after Mohammed Bouazizi lit himself on fire, and subsequently shared online, it is difficult to argue the revolutions would have had a similar outcome.

Images, and their role in producing the Arab Spring, are often intrinsically intertwined with the use of social media to share them (see: Khoudry, 2011; Khondker, 2011; Axford, 2011; El-Hamamsy, 2011; Boughelaf, 2011). Numerous news organizations, such as Al-Jazerra (Hamdan, 2011), and the BBC (Pollack, 2011). have developed feature length documentaries on the images of the Arab Spring. Nevertheless, they explore images in relation to the larger role of social media, focusing on how social media enables images to be shared easily and effectively.

Images within the Arab Spring are linked to the larger role lay individuals are undertaking as impromptu journalists. The rise of amateur image production is a marketed shift within the media landscape, where non-professional photojournalist images are being used with increasing frequency (Anden-Papadopoulos and Pantti, 2012). With camera in hand, protestors captured images of the Arab Spring by the hundreds of thousands, documenting the uprising, both for themselves, personal acquaintances and a wider unknown audience. The technological and social development of the cell phone camera, photo-messages and online publishing platforms, has transformed both how images are captured, but also how images are used and for what. Through the emergence of media convergence—"how different kinds of media are increasingly united in the same media object" (Stage, 2011, p.422; Goggin, 2006; Jenkins, 2008)—in conjunction with the accessibility of online publishing platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr or Youtube, how images are captured, shared and represent

an event is shifting dramatically. These images often became iconic representations of the Arab Spring as a whole: the early protests within Sidi Bouzid[4], from protestors fighting their way in and occupying Tahrir Square[5], to police brutality[6], and ultimately celebration[7].

Ultimately, the research of images within the context of the Arab Spring remains limited. Professional and academic reports (Cominos, 2011; Park *et al.,* 2011; Khondiker, 2011; Kavanaugh *et al.,* 2011) continue to focus on the use of social media within the uprisings, focusing specifically on identifying and characterizing Twitter use. This is problematic due to a number of reasons, including but not limited to, the lack of twitter use in the region, lack of concrete understanding of other platform roles such as Facebook and the causal relationships between their use and connection to action in the street. The media discuss social, economic and political issues underlying the Arab Spring but not normally discussed together, rather bracketed separately. Additionally, these underlying issues are often discussed in tandem with the role social media constitutes within the uprisings. The role of images within the Arab Spring continues to evade both scholarship and journalists alike, who place their emphasis on the modes of transmission over what the image shows, or more importantly, the role that it plays.

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[4] http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/22/video-that-triggered-tunisias-uprising/
[5] See Hamdan, 2011 minute: 21:22 onward
[6] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4k0_9Y1XaC8 (Egypt),
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cWmyF9y-Cc&feature=relmfu (Egypt)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mvc59IQZb1w&bpctr=1341426622&skipcontrinter=1(Egypt)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_Z42wuiO3E&feature=player_embedded (Tunisia)
[7] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z06GVWJgTWU (Egypt)
See Hamdan, 2011 Minute 14:54

Theoretical Framework

Establishing the role of images within modern revolutions and how they drive their success is a complex task. No single theoretical point of view is sufficient. Rather, to understand the impact images have within contemporary revolutions, it is important to employ a hybrid approach to the theoretical framework that compliments and frames this thesis. By drawing on recent theoretical frameworks in the field of visual studies, media studies, geography, and citizenship, this thesis develops a complex narrative of how images become iconic, connect individuals, and become an indispensible element in producing physical change. The following subheadings identify and explain relevant theoretical concepts that are used to underpin the argument of this thesis.

The Civil Contract of Photography

Bridging the gap between photography, citizenship and the nation state, Ariella Azoulay (2008) in her book, *The Civil Contract of Photography* establishes a new ontological-political understanding of photography (p.23). This new ontological-political understanding of photography, as she puts it, "takes into account for all participants in photo acts—camera, photographer, photographed, subject and spectator"…"approaching the photograph (and its meaning) as an unintentional effect of the encounter between all of these (Ibid, p.23). Images link the various participants and components of photography—the photographer, the camera, the photographed, the viewer—as a *citizenship* located within and defined by photography. This type of universal citizenship is made possible since, "photography, being in principle accessible to all, bestows universal citizenship on a new citizenry whose citizens produce, distribute and look at images" (Ibid, p.134).

Photography acts first and foremost as a passport for the citizenship of photography that is outside of the auspices of the state, where at all times "the citizenship of photography is distinct from the nation state…" (p.24). The citizenship of photography consists of "members of the community of photography"… who are…"anyone and everyone who bears any relationship whatsoever to photographs—as a photographer, a viewer of photographs, or a photographed person"(Ibid, p. 85). The citizenship of photography and its civil contract are simultaneously located in both physical and virtual spaces, the nation state reterritorializing citizenship, with photography deterritorializing citizenship beyond its conventional boundaries (p.25). Thus, images represent a multifaceted linkage—at one time deterritorializing citizenship connected loosely across platforms that share and publish images, such as the Internet, while simultaneously visually identifying the growing role and use of images for defining citizenship within the nation state.

An image, and the meaning that is ascribed to it, is the product of the relationship between the photographer, the photographed, and the spectator, who all play an integral role. According to Azoulay (2008), "a photograph is neither the product of a single person, despite the concept of 'author' having been established in relation to photography, nor is it even solely a product of human hands"(p.103). It is the relationship between the photographer and the photographed, the photographer and the camera, and the spectator, that between all of these individuals forms the meaning of an image. The result from this meeting cannot be predicted, nor can it be controlled. Rather, none of these individuals, "on their own, determine how this meeting will be inscribed in the resulting image" (Ibid, p. 11). This encounter between photographer, photographed and

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spectators is facilitated through the camera (an images production), development (its publishing) and sharing (how an image is viewed and moves between individuals). For example, social media platforms play integral roles in developing and negotiating the formation of an image meaning and facilitating *encounters* amongst the citizens of photography—the photographer, the viewer and the photographed. However, these relationships do not only exist within a traditional network setting, where information is shared between two static nodes, rather they are multi-faceted and layered convergences, located throughout any given image.

Employing a theoretical framework that is based on a civil contract of photography, offers a unique perspective into understanding the transnational nature of images, and how meaning is created. Photography offers a common denominator to the formation of relationships within a disperse grouping of individuals. Images become more than representations of events enveloping and happening to distant, detached individuals, rather to fellow citizens whose proximity is made immediate through photography. In short the "uses of photography are part of the way in which citizens actualize their duty toward other citizens as photographed persons who have been struck by disaster"(Azoulay, 2008, p. 104). These disasters are not of the natural type, but result from the failure of the nation state to provide its citizens with the basic necessities and conditions for survival. A citizen who is struck by these types of disasters is not a citizen of any particular nationality *per se,* but a member of the community of photography. The spectator, upon viewing these images, "has the power to translate her gaze into action" (p.144). Within the citizenship of photography, the photographed, the photographer, or the viewer can find protection within the citizenship of photography. Azoulay argues,

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"the civil contract of photography allows claims to be made that otherwise would not be seen" and "the civil contract of photography protects the citizen vis-à-vis power, endowing her political existence with a dimension beyond the bounds of being subject to power (p. 192).

Viewing Others: Precariousness, Grievability, and Anesthesia

To nuance the use Ariella Azoulay's theoretical framework of a civil contract of photography it is important to consider the manner which individuals view near/distant others whose likeness is captured within images. While questions of 'otherness'—the defining and understanding of those different to oneself – were argued in earnest by Edward Said (Said, 1977) and are still widely used within media studies as an underlying theoretical perspective. However, this thesis employs an updated set of terms and concepts couched within the language of *precariousness, grievability, and cultural anesthesia* as posited by scholars Judith Butler and Allen Feldman respectively (Butler, 2004; 2010; Feldman, 1994). Through using these three terms, I develop a theoretical lens for this thesis that situates *perceived citizenship*, thus individuals who can evoke rights and protections allocated to them as citizens of photography. Not a citizen within the purview of the nation state.

In 2004, Judith Butler authored *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence,* where she outlined the concept of precariouness. While precariousness can be understood as numerous points, I focus on Butler's assertion of the body as a "social phenomenon in the public sphere" where "my [anyone's] body is and is not mine" (Butler, 2004, p. 26). As social beings, and individuals who rely upon society to survive, one survival is at the behest of others, where claim over ones body is never fully achieved

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or realized (Ibid). In short, precariousness can be understood as "if certain lives do not qualify as lives or are, from the start, not conceivable as lives within certain epistemological frames, then these lives are never lived or lost in the full sense" (Butler, 2010, p. 1). These epistemological frames, primarily established through the media in this case, condense how a particular person will relate and more importantly contextualize a distant other. The fact an individual imaged could be marginalized and vulnerable, and how they are visually understood can have fundamental consequences in their lives is an important consideration.

In 2010, Judith Butler further nuanced her theoretical consideration of precariousness with the conceptualization of grieavability. Grievabilty deals with questions of perception, specifically how individuals perceive distant others. Grievability is defined by, "whose life, if extinguished, would be publicly grievable and whose life would leave either no public trace to grieve, or only a partial, mangled, and enigmatic trace?"(Butler, 2010, p. 75). Will the trespassing on the security or death of that imaged distant other be considered by a distant viewer, whose perception of being a living individual being dependent on how their identity as a distant other is constructed within the individual viewer's world view? Grievability links to what Butler argues is the concept of 'human' being thought of as a value. Butler argues human should be understood " as a value and a morphology that may be allocated and retracted, aggrandized, personified, degraded and disavowed, elevated and affirmed"(Ibid, p.76). In short, the term human is fluid, contextual, perspective driven concept.

In Butler's formation of these ideas, she maintains perspective regarding the intrinsic role of the media in facilitating these epistemological frames. An interesting

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point that Butler forms within her book *Frames of War* is the use of images within the context of military conduct, and how the camera and by extension the media has itself "become modes of military conduct"(Butler, 2010, p. 29). Such points of consideration can be further extrapolated to considerations of how concepts of citizenship, patriotism, and nationalism are affirmed through iconic images—for example the Iwo Jima Flag Raising (see Hariman and Louis Lucaites, 2007). As a result, Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites in their work *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture and Liberal Democracy* that citizenship, patriotism and nationalism are important for photojournalism and iconic images, which in turn that develop distinctive epistemological frames from which a viewer views is, "reproducing ideology, communicating social knowledge, shaping collective memory, *modeling citizenship*, and providing figural resources for communicative action"(Hariman and Louis Lucaites, 2007, p. 9, emphasis added). As such, coupled with Butler's concept of precariousness and grievability, "visual and conceptual frames are ways of building and destroying populations as objects of knowledge and targets of war, and that such frames are the means through which social norms are relayed and made effective" (Butler, 2010, p. xix)

The last consideration that neatly links Butler's concepts to larger cultural modes of experience is scholar Allen Feldman's exploration of the concept of cultural anesthesia. The concept of cultural anesthesia contends with the notion of how individual viewers can experience violence that is captured within images, which they themselves may have never experienced. Allen attests that through both physical and perceived distance from such violence, and the manner that it is captured through still photographs or videos, and ultimately shown, amount to a formation of cultural anesthesia on the part

of the viewer. If, as Feldman argues, that such a pervasive anesthesia exists as a cultural norm, specific consideration must be given to how any individual may be able to experience and understand the violence inflicted on a distant other. The categorical nature violence is shown, and the often sanitized means of viewing violence, implores viewers to look no further past or understand more then what is already shown.

It should be noted that I am not employing these concepts to discredit the overall theoretical frame I employ in regards to a civil contract of photography, but to note its limitations. Such a utopic ideal of a citizenship of photography may exist theoretically, but may be in fact lived and experienced very differently. Thus, the connection between viewer, photographed, subject becomes a clash between perceived and lived citizenship, across multiple platforms, mediums and formats. Through employing the concepts of precariousness, grievability and cultural anesthesia, a more nuanced understanding of what a citizenship can achieve, and the limitations that may exist can be understood.

Considering the Intersection Between Emotion and Images

In pursuing a research study on photography, there are numerous scholars and critiques that loom large over the disciplines. Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, John Berger, Victor Burgin and John Tagg to name a few, have had an indelible imprint on photography criticism for the past forty years or so. A central caveat that exists within post-modern photography criticism is unemotional, detached, observations of images. Images are viewed as untrustworthy, manipulative, and replete with replication without originality. Building a research project around the case that relationships and emotion play an integral part of understanding meaning within an image, one must address this 'scholarly baggage'.

Susan Linfield (2010), in her book *Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence,* attempts to develop a new type of photography criticism, one that rejects post-modernist opposition to emotion and thought within photography criticism. Linfield (2010) argues that scholars, in particular Sontag, have set a tone within photography criticism, "teaching us that to be smart about photographs means to disparage them" (p. xiv). The systematic denial of freedom, for the photographer and the viewer to offer or discover novelty within an image is something Linfield argues is damaging. Thus post modern theorists have "insisted…that the photographer could never offer, and the viewer could never find, a moment of surprise, originality, or insight at a photograph. *To invest a photograph with meaning is always a sad delusion…*"(Ibid, p.11). This research project believes that images can in fact *surprise, be original, and both the photographer and viewer offer insight.* The photographer is an emotional being, who is affected by the images they take, deciding what to capture and how. Viewers lash out with outrage, moved to give by individual appeals, react with surprise through images; an entire visual media industry, photo and video sharing sites is driven by this. As such Linfield notes it is important that photography critiques:

> …not to drown out in bathos or sentimentality but to integrate emotion into the experience of looking. They can use emotion as an inspiration to analysis rather than formant an eternal war between the two. They can allow the suffering of the world to enter into them instead of despising it as abjection. They can, in short, permit themselves and their readers to come to photographs as full human beings: as women and men of intellect and feeling, immediacy and history. (Ibid, p. 30-31)

Numerous scholars, such as Butler (2004, 2010) and Feldman (1994) argue that how subjects are framed within a photograph, lessens the ability for an emotional connection to be established, or even recognize the subject lives. Linfield rightly argues

that photographs more than any other medium brings the viewer closer to the to the experience of suffering by others (Linfield, 2010). However, "photographs also illuminate the unbridgeable chasm that separates ordinary life from extraordinary experiences of political trauma" (Ibid, p. xv), which scholars such as Butler (2004,2010) and Feldman (1994) both exemplify in their work.

A Point on Visual Methodology:

Unlike a dimensionless, revealing piece of information, an image is, on the contrary, a complex amalgamation of interesting processes. In the development of this thesis, the complex natures of images are taken into consideration. While not used as an outright, static methodological frame, the concepts of a *visual economy* and *visual competency* are employed to ensure that the multiple layers contained within each image are accounted for. The concept of a visual economy, first posited by Deborah Poole, has been increasingly mobilized within development literature to explore images within the context of the media, advertisements, and use by NGOs. David Campbell (2007) states in his work, "Geopolitics and Visuality: Sighting the Darfur Conflict," that:

> images cannot be isolated as discrete objects but have to be understood as imbricated in networks of materials, technologies, institutions, markets, social spaces, affects, cultural histories and political contexts" and continues "the idea of a 'visual economy' signals the practices through which a place and its people is enacted and our response made possible. (p. 361)

By looking at development images through this lens, images gain dimensionality, the small discrete intersections of production and meaning become integral to detangling an image's overall meaning. According to Poole (1997), the visual economy encompasses three levels of organization:

"organization of production encompassing both the individuals and the technologies that produce images"; "circulation of goods, or in this case, images and image-objects"; the organization of "cultural and discursive systems through which graphic images are appraised, interpreted, and assigned historical, scientific and aesthetic worth" (p. 9-10).

This theoretical approach intersects with recent work in communication studies regarding the development of 'visual competency'. As an emerging theoretical lens, " 'Visual Competence' is a paradigm for basic research on the production, distribution, perception, interpretation and reception of visuals, aimed at understanding visual communication processes in different contemporary social, cultural and political contexts" (Müller, 2008, p.103). Visual competency is a way to understand, in a more holistic manner, how images are constructed and the interplay that exists between the various layers of an image. A core assumption of this theory is that "visual portrayal is highly contested"(Ibid, p.101). Through "visual production, perception, interpretation, and reception [being] connected in a cycle" (Ibid, p.104), a broader understanding of the often "very different meaning attributions in different social, political and cultural contexts" (Ibid, p.104) that visuals take can be developed. This line of inquiry can be linked to the larger role of images within the representational practices in any given culture, best summarized within Stuart Hall's (1997) seminal work, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*.

In the context of this thesis, it is important to emphasize that meaning attributed to an image is fluid, built within a negotiation between the various citizens of photography. As such an image represents not a static recording of an event, rather a segment of visual information that is dissected, combined, and used. The growing use and ubiquity of social media platforms has made the connections between photographer, photographed, and viewer more readily made. However, at any given time one individual has more sway in

devising how a particular image is viewed. This is attributed to the specific information a person may hold, their stature within society and their proximity to the event or person that the image depicts.

As Edwards and Hart argue, context and materialiality are important to consider when deriving the meaning of an image, and how individuals relate to, formulate opinion, and ultimately use them (Edwards and Hart, 2004). While an increasing number of images are captured and used exclusively digitally, this tendency does not suggest that digital images do not constitute material objects (Sassoon, 2004). Digital images do not have tactile properties but still have to be considered an object, not just a combination of pixels that form an image. However, the digital nature of images enables images to be used in a wide array of contexts, developing varying situations (Van Dyjick, 2008). And in every one of these different contexts images engage with a citizenship. This thesis takes into account how an image is captured, shared and the context which it is used, to provide insight into how an image's meaning may be derived when discussed in relation to a civil contract and citizenship of photography.

Chapter 3 Citizen Photojournalism: Amateur Image Production in a Digital Age

> Advances in video and photography technology, which have not only made digital camera and video recorders accessible to lay people, have allowed online activists to document, photograph and record human rights violations, government negligence, police violation and other incidents of daily life, and share them with the vast online community. (Khoury, 2011, p. 2)

With the rapid shift in digital photo technology and the advent of publishing platforms through the Internet, citizen photojournalism has undergone transformative changes. Photojournalism is no longer the sole bastion of the professional photojournalist. The existing means to record and view images digitally anywhere in the world is rapidly increasing. Images captured by citizen photojournalists worldwide represent the democratization of photographic production; every person is now a potential witness. The mass of cameras and the images that they create have developed a new *encounter* around images (Azoulay, 2008, p. 24). Images represent "an encounter between people who take, watch, and show other peoples photographs, with or without their consent, thus opening new possibilities of political action and forming new conditions for its visibility" (Ibid, p. 24). These encounters are complex, with the individual who captures an image also a potential viewer, and subject. The citizen photojournalist constitutes "a new social type on the street, characterized by the simultaneous engagement in a multiplicity of task. In this social figure, protesting and reporting, two positions usually considered distinct, become indistinguishable" (Manoukian, 2010, p.247). Echoing Setrag Manoukian's sentiment, Melinda Hinkson (2011), discussing the role of citizen photojournalists notes that the citizen photojournalist "captures a convergence of two modes of experience— observer/observed, actors/reporter, subject/object—that have historically been understood

as distinct (Hinkson, 2011, p. 136). The revolutions in the Middle East mark a watershed

moment for the witness in the street and the coming of age for the citizen photojournalist.

This chapter, through a review of the literature, establishes a definition of 'citizen

photojournalism'. This definition is located within the larger discourse regarding user-

generated news content. How amateur images are produced is significant, with the use of

mobile phones to capture images and distribute them, as an important point of

consideration in establishing the role of the citizen photojournalist. This chapter

elucidates a shift in the type of images produced and viewed, which is evident in the

images produced and shared during the Iranian Green Revolution and Arab Spring.

Images produced by citizen photojournalists that are primarily published and viewed

digitally, represent a shift in how iconic images are located and negotiated within the

citizenship of photography as established by Ariella Azoulay.

Defining Citizen Photojournalism

        The concept and practice of citizen photojournalism is located within the larger

process of non-professionals, often the news users and consumers who are representative

of the audience, participating actively within the news system as producers of content.

The participatory journalist or citizen journalist marks how "news is becoming a

participatory activity, as people contribute their own stories and experiences and post

their reactions to events"(Purcell *et al.*, 40, cited in Hermida, 2010). Similarly, Sahar

Khamis and Katherine Vaughn (2011), argue citizen journalism "provides ordinary

citizens the opportunity to document their own version of reality and tell their own side

of the story" (p. 7). A common thread among these 'journalists' is "their motivation to

…bear witness to crisis events unfolding around them" (Allan and Thorsen, 2010, p.7),

which further challenges the role and definition of the audience (Mortensen, 2011). While the term 'participatory' and 'citizen' journalist are used interchangeably, they represent two distinct relationships between media outlets and individual news-users. Joyce Nip (2006) defines participatory journalism in her paper "Exploring the Second Phase of Public Journalism", as "the form of the news users generating content, more or less independently of the professionals, whereas the professionals generate some other content, and also produce, publish and market the whole news product. *User contribution is solicited within a frame designed by the professionals*" (Nip, p. 224, emphasis added). The news user produces content but within a specific framework designed by media outlets, their information curated by a professional journalist retaining the role of 'gatekeeper'—deciding what information is important and not. A number of studies in recent years have illustrated how news-users content is collected and interpreted, with news organizations soliciting content through polls, comments, images, or blogs (See: Hermida, 2008; Hermida, 2009a; Hermida, 2009b; Paulussen *et al.*, 2008; Domingo *et al.*, 2008; Thurman, 2008; Wardel and Williams, 2010). An underlying theme within these studies remains identifying how the Internet has facilitated this transformation. New media expert and University of British Columbia journalism professor Alfred Hermida (2010) states, "the Internet has changed the relationship between journalists and audiences from a one-way, asymmetric model of communication to a more participatory and collective system" (Hermida, p.2). The participation of the audience as a participatory journalist is made possible through the immediacy and connectivity of the Internet, although this is achieved in a format structured by the mainstream media through the structure of their websites and relationships with various internet news-users.

While many media outlets use the Internet to solicit user-generated content in a structured manner, the Internet remains an open and powerful publishing platform. Citizen journalism differs from participatory journalism through the independence between the news-user gathering and publishing content separately of established journalists or media outlets. Nip (2006) defines the citizen journalist as individuals who "are responsible for gathering content, visioning, producing and publishing the news product…" (p. 226). The production of content, images and text, is achieved outside of the purview of the professional journalist or media outlet. By using the Internet, the citizen journalist is able to publish their information directly to a wide and diverse online community, which on occasion can be used by the mainstream media. Platforms such as blogs, YouTube, and personal websites are examples of avenues citizen journalists are available to produce their work to. During times of political events or breaking news stories that are closed or unfamiliar to the mainstream media "citizen journalists can be the most reliable and credible source of news and information…"(Khamis and Vaughn, 2011, p. 17). However, these accounts developed by citizen journalists will not achieve any sort of 'news' status unless they are picked up by media outlets and circulated as such. Journalists are incorporating user-generated content (mainly images to further nuance and enhance their coverage (David, 2010, p.92). Kari Anden-Papadopoulos and Mervi Pantti (2011) in the introduction of *Amateur Images and Global News,* state "amateur images have come to have cultural significance and shape public perceptions of world events mainly because of their dissemination and publication in the mainstream news media" (Anden-Papadopoulos and Pantti, p. 9).

Unlike participatory journalists, citizen journalists are not bound by journalistic

standards, and particularly by ethical and or professional codes of conduct.[8] Professional

journalists work within a framework that binds the journalist to four principal pillars:

seek truth and report it; minimize harm; act independently; be accountable[9] (SPJ, 2012).

In regards to citizen photojournalism, Mette Mortensen, in his work "When citizen

photojournalism sets the news agenda: Neda Agha soltan as Web 2.0 icon of post election

unrest in Iran" that citizen photojournalists "may pose problems with regard to three

topics: source criticism [reliability/objectivity of citizen journalist]; violence [the

graphicness of material compared to general standards]; security [radical readings and

reactions, a general lack of a fixed message]" (Mortensen, 2011, p. 10-11). In particular,

the information captured and contained by any given image is sometimes difficult to

confirm or discern within the larger scene that is present. The camera is one perspective,

one that is unstable and continually changing capturing what is in front of the camera, but

failing to show what is happening to the sides, top, bottom and back of the scene. Citizen

journalism represents news and content that can be difficult to independently verify, often

using of single sources for stories, employing pseudonym and gathered outside the

auspices of professional ethical and code of conduct frameworks.

Given the tension that exists between the terminology, participatory and citizen

journalism, it would appear difficult to define amateur or non-professional

photojournalism as either. However, I argue the term 'citizen photojournalism' is the

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[8] For a historical and cultural analysis of the ethics and aesthetics of amateur
photography in the media news cycle see Becker, K. (2011) Looking Back: Ethics
and Aesthetics of Non-Professional Photography. In Anden-Papadopoulos and Pantti
(2011) *Amateur Images and Global News.* (Eds.) Hobbs: Intellect.
[9] For further details regarding the various points of consideration under each of the
four headings go to http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp

most accurate term to use, since information and images are gathered and published outside the purview of media outlets. The citizen photojournalist, using the means to record which they own, capture images of events around them. The majority of citizen photojournalists are able to publish images on platforms such as Flickr, YouTube, Facebook or Twitter first, their work available to millions by a simple search, bypassing the gatekeeper role of professional journalist or media outlets. Professional journalists retain the gatekeeper role insofar as they pick and choose what images or video to use within their respective mediums, and how to use it. Nonetheless, the images continue to be readily available elsewhere online in their unedited, uncut, or uncontextualized version. In short, their totality; what the photographer captured within that specific instance.

With breaking news now coming from all corners of the globe in real time, the citizen photojournalist fills the gap for recording events that professional photojournalists might not be able to fill. In relation to breaking news, Ray Niekamp (2012) states, "pictures become the most important contribution from citizens because they are able to be places and get scenes professional news organizations cannot"(p.115). The citizen photojournalist's unprecedented access to events allows them to capture images the instant an event unfolds. Illustrating breaking news with user-generated content marks the use of 'participatory' elements within major news organizations, such as CNN's iReporter. The use of images, compared to other user generated content, such as written accounts, during an unfolding event rest in the "the discursive authority that rests on eye witnessing" (Pantti and Anden-Papadopoulos, 2012, p.100). The image authenticates tangible visual evidence that can corroborate both verbal and written accounts given by

participants, with the image acting as a testament of witnessing the scene. By capturing images of breaking news, the citizen photojournalist assumes the role previously reserved for the professional photojournalists. Mortensen (2011) attributes this shift due to the "production and distribution of images becoming inexpensive" which allows citizen photojournalist images to "frequently turn into 'breaking news' in the international media" (Mortensen, 2011, p.5). However, citizen photojournalists may lack some of the fundamental technical and rhetorical skills that a professional journalist employs to capture an informative and effective image (Annany and Strohecker, 2002, p.2). Ananny and Strohecker rightly argue that the professional photojournalist simultaneously judges technical aspects (lighting, camera angles, focal length, etc.) and larger publication considerations (the medium, image placement) or editorial direction (Ibid, p.2). Thus, what exists is a tangible difference between the approaches of professional photojournalist and amateur photojournalists, which entails substantially different images that nonetheless appear on the surface similar or comparable.

Citizen Photojournalism and Camera Phone: A product of media convergence

The ability for citizen photojournalists to become eyewitnesses, recording the world and events that surround and involve their everyday lives is made possible by major technological advancements. Digital photo production equipment is not only becoming smaller and more powerful but is being incorporated within the same platform as communication technologies, cell phones. Cell phones represent a principal platform for citizen photojournalists to capture images of events that they witness. Cameras have been incorporated into cell phones for the better part of ten years (Googin, 2006, Villi, 2007). However, it is only recently that technology is available to produce good quality,

technically sound images that can be used within the mainstream media on a more regular

basis, illustrating not only breaking news but more ordinary events. The increasing

number of mega-pixels (a camera's resolution) that phone cameras record at and the

advent of capturing video in high definition has provided professional quality recording

equipment to more individuals. The citizen photojournalist, depending on connectivity to

the Internet or mobile networks, can shoot, edit, and publish their images online almost

instantaneously at a very high production quality. These mobile image platforms

represent an unprecedented shift in access. It is not only access regarding who can now

produce, but also where images can be captured. Thus, "the camera phone represents not

only an ever-present image capturing device but also an ever-present image sharing and

transmission device" (Villi, 2007, p. 51; Kato et al., 2005, p. 305).

The ability for individuals to use mobile phone technology to capture images and

reproduce them for a global audience is the result of media convergence—where different

kinds of media are "increasingly united in the same media object" (Stage, 2011, p.422;

Goggin, 2006; Jenkins, 2008). Henry Jenkins (2008) in his book *Convergence Culture*

argues against understanding convergence as being known "primarily as a technological

process bringing together multiple media functions within the same devices"(p. 3), but

rather as a larger cultural shift. The mobile phone is no longer only a phone, but also, due

to technological advances, a camera, video recorder, messaging tool and app platform.

The result is a powerful media production tool, which can capture, edit, and produce

numerous forms of media almost instantly, and moves communication to become more

visual. The idea of convergence is rooted in "the flow of content across multiple media

platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior

of media audiences…"(Jenkins, 2008, p.2). According to Gaby David (2010) in her work "Camera Phone Images, Videos and Live Streaming: A contemporary visual trend" the cell phone camera "enables us to participate, as a way of being visually engaged with what is going on and being able to retransmit our own ways of seeing, points of view and feelings"(p. 93).

The process of media convergence, and the continued evolution of the camera phone have developed, to borrow Jenkins term, a *participatory culture* (Jenkins, 2008, p.3). *Participatory culture* signifies the conflation of producers and consumers who now interact and cross roles with each other (Ibid). In other words, producers and consumers are individuals "who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands"(Ibid). The new relationship between producers and consumers are exemplified in the relationships facilitated by the camera phone where production and consumption are bound within one unit. Taking this a step further, the individual producer may in fact be involved in the scene that they are capturing. This blends a third conceptual actor missed by Jenkins term of participatory culture, *the participant*, that is in fact actively conflated into the role of producer and consumer. For example, scholar Melinda Hickson noted protestors during the 2009 Green Revolution in Iran, using their camera phones to record events around them were "engaged in a multiplicity of tasks that are commonly understood as distinct; they are protesting *and* reporting; acting *and* mediating that action simultaneously (Hinkson, 2011, p. 137; Manoukian, 2010). The producer of the image becomes simultaneously a participant and consumer—both participating in the event they capture on camera, and consuming its images through communication technology—that results in an increasing tension that exists within the

auspices of technologically convergent devices such as cell phones. The citizen

photojournalist using their camera phone represents a producer of content and a witness

in a physical and virtual sense simultaneously. The production of content is not only

limited to the capturing of images, but the sharing of those images across both physical

and virtual networks.

Camera phones and images: Presence/Absence, politics of space and 'beyond here and

now'

Through the emergence of camera phones and centralized media devices, the

modern cell phone represents a technological, social, and cultural shift in how individuals

communicate. The rise of the citizen photojournalist is located within this shift. How

individuals capture and share images on their devices becomes an important point of

consideration in further understanding the rise and use of material created by citizen

photojournalists. In particular, camera phone images represent a shift in how

relationships are formed through a communication based visually. According to José van

Dijck, in "Digital photography: communication, identity, memory" "these emerging

digital [imaging] tools substantially affect the way people socialize and interact and, by

extension, the way they maintain and consolidate relationships" (van Dijck, 2008, p.61).

Similarly, Mikko Villi and Matteo Stocchetti (2011) state in their paper, "Visual mobile

communication, meditated presence and the politics of space" that "camera phones

transform photography towards a digital and networked form of visual communication"

(p. 108). As Mikko Villi has earlier noted, "photo messages can alter *mobile phone*

communication from almost totally verbal (voice calls, SMS messages) into at least partly

visual communication (Villi, 2007, p. 50, emphasis in original). This shift allows for

situations and events that may not be readily expressed through text to be shared visually, further expanding communicative possibilities. The camera phone, and its ability to both capture and communicate images enables for seamless shift between production to sharing. Thus, Villi argues that "the camera phone is an ubiquitous camera, but also a device that enables new forms of photographic communication"(Villi, 2011). Camera phone images offer salient examples and information that otherwise would not be available readily. In short Gaby David states "camera phone images enable us to build a conversation that is rooted in the visually concrete" (David, 2010, p. 93; See also: Kato et al., 2005). The ability to share images quickly and effectively across a multitude of platforms instantaneously enables for a communication anchored in visuals between individuals to occur. What is achieved through photographic production with camera phones is a transformation of visual information and communication.

This transformation in visual communication is shifting the image from a permanent fixture of memory to the point where it allows "…photography to become more ubiquitous, transient, mundane, and interpersonal"(Villi, 2007, p. 51; van Dijck, 2008). Given these properties, photo messages are often viewed as purely *personal*, intended for the individual who received the message and not a wider public (Villi, 2007). As such, the very nature of camera phone images and how they are shared would appear antithetical to photojournalistic images (Ibid, 53), which are intended to be shown, shared, and act as a visual artifact of events that have passed. Villi (2007, 2011) argues that images shared as photo messages are only intended for intimate communication, but this is not always the case. With images being packaged and posted through posts across numerous social media platforms to a wide and varied audience, the photojournalistic

promise of camera phone image is realized. Even within a network of personal individuals, depending on what a specific images illustrates, an individual may be so inclined to share it among their wider network, for example an image of a protest or a protestor beaten to a bloody pulp. Through the evolution of the phone into a mobile media device, images are no longer restrained to simple photo messages or MMS, rather can be sent and shared in a multitude of ways to a wide and receptive audiences. One-to-one communication is replaced by one-to-many through the very nature of camera phones and the communication promise of the devices that they centralize.

An important facet that is developed from the camera phone is the ability to simultaneously extend and contract space. Through the sharing of images and viewing them, the image is able to generate what Villi and Stocchetti term *presence* and *absence*. They state in relation to individuals using photo sharing that "the fundamental ambivalence of mobile media consists of their usability as tools for both presence and absence: to induce a feeling of presence and to facilitate absence" (Ibid, p. 104). Camera phone images produce the presence of being there (Ijsselsteijn *et al.,* 2000; Schroeder, 2005, p. 342) and also illustrate, to use Roland Barthes' oft-cited statement and sentiment, "what has been" (Barthes, 1982). Villi and Stocchetti allude to the fact that "photo messages support closeness" (Villi and Stocchetti, 2011). Conversely, mobile phones support an 'absent presence', which allows image makers to keep distant others close while keeping those physically present at bay through being "absorbed by a technologically world elsewhere" (Ibid, p.105; Gergen, 2002, p. 227). The mobile phone through using its camera allows individuals to shape and share their visual memory and

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identity, often through fleeting snippets of images to their wider social network (van Dijck, 2008). This network is centralized and organized within their cell phone.

In relation to the citizen photojournalist, by taking an image and sharing it they are witnessing for *all* by their physical presence, thus displacing the viewer to the peripheries of an event; the viewer's role determined solely through their interaction with an image as a distant other. The presence that the viewer experiences is only "in a figurative or illusory sense, it is mediated presence" (Villi and Stocchetti, 2011, p. 105). The images that are captured and shared across cell phones facilitate a new sense of space. In its broadest sense, images captured from camera phones, and their transfer among individuals can be understood through the *politics of space* which, as they put it,

> is about the management of distance, presence and absence, and the use of communicative space for the management of social relations: keeping close certain individuals even when physical distance keeps us apart; keeping others at a distance even if they may be more accessible in physical terms. *In the politics of space, power is the capacity to influence the distribution of social distance/proximity: to influence more than to be influenced* (Villi and Stocchetti, 2011, p.108, emphasis added).

The citizen photojournalist experiences an increased capacity to influence social distance or proximity through the very images they capture and share. The image becomes an integral point of connection between social relations, where they often represent social importance. This presence experienced by the viewer can be further augmented through the use of similar images or contexts developed throughout the media, leading to general 'cultural anesthesia'—an inablilty to understand and feel the suffering of distant others through mediated use of images of violence (Feldman, 1994), a lack of grievability—the inability to grieve or 'know' the loss of a distant other (Butler, 2004; Butler, 2010) or 'compassion fatigue' (Moeller, 1999; Tester, 2001). Thus, the

image and it being shared across photo messages and social media platforms represents a simultaneous means to facilitate absence and presence among known and unknown individuals.

The use of the camera phone to capture breaking news events represents a process of the photographer being inclined to capture images for future use. While still communicating visually, the sharing of these images to a wider online community represents a shift in image use towards illustrating events rather then facilitating connections between intimates. For example, Hinkson characterizes the citizen photojournalist capturing of images during the 2009 Iranian Green Revolution noting, "their actions are future-focused and vest considerable significance in a communicative process oriented *beyond the here and now*" (Hinkson, 2011, p. 137, emphasis added). This marks a clear delineation between images being used as personal communication and as the product of citizen photojournalists. However, even images captured for personal use can easily find themselves in public forums, such as social media, with a couple quick clicks of a button. While images used by lay individuals are employed as a means of identity formation and a means of communication, which is fluid and fleeting (van Dijck, 2008), the capturing of images is part of a larger documentation process and determination to provide lasting representation of an event. The drive to record is a part of an "unconscious and deeply ingrained social impulse, as if this were ordinary practice in extraordinary circumstances"(Hinkson, 2011, p.136). This ambition is found even in times of recording death and destruction. The use of the camera phone has now become an ingrained process of witnessing, a larger cultural shift in recording the world around us as increased means of communicating visually.

For example, in December 2004 a large Tsunami crashed into South East Asia,

killing thousands in its path. Rather than polished reports from professional journalists,

images came from citizen photojournalists who visually illustrated the early days of the

crisis. Sharon Meraz (2006) notes that these citizen photojournalist's accounts were

conscripted for the " highly emotional and compelling incident" given the fact

individuals were… "armed with *camera-equipped cell phones and digital*

camcorders"(Meraz, 2006, p.11 emphasis added). Citizen photojournalist images offered

vivid accounts of the Tsunami crashing into the coastline and the immediate destruction

that the wave wreaked. Professional photojournalists, capturing images some days after

the tsunami struck could and would only produce images of the aftermath, not of the

event in action. The inability for professional photojournalists to capture an emotional

and compelling incident immediately during the height of the event would come one year

later in London. Citizen photojournalists captured the events and immediate aftermath of

the 2005 7/7 bombings, providing emotionally charged images of the bombings taking

place that professional photojournalist were unable to provide. Due to security

restrictions, the images that citizen photojournalists recorded of the event would soon be

closed to professional photojournalists. The ability for images to be captured through the

available technologies located in mobile phones has resulted in a shifting paradigm

regarding the photojournalist. While each of these citizen photojournalist's accounts

mentioned here were highly personal, they appealed to a wider community interested in

the images they captured. They represented tantalizing visual material to highly

emotional events, that were not only shared among intimates but an engaged and

receptive international audience.

Images and Truth: Digital manipulation, capturing images and perceived truth claims

One of the seeming benefits and strengths of citizen journalism is its perceived truth-value. Citizen journalists, through the use of cell phone cameras, offer seemingly immediate images in an unfiltered and raw visual account, which appears unaltered or free from bias. Digital images, with light translated directly to pixels rather then to a negative to create an image that offers a 'purer' images (Sasson,2004). Nonetheless, the nature of digital images and editing software is increasing concern that digital images may be tampered with more readily then their film counterparts (Wheeler, 2002; van Dijck, 2008; Sasson, 2004). Even the most basic digital cameras now have built in software and filters where images can be manipulated with ease, in camera or with a computer. The increased use of these digital cameras across a very wide section of the population raises the recognition of how images may be manipulated with this software. As Errol Morris (2011) notes in his book *Believing is seeing* "today, possibly because of Photoshop and other photography-doctoring software, people have become suspicious of photographs"(p.45; Campbell, 2011). The advent of this software, and its ability to create flawless changes to an image has eroded their 'truth' claim in the eyes of many individuals. Powerful editing tools such as content-aware fill in Adobe's Photoshop CS5[10], allows even lay individuals to remove unwanted parts within images and accomplish near flawless changes. Such digital editing tools have already created controversy within a professional setting. For example, Karen Rustad in her paper, "Photojournalism and the Internet: Competition, Collaboration, Convergence" discusses the infamous 'Burning Building' photographic incident from the 2006 Isreal-Lebannon

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[10] To see this tool in action follow this link:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTvxlfBW96k

conflict. During this photographic circumstance, bloggers discovered that Reuters had carried on their wire an image of a burning building, which was clearly manipulated using post-production software (2006, p. 3-4). Later that year, Reuters was again caught using false images of submersibles, which was cropped footage from the Hollywood Blockbuster *Titanic*. Reuters claimed that the footage was of two small subs being deployed by a Russian expedition at the North Pole (Holmwood, 2007)

Conversely, scholar David Campbell (2011) writing in his blog post "Who believes photographs?" argues that, "recognizing the capacity for manipulation does not mean abandoning the documentary promise [of images]"(Campbell, 2011). Britta Höijer, in her work, "The Discourse of Global Compassion: The Audience and Media Reporting of Human Suffering", argues, "the audience very rarely questions the reality status of documentary pictures, or sees them as constructions of situations or events… documentary pictures are instead experienced as if they give direct access to reality and they therefore insist on being taken seriously" (Höijer, 2004, p. 521; See also: Meskin and Cohen, 2010; Walden, 2010; Savedoff, 2010). Even if images are manipulated, misleading or distorted, many individuals would recognize them to be an exception, not the standard (Wheeler, 2002, p.5). The documentary promise (Campbell, 2011) or the "phototruth" (Wheeler, 2002) is what makes amateur images so appealing. The documentary promise is the *semblance of reality or truth*, which is contained within any given image. Thus, an ever-present tension exists between the *possibility* of manipulation and the 'truth' recorded of event or scene that has taken place, which is represented by an image. In relation to the citizen photojournalist, due to the sheer speed that an image moves from being captured to published material, gives the appearance that an image

may not be altered. The documentary promise is also located in how an image circulates and attains value as a visual testament even if the image is doctored. A famous example of this being the Osama Bin Laden 'death image' which once again circulated with vigor after his capture and death in 2011, even though the image was a known fake (Hill, 2011). Documentary promise also continues to be located in the number of people who recognize or believe what the image shows, furthering the truth claim of what is represented. Citizen photojournalist images often circulate more freely given the fact that copyright infringement or unauthorized use is less likely to be recognized or pursued by the individual who captured the image or who is its subject.

The documentary promise is not only achieved in what an image represents, but how the citizen photojournalist captures it. Citizen photojournalist images are often marked by their poor production quality—blurry, grainy, overall chaotic and tumultuous sense to the scene captured. Unlike their professional photojournalism counterparts, these poor production characteristics add to the documentary promise of the image.[11] For example, in relation to the footage regarding the killing of Neda Agha Soltan, which is further explored in the fifth chapter of this thesis, Mette Mortensen (2011) rightly states, "the footage comes across as authentic on account of its speed, intimacy, and strong reality effect, along with the fact that it is not usually infiltrated by commercial interests or legislative politics from the outset"(p.9). Susan Sontag argues in relation to images of suffering, that the photographer by "flying low, artistically speaking, such pictures are thought to be less manipulative" (Sontag, 2003, p.27). Such images may beckon the

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[11] Conversely, professional journalists are known to employ poor production quality to cover up a lack of knowledge they may have regarding a particular region or place. For an account of this see Clark 2004, 2009, Alam 1994

viewer to feel the chaos of the scene, the fears of the crowd and sense the proximity of the citizen photojournalist to the event. These characteristics make the image appear not being composed or tampered with and appear as if the images are captured unplanned. This attribute represents a shift in the production of images for media consumption, where 'good enough' marks a shift away from images showing technical perfection (Niekamp, 2011, p.118). Citizen photojournalist images offer a rawness that is often not found within mainstream photojournalism work. Professional photojournalist images tend to encompass technical strength, using good light, creative composition, strong subject manner, and professional norms of what to show and how. Professional photojournalist images are visually enticing but they are clearly composed, with the photographer 'manipulating' the scene's image—the image is a composition of the various elements available to them. Scholar David Campbell (2011), distinguished in his blog post, "The problem with the dramatic staging of photojournalism: what is the real issue?" how most professional journalist use composition to create shots, and that all images are staged to some degree.[12] Nonetheless, Campbell argues, "*staging is not the same as faking*"(Campbell, 2011, emphasis is original). It should be noted that even amateur images are staged, even though the shot creates the impression otherwise. The citizen photojournalist makes specific choices to include and not include, the camera moving in an unstable manner, often panning quickly to the next part of a scene that grabs the citizen photojournalists' attention.

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[12] Campbell uses a number of photos and one video example which can be found here: http://vimeo.com/29280708, www.magnumphotos.com Image Ref# PAR112713, http://www.dvafoto.com/2010/01/like-moths-to-a-flame-so-many-cameras-in-haiti/

Images captured by citizen photojournalists are in many respects more transparent, going directly between the citizen photojournalist who captured it, to a publishing platform such as Flickr, developing the impression that the image is free of manipulation. Therefore, in terms of aesthetic quality, Mervi Pantti and Piet Bakker (2009) state, "all amateur images are praised for being more "authentic" then professional photography and, thus they are believed to offer special value to the audience"(Pantti and Bakker 2009, p. 486). This 'authenticity' is further solidified by the ability of the viewer to see an image beyond the traditional news media, on platforms such as Flickr, Youtube or Facebook. The increasing availability of citizen photojournalist images from similar events being captured by professional photojournalists enables viewers to compare images from both professional and citizens and form their own opinions of the events. The ability to view an image on these online platforms adds an additional level of transparency, where the viewer can connect through directly with a citizen photojournalist images. This allows the image to be viewed and to see if the image was changed with post-production software or by photographing the scene to manipulate it.

Conclusion

The rise of the citizen photojournalist coincides with a larger shift in the traditional media environment that is developing a multi-level, multi-directional conversation between professional journalists and amateurs alike. Due to technological shifts, in particular through media convergence, the citizen photojournalist now has constant and immediate access to devices that can capture images, communicate with other individuals, and publish images to a broad community online. The rise of the citizen photojournalist is located in a broader cultural, social and technological shift where

communication is becoming more visual, with photo messages being used as a principal means to create and contract distance between acquaintances and strangers alike. Media convergence and increasing visual communication is shifting photographs towards the everyday, mundane and fleeting moments anyone may encounter in their day. Thus, the citizen photojournalist is a product of and located in this cultural, social and technological shift regarding images. Citizen photojournalist images, while not free from digital manipulation, appear as transparent and truthful photographic depictions of breaking news events. How these images are captured also reinforces this view of their truth claim. As news agencies begin to move towards a 'good enough' relationship with images, more citizen photojournalist images will be used and more readily to illustrate not only breaking news events, but everyday occurrences not captured by professionals.

Chapter 4: The Internet, Images and Revolution

The emergence of the internet over the past decade as the preferred mode of communication has drastically changed how individuals interact with each other and their governments. The internet is a contested space, where competing voices, views, and motives interact seemingly without rule. It is not surprising as more individuals worldwide have gained access, the internet has emerged as an important tool and consideration within contemporary revolutions.

As an increasing number of events are captured by citizen photojournalists, and subsequently shared online, the role of the internet and images to cultivate a citizenship of photography across digital platforms is important to note. Images, as a central component within contemporary revolutions connects individuals. The various platforms of social media and image sharing sites mediate an *encounter*, which is inclusive of the relationship between the camera, photographer, photographed, subject, and spectator, which form "the photograph (*and its meaning*) as an unintentional effect of the encounter between all of these" (Azoulay, 2008, p.23 emphasis added). Linking online and physical individuals, these platforms represent a direct relationship between virtual communities (the citizenry of photography connected by through the internet and other communication technologies) and the physical world (citizens in relation to a specific nation or government).

How images are shared has, to a great extent, shifted relationships between individuals and images. This shift marks an important change in the conceptualization of a citizenship of photography within contemporary revolutions. Determining how images are shared amongst citizens of photography online, and the extenuating factors that can

be used to limit this or create an adverse environment that actually threatens individuals and or revolutions will shed more light on the emerging role images play in contemporary revolutions.

Shirky/Morozov Debate: The Internet and Social Media in Revolutions

The recent revolutions in Iran and within the Arab Spring, coupled with the apparent widespread use of the internet and social media in both, has implored a close reexamination of its role by the media and academics alike. While many scholars, pundits and journalists have all established a perspective, the debate can be roughly divided between two opposing perspectives, that of cyber-uptoism (Clay Shirky) or cyber-dystopianism (Evgeny Morozov). At the crux of this debate is the role of internet technology, how it can be used, who uses it, and how it can be effectively mobilized to produce physical change.

Clay Shirky, professor of new media at New York University, discusses how technology has enabled collective action. Shriky's views are often termed 'cyber-utopic' defined by the belief in "the emancipatory nature of online communication" (Morozov, 2011, p. xiii). Shirky argues, along with like minded scholars, that technology allow individuals to easily assemble and harness online tools to achieve stated goals. These tools Shirky notes, channel existing motivation, all the while facilitating group formation within an environment with minimal managerial oversight and direction (Shirky, 2008, p.21).

The effectiveness of social media, is located in its communicative ability. Through enabling communicative ability, collective action can be effectively achieved. And these online actions can have physical consequences. Shirky notes that "the use of

social media tools… does not have a single preordained outcome"(Shirky, 2011).

Scholars, pundits and journalists often use superlative language and hyperboles to connect the use of social media, the internet and the 'success'—very relative and subjective term—of any given contemporary revolution. However, the clear connection between social media and the success of a revolution may be difficult to ascertain. Nonetheless, connected with the relatively straightforward narrative that social media presents in explaining contemporary revolutions—ideas of connectivity, ease of assembly and effortlessness of communication—become the norm, not apart of a nuanced understanding. Even Shirky himself has stated such superlative and reductive claims, like "this is it, this is the big one" in an interview with *TED* during the early stages of Iranian Green Revolution (TED, 2009). However, some two years later Shirky notes more conservatively that "the potential of social media lies mainly in their support of civil society and the public sphere—change measured in years and decades rather than weeks or months"(Ibid, 2011). When all the tools that the internet offers is taken in its totality, social media, email, photo/video sharing sites, leads to their significance (Shirky, 2011, p. 20).

Conversely, an emerging group of scholars are beginning to question the effectiveness, and to a greater extent, the safety or security of individuals using social media services altogether. Evgeny Morozov, scholar and one time cyber-utopic (See: Morozov, 2009) coins the term "Net Delusion" to explain "the flawed set of assumptions (cyber-utopianism)" and the use of "a flawed, even crippled, methodology (Internet-centerism)" (Morozov, 2010, p. xvii) that equates to almost delusional concept of what the internet can offer citizens, on and offline. The same tools—social media and the

internet—that empower individuals to create, share and view information, which can be used for activist and revolutionary purposes, are simultaneously some of the most effective surveillance tools ever created for authoritarian regimes. For example, when the use of Twitter and Facebook became major storylines within the international media regarding the revolutions in Moldova and Iran, authoritarian regimes 'awoke' to these platforms political potential. This increased attention, rather then aid individuals using these tools anonymously, shifted regimes understandings of these platforms from harmless hubs for social interaction and entertainment, into effective tools of regime change and dissidence (Morozov, 2010, p. 24). Particularly within the case of Iran in 2009, Iranian officials began to use Twitter and Facebook to monitor protest activity, share images to identify suspects wanted by the regime and locate dissidents (Morozov, 2010).

Numerous NGOs, such as Reporters Without Borders and the Open Net Initiative are reporting filtering and surveillance being undertaken by government across the globe. For example, a 2012 Reporters Without Borders study, "Internet Enemies: Report 2012" indentified twelve enemies of the internet, four of which were located in the MENA region (Bahrain, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria) and fourteen countries to watch, four of which were MENA nations (Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE)[13]. Tactics such as surveillance, filtering, and Web 2.0 phishing measures are some of the few online tools used by

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[13] An intriguing omission from this list is Libya, which in past reports was included as an enemy (Reporters without Borders, 2005). This is probably partly due to the recent collapse of Ghaddafi's regime and the installation of a revolutionary ruling council. However, it should be noted that said council may use aggressive online surveillance and filtering tactics if viewed as an amicable option to issues that arise, as freedom of speech laws have already passed (Alertnet, 2012).

regimes. This is coupled with physical measures, such as intimidation, beatings, torture and arrest for actions are involved in online.

The tools that many governments use to conduct surveillance or filtering are subsequently developed by Western corporations. For example, Open Net in its report "Internet in the Middle East and North Africa" states that many Middle Eastern and North African regimes use two Western built filtering tools, Websense and McAfee Smartfilter (Ibid, 2011). The adoption of Western developed filter software to control access to certain Internet sites and activities raises the possibility for intervention to occur on behalf of Western nation states or corporate goals. Open Net concluded in their report that "Western companies are playing a role in the national politics of many countries around the world. By making their software available to the regimes, they are potentially taking sides against citizens and activists who are prevented from accessing and disseminating content thanks in part to filtering software"(Ibid, p.16). To certain degree, use of this software allows Western corporations and by extension Western nations to control events in the MENA region. By fulfilling the demands of MENA regional governments to block certain sites, Western filtering corporations can directly stem the flow of information in and out of the MENA region.

The ideas developed by cyber-utopic and dystopic views illustrates the murkiness that revolves around the specific role social media and the Internet constitutes in modern revolutions. Social media and the Internet are not fully free spaces, nor are they totally controlled by government forces. Rather, the role of social media and the internet is contested, its influence and role ebbing and flowing at any given moment. Therefore, the general role images play in creating space, is both fluid—moving across platforms and

digital frontiers—while being difficult for anyone individual (including governments) to control, makes images an effective means to create virtual space. Images, and the encounters that surround them aid in the development of virtual communities and connections between a digital citizenship.

Images and Encounters: Virtual Communities and Digital Citizenship

The process of citizen photojournalists capturing images and sharing them has established a new form of a virtual public space and sphere. This virtual public space and sphere is found in the ability for individuals to connect and share images effectively, collapsing physical distance constraints and other boundaries between individuals. Doreen Khoury (2011) states in "Social Media and the Revolutions" that:

> advances in new mass communication technology which have revolutionized expression and collapsed boundaries between people (both within and across countries), have allowed young Arabs to relocate civic action and expression from the suffocated (physical) public sphere to the internet, and in so doing, they have created a new virtual public sphere. (p.81, emphasis in original).

Drawing this concept out further, Julieta Leite and Sílvio Zancheti, in their paper, "Public Cyberspace", note that the "virtual public space is defined as a space structured by digital communication networks that serve the two functions of *organizing* and *representing* a collectivity at one and the same time…" (Leitie and Zancheti, 2007, p. 115, emphasis added). Scholar Zizi Papacharissi establishes that this virtual public sphere is radically different to the physical public sphere (Papacharissi, 2002, p. 21). This virtual public space, like its physical counterpart, is comprised of a multitude of individuals, but who are active citizens in a digital sense. In short, Karen Mossberger, Caroline Tolbert and Romona McNeal, in their book *Digital Citizenship: the Internet, Society, and*

Participation state ""Digital citizenship" is the ability to participate in society online"(Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal, 2008, p. 1).

While the role of social media platforms and the internet in contemporary revolutions is contested, they provide specific function as a point of connection between images and individuals. As such, a global citizenship of photography is loosely connected within a conduit of information flowing on and across these various social media and online communication platforms. Zizi Papacharissi, in his seminal work "The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere" notes "it would seem that the internet and related technologies have managed to create new public space for political discussion" (Papacharissi, 2002, p.22) This public space allows for the development of a virtual public sphere. According to Papacharsissi, "the public sphere presents a domain of social life in which public opinion is expressed by means of rational public discourse and debate. The ultimate goal of the public sphere is public accord and decision making, although these goals may not necessarily routinely be achieved" (Papacharissi, 2008, pg. 4-5). However, even though these technologies are opening up new space for discussion, interpretation may remain limited, space not utilized, and discussion may not appear any different then what is found in the public sphere (Ibid, p. 21-22). In addition, Papacharsissi discusses that "the most plausible manner of perceiving the virtual sphere [is that it] consists of several culturally fragmented cyber spheres that occupy a common virtual public space" (Ibid, p.22).

Thus, digital citizens may not break down barriers that already exist in a physical sense (such as distance, borders). Compounded is the issue of language, which even online is not an easy barrier to overcome and exists everywhere. Papacharsissi states

"scholarly examinations of the internet as a public sphere all point to the conclusion that online digital technologies *create a public space*, but *do not* inevitably enable a *public sphere*" (Papacharsissi, 2008, pg 12, emphasis added). In short, the internet provides the space for "the public space to convene, it does not guarantee a healthy public sphere" (Ibid, pg.5).

It is noted that images provide a public virtual space, but not always a virtual public sphere. Images do not guarantee debate will happen, nor discussion. Rather images offer a space for *encounters* to occur. These encounters may be understood as a visual event. A visual event is represented as "not a point on a network that is connected to other points [a network theory perspective of social media]; rather it is along everyday and performative routes or narratives that people, cameras, photographs, and researchers trajectories become interwoven"(Pink, 2011, p. 7; Radley *et al.*, 2010). The image itself, and the intensity of the interconnection it creates for digital citizens to partake in a digital public space is part of a

> visual event as not necessarily a public media event connected to a network of
> other events; rather, the visual-place-event might be conceptualized as an
> everyday intensity, whereby images are made, carried, consumed, move forward
> and open up potentialities with perceiving embodied persons as part of specific
> environmental configurations. (Pink, 2011, p. 8)

How images ultimately develop a performative space—a virtual public space—determines their role in how individuals will connect within these virtual public spaces. Hence, how images are shared online become an important point of consideration when determining how images aid in connecting a disperse citizenship of photography. It is this mainly digital citizenship that determines an images meaning, use, context and ultimately its fate as a visual testament of "what has been"(Barthes, 1982). It is important to note

that the virtual public sphere is not located in the space social media provides, rather with images. This is evidenced in the cross-platform sharing across social media platforms that occurs, which allows images, individuals and conversations to break the boundaries of one space into another. In short, images produce an organic process, where images are fluid, ever-changing entities that produce intensities, not nodes, information hubs, within a network.

Evolution of Sharing Images: Social media in shaping a citizenship of photography

Susan Murrary (2008) in her paper, "Digital Images, Photo-Sharing, and our shifting notions of the everyday aesthetics" argues that platforms such as Flickr have become indicative of

> a collaborative experience: a shaded display of memory, taste, history, signifiers of identity, collection, daily life and judgment through which amateur and professional photographers collectively articulate a novel, digitized (and decentralized) aesthetics of the everyday (p.149)

Flickr offers a forum which different image-makers, both professionals and amateurs, are able to come together and create a visual catalogue of the world around them. A shift in the relationship with images comes through a collaborative effort to document experiences through images and share them. Within Flickr "an altered temporal relationship to the everyday image" exists where "users and viewers are encouraged to establish a connection with the image that is simultaneously fleeting and a building block of a biographical or social narrative" (Ibid, p.161). Through the use of groups and the ability to leave and post comments, virtual communities can negotiate the meaning of images within a larger social narrative. These images become indicative of both lived and perceived experiences, linking all those who look, take, or engage with these images.

According to Sophia Lui *et al.* in their chapter titled "Citizen photojournalism during crisis events note "with digital photography and on-line photo sharing, people can easily store, display, manipulate, and share their pictorial experiences"(Liu et al, 2009, p.43). It is through these platforms that, "everyday citizen photography is becoming a social and cultural documentary practice among diverse publics" (Ibid, p.43). Photo sharing websites such as Flickr (51 million users), Photobucket (23 million), Picsa, Tumblr or Twitpics have become epicenters for gathering, aggregating and disseminating images during times of disasters, conflict and/or protest. These sites are not only represented by a transformation of images towards illustrating the fleeting, mundane occurrences of an individual's everyday life, but the events that an individual witness.

José van Dijck, in his paper "Flickr and the culture of connectivity: Sharing views, experiences, memories" explores how Flickr is shifting traditional notions of collective memory and connectivity. Using Hoskins (2009) "argument that the idea of collective memory has become problematic in the age of digital networks" (van Dijck, 2011, p. 402, Hoskin, 2009) van Dijck notes how memory is shifting from a socio-anthropogenic idea of collectivity towards a socio-technological concept. Van Dijck argues that social media sites, and how images are shared, connected and discussed within Flickr and similar platforms has developed a "*culture of connectivity*—a culture where perspectives, expressions, experiences and productions are increasingly mediated by social media sites"(van Dijck, 2011, p.402)

Social media sites and platforms such as Flickr and Youtube, act not only as a conduit for individuals to connect, but also as a space *to share* images; within a virtual public space *created by* images. Social media and photo/video platforms represent the

principal publishing avenue where citizen photojournalists can post their images. Hence, social media platforms represent a fundamental point for developing *encounters*— relationships between the citizens of photography, which in turn establishes the meaning of any given image. The use of virtual public spaces for negotiating images started some years before the Green Revolution and Arab Spring, truly beginning in earnest during the 2004 South East Asia Tsunami and 2005 7/7 London Bombings. These two events are important for establishing this virtual public space of social media because they link citizen photojournalist images online with an engaged viewership and public.

Sharing proves to be an important facet in creating effective bonds and space for discussion. According to Clay Shirky (2008), in his book *The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*, even when large numbers of people are able to capture images, if an image cannot easily be shared and linked with similar ones, they will not develop common bonds between individuals. Or more importantly become valuable sources of information. Established networks for sharing and communicating must be in place for virtual public spaces to be successful and encounters to occur among the citizenship of photography and use citizen photojournalist images. Shirky, using examples from three distinct events –the 2005 Coney Island Mermaid Parade, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, and the 2006 Thailand military coup—concluded:

> the common thread [between the events] is the complexity of gathering the photos. The groups of photographers were all latent groups, which is to say groups that existed on *in potenia*, and too much effort would have been required to turn those latent groups into real ones by conventional means. (Shirky, 2008, p.38, emphasis in original)

Photo sharing platforms and social media sites have in effect turned these *in potenia* citizen photojournalists into valuable documenting and information sharing

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individuals. Each citizen photojournalist is able to record a small cross-section of an event. They are then able to publish this within a public space where it can be stitched together with other similar images. Collectively, their small individual accounts form a complex mosaic of witnessing. Lui *et al* (2009)*,* point to the use of Flickr groups and tags unique to particular events on photo-sharing platforms to link individuals and images. These groups are mobilized actively to collect images and develop a connection amongst their membership. These social media platforms are marked by the development of 'Web 2.0' which, "describes a new generation of web-based service that emphasize social networking, collaboration and participation"… where "control seems to be shifting from established institutions to ad hoc groupings of users"(Anden-Papadopoulos and Pantti, 2011, p.11).

Conclusion

Social media platforms form an integral link for the citizenship of photography. Digital images captured and then disseminated by protestors in contemporary revolutions across social media, stream truth to power (the nation state), and facilitate encounters between virtual individuals and communities and real ones. The digitalization of images allows for a greater number of participants to be citizens within a citizenship of photography and deterritorialize images. Government attempts to control the internet by limiting or entirely eliminating access, cannot control how images will spread. Images are replicated domestically and abroad by a multitude of different individuals from various nation states and through different applications, such as social media or conventional print mediums. This deterritorialization of images allows for the participation and inclusion of a citizenship that is not bound to traditional boundaries of the nation state,

including but not limited to territorial borders, national law, religious doctrine, or ethnic origins (Azoulay, 2008, p.25).

The penetration of social media in the MENA region remains limited. Nonetheless, the penetration of social media platforms and the internet is sufficient to connect to virtual networks regionally or internationally and to physical networks locally. Coupled with the extensive images captured by citizen photojournalists, any given image's meaning is now negotiated amongst a wide and varied online community. The role of social media in defining the meaning of citizen photojournalist images marks the possibility for iconic images to be formed. Social media, by its nature, allows for immediate feedback and conversation that is recorded and accountable for the public to see, allowing individuals to build an evolving narrative, which establishes 'traces'. These various small traces between the citizenship of photography helps define an image and the images importance/iconicness in defining events. But how these images move from social media and influence events in the physical world is difficult to discern. The next two chapters illustrate two examples of how citizen photojournalist images, given meaning through social media and other communication technology, are successful or not in shaping revolution in the Middle East. The first example illustrates the role of Neda Agha-Soltan's image of her death during the 2009 Iranian Green Revolution and the images of Mohammed Bouazizi during the Arab Spring in late 2010 and early 2011.

Chapter 5 Images: Citizenship, community and the 2009 Iranian Revolution

"Technology alone does not cause political change—it did not in Iran's case" (Howard, 2011, p.12).

Commentators have discussed the ongoing Arab Spring in terms of its unprecedented documentation by citizen photojournalist images and use of contemporary communication tools such as the Internet and mobile phones, to share images and coordinate action within the street. However, the case of images within the 2009 Iranian 'Green Revolution' is illustrative of the larger role both have played, citizen photojournalist images and communication tools, in previous protests within the MENA region. The 2009 Iranian Green Revolution or 'Green Wave' is defined by the use of social media, the role of citizen photojournalists and the images they captured, by both academics and the media alike. Citizen photojournalists on the street captured images depicting violent street clashes and protests. Of the many images captured during the Green Revolution, one image of the protests stood out. It depicted the shooting death of Neda Agha Soltan. Agha-Soltan was a twenty-six year old graduate student who was partaking in the Green Revolution protests; she was shot dead by a Basji militiaman. Agha-Soltan's death was captured with a mobile phone camera by nearby onlookers. The grainy video illustrated a singular event, a young woman, who held neither weapon nor aggression, struck by a bullet from a militiaman's gun. The victim of a senseless killing, the video would soon become a social media and internet sensation.

This chapter discusses how images formed community and mobilized a citizenship around them within the Green Revolution's revolutionary context, both digital

and real. Images captured by citizen photojournalists proved important in the revolution, none more so than images of Neda Agha-Soltan.

Images in part can aid in explaining the 'failure' of the Green Revolution, through analyzing the varying extent that images mobilized citizenship and community in both virtual and real contexts and what they achieve in the larger context of the revolution, *solidarity* or *physical change*. In short, the following discussion considers how the failure of the Green Revolution may be explained, in part, due to the role of images, specifically the iconic image of Neda Agha Soltan.

To illustrate the role of images in the Green Revolutions, six specific themes underpin a cross-comparative analysis exploring the role of images within contemporary revolution. These subsections include the underlying causes of the revolution; the penetration and role of social media in the uprisings; the actions of the citizen photojournalists; the development of iconic images; the government response to the images of revolution; and the effect of images within the revolution. Through exploring these six subheadings, the thesis attempts to develop a detailed longitudinal analysis of images within this chapter in order to develop an understanding of the role played by images in the revolutionary context of the Green Revolution and the extent they may partly explain the success or failure of the Green revolution.

Underlying Issues: The contested 2009 Iranian Election

In the months leading up to the Green Revolution in Iran, a presidential election was in process, with the final election results ultimately sparking widespread unrest. The election, following in the aftermath of the global financial meltdown, plummeting oil

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demand, and Western sanctions, poised the economy to be a central issue during the campaigns of the presidential hopefuls. According to the BBC, pre-election rhetoric within Iran pointed to the economy being the biggest concern of most Iranians. The BBC states, "global recession, falling oil prices, government overspending, high inflation and high unemployment", but women rights and the media were some of the concerns in the electorates minds (BBC, 2009). The Huffington Post, six months before the elections pointed to the existence of Western sanctions and how relations with the West would move forward post-election as a key differentiating factor between each of the candidates (Huffington Post, 2008). Compounded by high inflation rates, falling housing prices and high unemployment rates, a failing economy (Dahl, 2009), and individual's stakes within it, proved to be a divisive factor.

Tensions were high in the days leading up to the election with numerous rumors swirling around incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Rumours leading up to the elections stated Ahmadinejad's campaign of importing 'disappearing' ink pens that would nullify individuals votes for the main opposition leader Mir-Hossein Musavni, once the ink disappeared on the ballets (Frontline, 2009). The day of the election Basji militia struck the opposition leader, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, headquarters with instruction to shut it down, raising tensions amongst opposition voters (Frontline, 2009). This was compounded by reports of Musavni observers not being allowed at some polling stations and voter intimidation (Frontline, 2009). On June 12th, incumbent Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president in a highly contested election. After a record eighty six percent voter turned out to vote, Ahmadinejad was declared victor in the first round with "62.6 percent of the vote, compared with less than 34 percent for

Mousavi, who was the leading challenger"(Erdbrink, 2009). The 62.6 percent vote total

for Ahmadinejad was the exact figure leaked the previous night unwittingly by the state

run media, leading to instant accusations of election fraud both within and outside of Iran

(Frontline, 2009). The disputed presidential elections of 2009 were a central caveat in the

reasons why individuals dissatisfied with the election process that appeared to be

compromised with electoral fraud, took to the streets and protested. Compounded with

the numerous systemic economic, political and social issues, shared amongst a

disenfranchised youth, led to sustained political action within the streets of Tehran.

Penetration and Role of Social Media in the Uprisings:

The use of social media and its penetration before and after the Green Revolution

is difficult to ascertain. As previously stated, social media serves and enables efficient

communication between the citizens of photography whom interact within the virtual

public space constructed by social media. Exploring the use of social media enables the

formulation of an understanding of how images *could* be transmitted, and *could* connect

individuals. Social media provides a tacit link between virtual citizens and communities

to real ones. As such, questions of penetration, material shared, and how effectively it

was shared are needed to be answered understand who was using social media and what

citizens and communities were in fact mobilized.

Social media use is not mapped extensively in the context of the Green

Revolution, which makes it difficult to fully gauge the impact of such media.

Nonetheless, a few stats are available and pertinent to this section. According to Internet

World Stats, Iran's Internet use per captia constituted 48.5 percent of the population in

2009 but dropped to 43.5 percent one year (2010) after the uprisings (Internet World Stats, 2011). Sysomos, a social media monitoring company, noted Twitter users within Iran up to May 2009, one month prior to the protests, numbered 8,654 individuals. After the disputed election Twitter users numbered some 19, 235 users within Iran (Sysomos, 2009). March and April of 2009, two months before the elections and during pre-election campaigning, showed some of the largest gains in new Twitter users within Iran (Sysomos, 2009). However, these numbers pale in comparison when looked at in conjunction with the total number of Internet users and overall population of Iran. Nonetheless, the post-election demonstrations quickly gained the moniker "Twitter Revolutions" within the Western media.

The term, 'Twitter Revolution' was used to define the apparent use of social media platforms, such as Twitter, to organize and consolidate protests being held in the streets. The term Twitter revolution also refers to the multiple other online platforms, such as Youtube, Flickr or blogs used to disseminate information, images and coordinate collective action. As the Washington Post noted, "Iran is a highly computer-literate society" where "well-developed Twitter lists showed a constant stream of situation updates and links to photos and videos, all of which painted a portrait of the developing turmoil" (Washington Time, 2009; See Newsweek, 2009[14]). Octavia Nasr in her piece "Tear Gas and Twitter: Iranians Take Their Protests Online" stated these communication tools, "enabled people to express to the world their hopes for the elections, excitement at the chance of exercising their right to vote, jubilation in President Mahmoud

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[14] For Twitter Timeline follow:
http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2009/06/25/a-twitter-timeline-of-the-iran-election.html

Ahmadinejad's camp and shock and disappointment among Mossavi's supporters"(Nasr, 2009). But why Twitter? The Time put it succulently, "it's free, highly mobile, very personal and very quick" (Grossman, 2009). Coupled with the ability to use hashtags— searchable phrases that aggregate and group similar tweets—Twitter proved useful to disseminate information quickly.

Nevertheless, the term 'Twitter Revolution' is misleading. At the time of the uprisings, the use of twitter within Iran was nearly non-existent. During the Iranian unrest, estimates put the number of active Twitter users in Tehran at 1000 (Weaver, 2010), while others put it as low as 100 (Mishra, 2009). During the height of the protests, individuals from across the globe changed their Twitter account's location to Tehran, both as a digital act of solidarity with protestors and to confuse Iranian officials trying to trace the origin of tweets (James, 2009). Particularly, three of the most prominent twitter accounts during the revolution were located not in Iran, but the United States, Turkey, and Switzerland (Esfandiari, 2009). This makes determining the full extent of twitter use difficult to ascertain.

During the height of the protests, Twitter myths and reality became one, making it difficult to ensure a nuanced narrative appeared (see, Petrossian, 2009). However, subsequent studies such as Gaffney's (2010) "#IranElection: Quantifying the Role of Social Media in 140 Characters or Less" shows that the tweets were in fact geographically disperse (Gaffney, 2010, p. 22). Malcolm Gladwell, in his oft cited, polarizing New Yorker editorial, "Loose Change" argues that social media, as illustrated in the case of the Iranian revolution, facilitates loose connections over strong ones between protestors. Similarly, social media critic Evgeny Morozov, argues that it is

difficult to establish the actual role of twitter and the impact it had in organizing protests and facilitating action within the street (Morozov, 2009).

One reason why the use of Twitter, the Internet, and mobile phone networks was difficult to use is due to the pervasive use of internet and network filtering within Iran. Open net reports that Iran employs a sophisticated, multifaceted approach, including "legal, administrative and technical aspects", which determine access and limit use of the internet (Opennet, 2009). According to a Reporters without Borders reports intimidation tactics and arrests where at, "least 170 journalists and bloggers have been arrested in Iran, and 22 have been sentenced to jail terms totaling more than 135 years" were used by the Iranian government to deter online activism and commentary (Ide, 2010). These tactics are employed to quiet individuals who use the Internet to dissent against the ruling government. Maps such as "A Censored Network[15]" show the extent and nature of websites that are censored (OpenNet, 2006). Tactics are becoming more pervasive, including Web 2.0 tactics (Cominos, 2011) that use advance phishing techniques to steal passwords and accounts, and the use of 'sleeper agents' who infiltrate online groups and help identify users to authorities or keep tabs on their activities. Security measures also slowed information flows from protestors on the ground to their followers abroad. For example, Twitter user Oxfordgirl, based in Oxfordshire, England admitted to the *Guardian'*s Matthew Weaver that she was still getting information from her friends inside Iran via twitter but "but it is not such an easy flow"(Weaver, 2010).

One of the tangible results that can be viewed from the use of social media within the Green Revolution by Iranians is the availability of images from various citizen

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[15] To view map follow: http://opennet.net/research/map/socialmedia

photojournalists. So while the mode of transmission remains contested, the existence of images proves unequivocal; social media was used by individuals, through themselves or by proxy, to disseminate images and provide a catalyst for the development of a citizenship of photography. For example, Victoria Grand, YouTube's head of policy and communication, stated in relation to the power of images, "people were holding up their cameras as it were a sword in a way. They really understood that if you can get the global community to see what's happening that will be your greatest defense" (Weaver, 2010). Hickson, who argues that the actions of protestors capturing images were future oriented (Hickson, 2011), echoes a similar sentiment. According to Iranian journalist and blogger Omid Memarian, images shared online offered a change in the perception of the Iranian government internationally, where we see "how brutal they can be, and how they can be harsh against their critics"(Ide, 2010). The Washington times editorial called the "raw, unedited, dramatic" images from the revolution that appear as, "a revolution in cinema verite" (Washington Times, 2009), which proved to be important in the information flow about the protests. Especially after the Iranian government banned Western media inside of Iran, citizen photojournalists filled the role of capturing the visceral and chaotic scenes filling the streets.

Social media, in conjunction with the performative and documentary value of images, enabled a broader digital citizenship and community to be mobilized across images. Even with social media use in Iran limited, and government attempts to quell access to protests to outside observers, images were shared, and more crucially, a citizenship and community mobilized by them. But, it is important to note that the citizens and communities these images did mobilize resided far outside of the epicenter

of the revolution in Iran. Thus, images provide a space, and social media a conduit for communication, but not a means to translate this citizenship into action on the street; they remain solely digital, a solidarity movement devoid of actionable abilities in the real within Iran. As Golnaz Esfandiari notes in his article "The Twitter Devolution" "the internet, in many ways, just complicated the picture [revolution]" (Esfandiari, 2010).

The Actions of the Citizen Photojournalist

Images captured by citizen photojournalists came to define the uprisings. Through the banning of Western media in the early stages of the uprisings, citizen photojournalists' images offered gripping scenes that were all but closed to traditional media organizations. Their images were evidence, which could verify accounts that could not be readily confirmed being tweeted, reported through SMS message, blog posts and spoken accounts. The number of images of the Iranian Green Revolution is staggering and these images were used widely by news organizations internationally.

The actions of the citizen photojournalist within the Iranian revolution represented a new evolution in the role of the citizen photojournalist. No longer retained to photographing short, time specific, events, such as the London 7/7 bombings, or Hurricane Katrina, the capturing of images and their use by the media and revolutionaries represented a sustained and characteristic shift in how citizen photojournalists could drive the event forward, rather than just report on it. Images created a visual narrative that threaded together the often sporadic natured events occurring on the ground. Where text based tweets prove problematic to trace origin or impact, images represented tangible evidence that social media was being used within Tehran or through accounts of expatriates closely connected with those in the protests. Images, coupled with their

publication online through social media platforms, proved invaluable in the context of connecting a disperse and potential citizenship of photography. And the more images citizen photojournalist produced, and were able to share, built a narrative that once online could be discussed, stitched together, and motivate a community of activists willing and wanting to help.

Within the context of the Iranian revolution, the evolution of the citizen journalist as a multifaceted, often contradictory figure took place. No longer recording events acting upon them, they acted upon the events, actively participating in what they were recording. Academic Melinda Hinkson put this evolution succinctly as earlier noted in chapter three, stating "protestors are engaged in a multiplicity of tasks that are commonly understood as distinct; they are protesting *and* reporting; acting *and* mediating that action simultaneously" (Hinkson, 2011, p. 137). As Mette Mortensen notes, this "reflects on the consequences of the 'new' media's blurring of boundaries between those documenting a conflict and those participating in it"(Mortensen, 2011, p. 10). The citizen photojournalist is at once, both a digital and real citizen, interacting and acting upon two distinct communities. However, the citizen photojournalist did more to act upon the digital citizenship of photography and community it created, rather then those digital entities act upon them. They recorded, digital citizens of photography watched.

As shown in chapter three of this thesis, the technological shift of mobile phones, has facilitated an environment where "everybody is a potential witness"(Ibid, 8). This marks a shift in our visual culture, where "bearing visual testimony is invariably an option, whether we find ourselves situated as bystanders to history in the making, at a scene of crime or merely in the humdrum of everyday life"(Ibid, 8). The camera phone,

according to Gaby David further "enables us to participate, as a way of being visually engaged with what is going on and being able to retransmit our own ways of seeing, points of view and feelings" (David, 2010, p.93). Thus, the recording of events, for ones personal documentation, or for consumption by a wider audience is habitualized to such extents that the capturing of a death or beating of a protestor is normalized.

Such actions by protestors within the Iranian revolution mark the actions of the citizen photojournalist as being forward-focused within their intention and use of images. Hinkson discusses that Setrag Manoukian in his work on Iranian audio visual accounts and visual poetry "shows that Iranian photographers … interpreted as acting reflexively—their actions are future focused and vest considerable significance in a communicative process oriented beyond the here and now" (Hinkson, 2011, p. 137; Manoukian, 2010). Within the context of the Iranian Green revolution "the actions of the photographers reach beyond the immediacy of their situation—they make a martyr for the Iranian struggle as well as a form of symbolic capital that might be circulated to the wider world"(Hinkson, 2011, p. 136). Such symbolic capital is exemplified in the images of Neda Agha Soltan, exemplified in "thingifying Neda", the process of transforming and constructing image-objects of Agha Soltan (Stage, 2011).

There are two more actions/traits of the citizen photojournalist within the Green Revolution that I will briefly touch on. First, is the emergence of truth quality contained within citizen photojournalist images, but the precariousness of the message that the image encapsulates. As previously illustrated, citizen photojournalist's images "comes across as authentic on account of its speed, intimacy and strong reality effect" (Mortensen, 2011, p. 9). Their images proved an effective news source in the absence of

independent reports from professional journalists. However, the often chaotic and fractured nature of the images, small, visual snippets within larger events, which often end abruptly or lose focus at important points illustrate the precariousness of citizen photojournalist images as an effective source of information. Thus according to Morntensen, "owing to citizen photojournalism's precariousness as a source and the violent content, the material lends itself to radical readings and reactions" (Mortensen, 2011, p. 11). This is exacerbated since citizen photojournalist images are published through an unmediated platform, where specific curating of the material and proper context is often nonexistent. Images aid in creating a public space, not a sphere that will create constructive debate. Widely divergent readings, between citizens of photography and the online communities they belonged to are consistent with how pictures "seldom convey a fixed message apprehended by spectators across time and place"(Ibid). Thus, it is difficult for images to produce an effective message for digital citizens of photography that will translate into physical support or actions for Iranian protestors to further their revolution within Iran.

Secondly, the actions of individuals capturing video illustrate the process of where "protests and media become intertwining aspects of the same event"(Manoukian, 2010, p. 248). Through the shift in technology with the advent of camera phones, "new spatiotemporal coordinates as platforms for sensations and thoughts" are enabled (Ibid). This process extends to the affirmation of distant spaces, places and events, which come to define revolution, both for those participating, and those watching from afar as a digital citizenship and community of photography. The citizen journalist is both near and far, acting within a crowd, but also defining its actions through their mediation, as

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illustrated with the Manoukian's discussion of the visual poet in the Iranian revolution context. Thus, there position is not static, their influence perpetually changing, so too does their perspective.

The Development of Iconic Images: Defining the Green Revolution in Iran with the Images of Neda Agha-Soltan

The role of the citizen photojournalist within the Green Revolution represents how their actions defined the way the revolution was driven forward through the capturing of images. As these images were shared online, they developed an online citizenship of photography and community founded within the virtual public space developed by such images. However, every image that the citizen photojournalist captures is not readily remembered, or even connected to the larger event it is captured from. Nor are they viewed as important visual cornerstones of the revolution. Within the fractured visual nature of the Green revolution, one image stood out. The short, grainy, forty+ second clip of a young woman being shot, Neda Agha-Soltan. This image represents the trajectory of how images become iconic and their role in defining the revolution at large for a mainly online community, who are not partaking in the revolution in any real, physical sense.

On the 20th of June 2009, at the height of the Green Revolution protests, an Iranian Basiji militiaman shot Neda Agha-Soltan in the chest.[16] Agha-Soltan collapsed to the ground bleeding, fatally wounded from the gunshot. Numerous onlookers with their camera phones captured Agha-Soltan's final moments before her death. The shaky and graining footage from the scene shows Agha-Soltan collapsing into a pool of her own

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[16] Insert Video Link here

blood. The frantic shouts of three men, "Stay with us Neda", are heard in the video as futile attempts to save her life are administered (Frontline, 2009). As shown in the video clip, her eyes roll back towards the camera as she dies with blood streaming down her face.

Agha-Soltan's image came to represent the "unknown number of Iranians who have died in the protests"(Fathi, 2009). Although a number of other individuals had already been killed during the protests and their deaths captured on camera, Agha-Soltan was the first to be clearly identified (Garnsey and Martin, 2009). This gave her image a personal feel, as individuals would later piece together her identity, life, and beliefs. Robert Tait and Matthew Weaver in the Guardian state that the killing of Agha-Soltan has, "become perhaps the defining sequence in the 10-day uprising against the regime in Tehran," as her video and death became representative of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's threat of violence against the protestors a day earlier (Weaver and Tait, 2009). When the video of Agha-Soltan's went viral, it attained a wide international audience across a variety of platforms including Facebook—the original publishing platform—Youtube and Twitter. The death of Agha-Soltan would give the protests and protestors a face, a central 'hero' to rally around and "became the personification of a nation in torment"(Golsorkhi, 2009). In the case of Agha Soltan, her blue jeans, headscarf and overall casual dress while using a mobile phone as she was shot, marked her as an emancipated individual of the middle class, an individual representative of a large number of protestors in the street (Weaver and Tait, 2009).

At the time, the video was arguably to be the world's most successful viral video, as her death was viewed by millions, but more importantly, viewed by numerous world

leaders spurring them to action (Frontline, 2009). The transformation of Agha-Soltan's death from a short, grainy video clip to an instant international iconic image was facilitated through an online citizenship of photography and community connected by social media. Those who encountered Agha-Soltan's image consisted of a citizenship of photography that was casually or actively linked through her images. For example, Twitter users tinged their profile avatars green as an act of solidarity towards Agha-Soltan (Hildebrandt, 2009). Numerous Facebook groups connected users in morning, remembrance and protest for her. The video clip of her death became repurposed hundreds of different ways from tribute videos to documentaries that began to flood YouTube. While the protests were linked between common grievances against economic woes faced by many in the nation of Iran, the countries presidential elections and subsequent crackdown on the protests which followed, it was these images of Neda Agha-Soltan's death that formed a common rallying point in the digital community. However, this digital community was unable to directly influence events unfolding within the revolution. Rather they watched, discussed, and stood in solidarity with those on the ground at a distance. Hence, Agha-Soltan's image connected and acted upon a diverse digital community and citizenship mainly *outside* of Iran.

Response to Images: Iranian Government reaction to images of revolution

While the digital space mobilized numerous rallying points around Agha-Soltan's image and other images captured by citizen photojournalists, the physical space within Iran became increasingly controlled by the Iranian government. The Iranian government's crackdowns on the Green Revolution continued relentlessly, leading to

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demonstrations being terminated by government and militia forces almost immediately after the protest began.

Unlike the deaths of other protestors that were also captured on video, the Iranian government moved quickly to contain the turmoil erupting around Agha-Soltan's death, due to her images becoming a "symbol for the Iranian anti-government movement"(Amin, 2010). After Agha-Soltan was killed, the police did not release her body to the family and forced her family to move out of their home (Kamali Dehghan, 2009). Iranian authorities banned collective prayers and/or memorial services for Agha-Soltan (McElroy, 2009). These actions undertaken by the Iranian government, underscored the importance of Agha-Soltan's image in simulating and forwarding the uprising in the eyes of the Iranian government and religious elite.

Traditionally, following the mourning cycle of Shi'ite Muslims, Agha-Soltan's death would be observed on the third, seventh and fortieth day after her death (Wright, 2009). These dates within the Shi'ite Muslim mourning cycle have proven pivotal in past Iranian protests, such as the 1978/1979 revolutions (Ibid). The mourning cycle was already an established undercurrent in the 2009 protests, with the largest protests falling on days being observed for mourning the death of participants of the Green Revolution (Ibid). Hence, the days of the Shi'ite Muslim mourning cycle could act as points of renewal for demonstrations and help protests reestablish themselves. On the fortieth day after Agha-Soltan's death, the Iranian state police broke up the ceremony, sometimes violently through using batons and arrests, to stop individuals from commemorating her death and those other protestors who had been killed on the June 20th (BBC, 2009). The breaking up of the fortieth day commemoration followed numerous previous instances of

the Iranian state intervening at commemorations for Agha-Soltan's death in the days following her being killed. The digital space of the Internet had proven to be welcoming of individuals commemorating Agha-Soltan but the physical space in Iran remained restricted.

A 2009 BBC documentary about Agha-Soltan's death illustrated the intense conflict that had ensued over the physical space, between the Iranian government and protestors, where Agha-Soltan's death had occurred. Risking arrest, a BBC cameraman drove to the small intersection where Agha-Soltan was shot, where a small patch of green paint marked the spot she died (Garnsey and Matin, 2009). Graffiti was employed by protestors in an attempt to memorialize the memory of Agha-Soltan, however the Iranian government had removed the graffiti by painting over it (Ibid). This documentary depicts in sharp relief the conflict between of linking physical space in Iran with iconic images of Agha-Soltan. The Iranian government's fear of seceding to attempts by the protestors trying to establish a physical space for a testament to Agha-Soltan's iconic image is well founded. Iran's attempt to control the physical space was intricately linked to images specifically Agha-Soltan's, which were proliferating within the revolution. The Iranian government understood the threat that these images posed, particularly if they were freely allowed to manifest within the physical space of Iran, in either protests or memorial sites.

These measures to quell unrest in the physical sphere formed only one part of a larger Iranian plan to limit the effectiveness of images and the protestors in general. Noting the importance of online tools in facilitating unrest, drawn in sharp relief after the United States department requested Twitter to delay routine site maintenance to a more amicable time for Iranians using the service for revolutionary purposes, the Iranian

government moved quickly to control the digital space. While the Iranian government was unable to control every encounter an image produced once it was online, the Iranian authorities were able to control individuals who crossed the digital/real threshold within Iran. These individuals proved important links between a wider citizenship of photography located across online platforms, and protestors in the street, many of who had little or no connection to this wider community exemplified by a digital citizenship and community of photography.

As noted earlier, OpenNet reports "Iran continues to strengthen the legal, administrative and technical aspects of its Internet filtering systems"(Opennet, 2009). These measures are a mixture of digital policies and tools to physical tactics, such as intimidation and arrests, many stemming directly from the 2009 Iranian Presidential Campaign. Prior to the Iranian presidential election, Iranian internet censorship employed "one of the most extensive technical filtering systems in the world" (OpenNet, 2009). *The Guardian*, noted advance software the Iranian government employed to trace websites individuals visited and tweets they published and to view their precise IP address to track their location (Black, 2009). This was coupled with extensive blocking of social media sites (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook), the shutting down of mobile phone networks and the throttling of the Internet (Faris and Zittrain, 2009, p.93).

Evgeny Morozov notes the extensive use of digital tools Iranian authorities employed to control protestors, both in the street and online (see Morozov, 2011, p. 1-32). Morozov puts it succinctly stating Western focus on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, "triggered a world wide Internet panic and politicized all online

activity, painting it in bright revolutionary colours and threatening to tighten online spaces and opportunities that were previously unregulated"(Morozov, 2011, p. 13).

Phillip Howard in his prologue in *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* noted, "it is not clear that the international cyber activists had more than a symbolic effect on the infrastructure of the Iranian government" (Howard, 2010, p.9). However, Howard argues that activists did in fact use the tools, and were involved in passing information that helped facilitate the movement. As such, Howard, like other scholars is suspect of the effectiveness of the Iranian governments control of the internet, since Iranian officials made sure they controlled the individuals using those tools.

Given the number of active twitter users within Iran numbered as few as one hundred, intimidation and arrests proved effective tools in limiting the number of online dissidents that through sending messages to other individuals online involved using the internet for revolutionary purposes. While a larger citizenship of photography could mobilize against the Iranian governments attempts to block sites, little could be done to quell arrests, tortures and the beatings of individuals on the ground using the internet as a tool of resistance. Arrests were rampant during the election and even after the disputed elections, twenty-four bloggers and journalists remained in custody (Howard, 2010, p. 116). Even today, Reporters without Borders, using their Press Freedom Barometer, noted currently thirty journalists, one media assistant, and nineteen netizens imprisoned (Reporters without borders 2012).

Little care, as shown by Iran, is given to someone halfway around the world, their influence lessened by their distance, stature, and threat level. Sometimes, tools developed by Hacktivists to aid the revolution in fact produced effective surveillance tools.

Programs like Haystack allowed 'encrypted' activist and media material to travel freely

along government Internet protocols (Hanly and Barnes, 2010). However, this program

could be accessed by Iranian officials to track individual protestor's actions, movements

and even exact location since transmissions were unencrypted (BBC, 2010). Nonetheless

a digital activist, located in Iran, is an exceptional target, one that both influences at a

digital and physical level. The citizenship of photography is only as influential when it

can enact pressure that causes a government to alter its course of action. Up to that point,

it is a citizenship of spectators, keyboard warriors, who are for the most part relegated to

watching events unfold. What is interesting to note here is the little effect that individuals

within the larger citizenship of photography, connected through viral images such as

Agha-Soltan's were able to influence events within Iran. In some cases, they could even

put individuals in harms way, by inadvertently advertising protest locations, divulging

activist names, and developing insecure software that could be used for surveillance by

Iranian government forces.

What did images achieve or not achieve in the Green Revolution?

The images achieved a number of things, which are important to note within the

context of the Green Revolution. Citizen photojournalists, through their images, created

momentum and aided in driving forward the revolution, particularly developing online

solidarity within a digital citizenship of photography. Through posting their images to a

wider audience within a digital environment, connected through platforms such as social

media, images were seen and discussed by a regional and international audience. Citizen

photojournalist's images collaborated evidence and accounts coming out across social

media platforms and point to use (albeit limited) of these platforms and other communication tools by Iranians on the street within the revolution.

Citizen photojournalist images, particularly of Agha-Soltan, aided in galvanizing support for protestors within a larger global community. Her images marked a watershed juncture within the protests, both for protestors and the Iranian government alike. While protestors made concerted efforts to use her icon to link to other individuals who had died or were injured, and create a centralized figure, the Iranian government fought back against this. The images of Agha-Soltan, are simultaneously the protestors silver bullet, an effective weapon that could for once and for all bring the Iranian government to its knees; but it was the revolutions Achilles heel, an image that galvanized and strengthen the Iranian governments struggle to keep digital images just that, digital.

What the images failed to produce, mostly due to the Iranian government's strict control over the physical space, was a larger movement within the street, which used images as a point of consolidation between protestors and their goals. Coupled with the Iranian governments extensive use of digital tools to silence and intimidate Iranian protestors, who were both online and in the street, established a disconnect between a wider citizenship of photography and protestors on the ground. Images prove an important catalyst in driving people to the street, while creating digital solidarity. With protestors unable to take to the street, their action remains largely symbolic and digital. As the old adage goes, actions speak louder then words.

While the Iranian government could do very little to contain the spread of the images once they were on the Internet (citizens of photography and communities located outside of Iran), little pressure could be mounted on them within a digital medium. The

condemnation that Iran received internationally, that could actually put pressure on the regime was diplomatic, with little in the way of actual physical threats being able to be carried out, for example military strikes, sanctions, or embargoes. The Iranian government continued its crackdown with impunity, and quickly ground down the protestors will to continue. Without small victories being won in the streets, and the continued proliferation of images showing more victims of beatings and those killed, the price may have appeared to high to pay for succeeding at goals that appeared far away.

Conclusion

The 2009 Iranian Green Revolution is illustrative of the emerging role of images within modern revolutions. No longer a product of the revolution itself, visual snippets of events that have occurred, images emerged as a central tool to move forward the revolution in a meaningful and effective manner. Images are not the product of underlying of photographers capturing images within a revolutionary context, rather a cultural/technological shift that has occurred, where individuals can capture, share, or publish images from platforms such as mobile phones almost instantly as a product of *witnessing*. Protestors are no longer solely participants within the events that surround them, rather are potential witnesses who are both simultaneously participants and an audience. Images that these individuals capture, such as the death of Agha-Soltan, constitute specific instances of how images prove pivotal within revolutionary contexts.

The ability for revolutionary images such as Agha-Soltan's to become iconic is due to 'cultural convergence': "the fact that media users are more and more able to both produce and circulate media on a potentially global scale"(Stage, 2011, p.423). Images of

Agha-Soltan and other images from citizen journalist's travel due to the intensity of the emotional response they elicit from viewers. In the case of Agha-Soltan, "[her images] moves because her death elicits an immediate response and people react emotionally to the pictures"(Ibid, p.425). This emotional response is immediately available and stored through comments, posts, and tributes that arise from the citizenship of photography viewing Agha-Soltan's images on social media, mobile platforms and similar venues. The virtual public space established by social media, mobile phones and the Internet ensures images and their iconicness are kept outside of the purview of the nation-state. However, the nation state of Iran retains control over the physical sphere and the digital/real threshold that is made of Iranian protestors near the epicenter of the movement. This makes it difficult for Agha-Soltan's image to have a lasting impact within Iran

Agha-Soltan's and citizen photojournalist images within the revolution identify the importance of *emotion* as a central caveat to connect individuals through images and collaborate the necessity of emotion to form an iconic image. This same emotion that is fundamental for the formation of iconic images is paramount in how place is made iconic. There was no lack of emotion being poured out into the street for Agha-Soltan but place was not made available. In short, emotion proves to be the transcendental property that connects digital communities to physical ones and provides the catalyst to create their icon and drive revolution forward. The binary relationship they form facilitates change simultaneously across digital and physical spaces. As illustrated through the case of Agha-Soltan and other citizen journalist images the lack of the physical space eventually relegated Agha-Soltan's images and others to the peripheries of the Green

Revolution. Her iconic image has become a footnote in a longer list of 'failed' revolutions and 'failed' icons that have not accomplished the physical change they were meant to achieve.

Simultaneously, the threshold between the digital/real manned by the activist in the street, who also using digital applications and platforms apart of their revolutionary toolkit, is important to understand how a disconnect between a digital citizenship of photography and actions on the ground may exist. The ability for the Iranian government to control the few individuals who bridge these two spheres, the digital and the real, enables them to have considerable power in quashing the revolution. Because, once these few links are severed, the solidarity and support located within the citizenship of photography cannot be translated or used within the physical revolution within Iran. In short, the power of the digital (a citizenship and community of photography) is terminated through a lack of connection between the real (Iranian protestors).

To a degree, physical place and actions acts a static referential object in both the physical and digital world. It gives root to loose connections within the virtual sphere and manifests disperse opinion and action into a tangible object, place or space. This object proves important in providing the necessary catalyst to create lasting change. And this object can also be used as the gateway between the digital/real thresholds when individuals cannot fill that role. Thus, the interplay between physical place and digital space is negotiated through physical places, which is explored in the next chapter through the use of images and place in the Arab Spring.

Chapter 5: The Arab Spring: Images and Revolution

From bloody depictions of protestors caught up in state violence to squares teeming with individuals, the images from the Arab Spring record emotional scenes that have become pivotal in depicting these uprisings. The images not only depict a civil uprising in progress, but also aid in stimulating protests and protestors in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region. These protests within the Arab Spring have amounted to fundamental changes in power and societal construction in the region, from multi-decade leaders ousted, to new democratically elected assemblies and the development of new constitutions. While a considerable number of revolutionary goals are still being fought for—like economic growth and security or social equality—the revolutions are a step towards larger more systematic shifts, which may or may not happen rapidly, evenly or for the better. This chapter explores the role of images within the revolutionary context of the Arab Spring. In the second part of this thesis's cross comparative analysis, I explore the role of images within the Arab Spring through the case study of Tunisia. These case studies attempt to elucidate how the affective politics of images, to any extent, explain the success of this revolution. As presented in the previous chapter, there was no shortage of images in the Iranian Green Revolution that incited outrage, particularly the images of Agha-Soltan. Nonetheless, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is still in power with little of the protest goals achieved—particularly a recall of 2009 election results and new elections held. The images of Neda Agha-Soltan illustrate the extent to which images can help galvanize protestors in the virtual public sphere, through a citizenship and community of photography. At once, images act as a central point of connection between individuals across the digital/real divide. However,

the Iranian government was effective in controlling both the physical sphere, and the digital sphere where the revolution was located. In particular, Iranian officials were able to control the few individuals who navigated between a digital/real threshold, ensuring images such as Neda Agha-Soltan not to materialize as sustained action within Iran. Or use the pool of support and solidarity located within the citizenship of photography. These two case studies employ the same six overarching themes to determine the role of images within the Arab Spring: underlying causes of the revolution; penetration and role of social media in the uprisings; actions of the citizen photojournalist; the development of iconic images; government response to the images of revolution; what images did or did not achieve within the revolution. This chapter identifies the iconic image within Tunisia during the Arab Spring, the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi's in Sidi Bouazid, Tunisia. Due to the pan-regional nature of the protests and limited space, I focus on Tunisia. These two countries are chosen due to the extensive production and use of citizen photojournalist images, both online and by the international media, extensive research on social media penetration and use during the uprisings, and far-reaching scholarly and popular media discussion regarding the role of images within Tunisia's revolutionary context. Through focusing primarily on the important/iconic images identified in Tunisia through this chapter, I explore the affective politics of images and their transformative role in the revolutions.

Underlying Causes

Unlike the protests that erupted within the context of the 2009 Iranian Green Revolution, the events that overtook Tunisia were not triggered by a contested election.

Barring this, the underlying issues between the two revolutions are strikingly similar. In both instances, economic, social, and political issues were far reaching and pervasive.

Extensive corruption within the ruling party, connected to economic insecurity for the majority of Tunisia's ten million inhabitants aided in fueling the revolution (Kirkpatrick, 2011). Corruption in particular was exemplified through a number of Wikileaks documents—classified diplomatic cables (Bachrach, 2011; Democracy Now, 2011), which illustrated the extent of government corruption and greed. Communities such as Sidi Bouzid were affected by high unemployment caused by "unbalanced economic growth" (Alexander, 2011), mostly stemming from this corruption. Even the little money that did arrive in Sidi Bouzid was either siphoned off to corrupt government officials or into projects for only the wealthiest in the community (Fahim, 2011). The regime's powerful grip on the country began to wane some five years prior to the events of late December 2010 and early January 2011 revolution due to the pervasiveness of this corruption within Tunisia (Alexander, 2011).

This corruption, coupled with systemic issues regarding food security (Geewax, 2011), unemployment—thirteen percent national, twenty-six percent youth—(The Economist, 2011), and dissatisfaction within Tunisia's educated, youthful population are often cited as contributing to the motivation behind the uprisings (Porter, 2011). Lack of access to information, from limited internet freedom (Opennet, 2011) to suppression of a free independent press[17] in part attributed to revolutionary sentiments amongst the population.

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[17] See cpj.org for discussion of arrests and deaths of journalists within Tunisia

Unlike the Green Revolution, unequal economic opportunity, specifically the lack of economic security experienced by the lower classes within Tunisia, created a large, fairly uniform dissident group of individuals, who could find commonality with each other. Both rural poor and urban dwellers experienced the uneven economic practices that supported those closest to the regime, and few others. Conversely, the protests that occurred within Iran found grievance within the smaller, middle class, and urban dwellers of Tehran, comparative to the large number of rural inhabitants, which limited potential cross-country support.

The Role Social Media

In order to accurately access the impact of social media, it is necessary to establish the penetration and use of social media platforms in Tunisia during the uprisings. I refer to three reports commissioned by the Dubai School of Government, which explore the use of Facebook and Twitter in the Middle East and North Africa Region. These reports identify the number of users, level of penetration, and type of use.

As of December 2010, Facebook users within Tunisia numbered 1,820,880 individuals, reflecting 17.55-penetration rate amongst the Tunisian population. During the first two weeks of January 2011, Facebook use increased by eight percent, in part due to the uprising gripping the country, acquiring five percent new users as a percentage of population between January and April 2011 (Ibid, 2011, p.10). As of April 2011, Facebook user penetration in Tunisia rose to 22.49 percent (Ibid, 2011b, p.11).

The Arab Social Media Report noted, "the type of usage also changed markedly, shifting from being merely social in nature to becoming primarily political"(Arab Social Media Report, 2011, p.3). This observation is reinforced by 105 Tunisian Facebook users

polled by the Dubai School of Government, who noted over eighty-six percent of use was protest related (Ibid, 2011b, p.6). Thus, the correlation between the protests within the region and an increase in users appear to be protest related (Ibid, p. 6). Social media platforms also proved pivotal for individuals getting news and information about the uprisings (Ibid, p.9).

Conversely, Twitter penetration pales in comparison to the number of users using Facebook. Twitter users in Tunisia numbered 35, 746 active accounts as of March 30th 2011 (Ibid, 2011b, p. 16), which amounted to a per population penetration rate of only 0.34 percent (Ibid, p.17) compared to over 22 percent for Facebook (Ibid, p.11). Over the course of the first three months of the uprisings, Tunisian twitter accounts accounted for 576, 000 tweets (Ibid, p.17). Like Facebook, protest related events drove twitter conversations forward, which can be attributed to hashtaged, protest related tweets such as #sidibouzid in Tunisia (Ibid, p.22). Lotan *et al.* noted in their study "The Revolutions were Tweeted" that the majority of tweets in the Tunisian context of the Arab Spring were generated by individual accounts versus professional or organizational accounts (69% compared to 31% respectively) (Lotan *et al.*, 2011, p.1386). They noted that organization's Twitter accounts "are often managed strategically, and their tweets … more polished" and "follower counts tend to be higher" and also noted individual twitter accounts had variances in tweeting frequency and followers (Ibid, 1386). Kavaungh *et al.*, in his study, "Between a rock and a cell phone" noted, as in the case of Iran in 2009, many tweets did not come from in country, but were located elsewhere or as retweets (sixty-three percent) from international accounts (Kavaungh, 2011, p.4; Gaffney, 2010).

Thus, twitter users, tweets, and locations all played a significant role in whom, how, and why the platform was employed to mobilize or forward the revolution.

Even though Facebook and Twitter as social media platforms are distinct, they are intricately linked. The effectiveness of these platforms arises from the information that flows between them. For example, Ben Ghrabia, a Tunisian blogger and Global Voices advocacy director proposed in an interview with Tim Martin of RFI, that "if the content had remained strictly on Facebook, its audience would have been limited to those who are members of certain groups, and would not likely have been disseminated in ways that proved pivotal to the media coverage"(Ghannam, 2011, p.16). Lotan *et al.* discussed "Twitter served both as a common medium for professional journalism and citizen journalism" (Lotan *et al.*, 2011, p.1377), often highlighting existing relationships and may serve "as a convening site wherein people without previously shared interests or existing relationships gather around a particular topic (Ibid, 1397). While Facebook pages and groups act as centralized virtual meeting points, they remain limited to those who are apart of them as Facebook group/page members. Issues such as privacy settings may exclude some individuals. This exclusion further limits the potential number of individuals, which may be reached by this platform. Therefore twitter as a micro-blogging, news aggregator, can be used to quickly and easily point individuals to pertinent information, images and links, mainly due to its open, public nature. By using hashtags, information is easy to identify and search. Twitter, unlike Facebook allows for the real-time updating of information through tweets. The platforms of Facebook and Twitter are according to Carington Malin, executive at Spot on Public Relations Dubai

are "beginning to define how people discover and share information, shape opinion and interact" (Ibid, p.14).

Communication tools, in particular social media, provided a means for information to be passed outside of the country, both to inform and inspire. The self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi, explored shortly in this chapter, represents a 'contagion', which was spread through a citizenship of photography across social media platforms and other communication tools. A 'contagion' is an image which provides "hope and inspiration to those embarked on similar struggles elsewhere" (Cottle, 654). Communication tools provide important outlets for these contagions to spread across long distances, easily jumping from country to country. Cottle argues in his paper, "Media and the Arab Uprisings: Research notes" that these contagious images are found elsewhere from the original contagion "via the replication of symbolic forms of protest such as the occupation of city central squares/plazas or extreme acts of self-immolation by 'martyrs' to the cause—like Mohammed Bouazizi" (Cottle, 654, 2011).

In addition to social media use, Tunisia had experienced rapid growth of its mobile phone networks, in the years preceding the Tunisian revolts. Mobile networks were deemed important for the modernization of Tunisia by Tunisian president Ben Ali. With the advent of the first smart phones just a couple of years earlier, individuals were not only able to call and send texts, but share images and videos through Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) and the Internet. Jamila Boughelaf in "Mobile Phones, social media and the Arab Spring" argues "mobile phones represented the main tool that provided protestors with the opportunity to spread their voices and share their values with

the entire world", (Boughelaf, 4, 2011) where "distances have been shortened and times have been restrained".

Communication technologies proved important points of connection between otherwise disperse individuals and events. The ability to share images and other material in an expedited manner, ensured those who needed information could access it if they were online or connected to those who were. Using a multitude of communication tools, such as mobile phones and social media, provided activists with effective means to share images and other pertinent information. It was these tools though that took the citizen photojournalist from a witness in the street, to a witness for all those who choose to see.

Actions of Citizen photojournalist

A few months into the uprisings, that now gripped more than a handful of nations in the MENA region, Peter Beaumont, writing in the Guardian, made an observation that was becoming all too common. He stated that the

> defining image [of the uprising] is this: a young woman or a young man with a smartphone. She's in the Medina in Tunis with a BlackBerry held aloft, taking a picture of a demonstration outside the prime minister's house. He is an angry Egyptian doctor in an aid station stooping to capture the image of a man with a head injury from missiles thrown by Mubarak's supporters. Or it is a Libyan in Benghazi running with his phone switched to a jerky video mode, surprised when the youth in front of him is shot through the head (Beaumont, 2011).

The use of cell phones, which were employed to capture and share images of events from the street level, through the eyes of the protestor, facilitated a raw, unmediated and chaotic account of the revolution. These small visual snippets, shared among close friends and distant acquaintances, spread revolutionary sentiments. While it is simple to indentify how images where captured, and to an extent by whom, it is far

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more difficult to establish their role. Literature, both academic and popular, which explores the role of the citizen photojournalist in the case of Tunisia, remains sporadic and limited. Unlike the case of the Green Revolution, academic literature has yet to systematically dissect the citizen photojournalist's role and their actions. The actions of the citizen photojournalist in Tunisia are often intermixed with the actions of other citizen photojournalists elsewhere in the region. In lieu of academic literature or systematic media assessments, I draw out a number of broad conclusions through the viewing of images captured within the Tunisian revolutionary context. These observations are couched within the framework that was developed in chapter three of this thesis exploring the role of citizen photojournalists and how images are now captured.

The images of the Tunisian revolution, illustrate a continued shift of individuals using mobile phones to capture, share and publish images to a wide and diverse audience located online and in the real. Jamila Boughelaf argues in "Mobile Phones, social media and the Arab Spring" that "mobile phones played a huge role in both coordinating local groups and recording events through videos and pictures"(Boughelaf, 3, 2011). Mobile phones as a product of media convergence (Jenkins, 2006), transform protestors to individuals who both participate and witnesses in the unfolding action that surrounds them (see: Hinkson, 2011; Manoukian, 2010; Anden-Papadopoulos and Pantti, 2011; Allan and Thorsen, 2010). This marks an evolution in how images no longer are just recordings of events that have been (Barthes, 1980). Citizen photojournalist's images shared across mobile phones and published online, provided a virulent catalyst for pan-regional revolutions and their movement forward. Particularly within the Tunisian

context, how images were shared and published online proved pivotal in connecting a wider citizenship and community located in photography.

Professor Jamal Zran in a documentary for Al-Jazerra noted, "In general, images were neglected…but those who where ignored used images to defend their rights" (Hamdan, 2011). Citizen photojournalists took up recording the events that they were involved in, and the actions government forces were using against them. Images were then shared amongst other individuals, whom may not have been at the scene of the protest or violence, enabling the viewer to experience it through their images. Zran argues that "if it wasn't for the footage, the protests wouldn't have taken place" (Ibid, 2011). And it was the mobile phone that proved to be the ubiquitous means to record these events effectively and efficiently. The mobile phone, more then any other device, proved an effective media tool, both recording and sharing images. According to Alex Commino's report, "Twitter Revolutions and Cyber Crackdowns", "micro-blogging, and picture and video sharing over mobile phones became avenues to disseminate and consume news about the protests"(Cominos, 9, 2011).

The ability to share images, more so then capture them, proved a pivotal component of the citizen photojournalist role in the uprisings. Through sharing images on mobile phone or online networks, images themselves became deterritorialized, no longer confined to the borders, nor the physical place of the country where the events occurred. Simon Cottle (2011) noted in his paper "Media and the Arab uprisings of 2011: Research notes" that images "leapfrog" across national borders and regions, and this points to "the transnational nature of global protest communications…" and, "their capacity to help build and sustain feelings of political affinity and solidarity"(p.654,

Allen and Thorsen, 2009). The formations of disperse opinions and ideas into effective communications within the protests were achieved through images.

The actions of the citizen photojournalist and the images they created within the Tunisian Revolution help solidify this public space, both virtual and real, comprised of a citizenship of photography. Images captured by citizen photojournalists become a common *revolutionary* link that helps ignite and sustain the revolution. The role of the citizen photojournalist is to build a visual account of the revolutions, using the documentary promise contained within images as a forward focused set of evidence (see: Hinkson, 2011; Mortensen, 2011; Manoukian, 2010). The citizen photojournalist's images can be used both as evidence and inspiration, pushing individuals into action while documenting the measures taken against protestors by regional governments.

Visual images captured by citizen photojournalists are powerful testaments of events that were occurring, but can be very difficult to verify. Nonetheless, images offer one of the few instances of 'objective' verification within the turbulent context of the Tunisian revolution, where verbal and textual accounts are often conflicting. Online publication of images, particularly through social media platforms is crucial in developing both a critical mass of images and a way to protect them from the ruling regime. Simultaneously, images enable a means for individuals to develop and use visuals as important pieces of information within the context of the Tunisia revolution to forward revolutionary goals. While thousands of images within context of the Tunisia were captured, one in particular became *iconic* and *synonymous* within the context of the Tunisian revolution.

Development of Iconic Images: The self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi

On the 17th of December 2010, in the small Tunisian trading town of Sidi Bouzid, Mohammed Bouazizi, in a final act of protest against the local police and city council[18], lit himself on fire (Ryan, 2011a). His self-immolation protest ignited widespread anger within the small community. Almost immediately, demonstrations erupted outside the central government building in Sidi Bouzid, led by Mohammed Bouazizi's mother (CBC, 2012). The initial protests were largely peaceful; Mohammed's family and close friends threw coins in front of the government building where Bouazizi had committed his self-immolation. They were joined by local street vendors who poured out their fruits and vegetables in front of the government (Hamdan, 2011). Bouazizi was a galvanizing local individual who, according to his close friend Hajlaoui Jaafer was well know and popular in the small town due to his ongoing generosity (Ryan, 2011a).

The self-immolation of Bouazizi was not captured on film. However, the protests occurring directly after his protest were[19] (see: Mackey, 2011). The self-immolation of Bouazizi is intricately entwined with these subsequent protests. Captured by mobile cell phone cameras, and posted only a couple days after Bouazizi was rushed to hospital, these videos illustrated a growing protest interspersed with clashes from police (Mackey, 2011). These first images of protest were soon posted to Facebook and other social media platforms, and shortly picked up Al-Jazzerra (Ryan, 2011b).

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[18] Bouazizi, who was harassed earlier by the police for selling goods from his unlicensed cart and had confiscated his electronic scales, could not provide the required bribe to ensure the police did not continue to intimidate him or confiscate his wares (Ryan, 2011)
[19] http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/22/video-that-triggered-tunisias-uprising/

The iconic image of Bouazizi was not defined by what the lack of the images of his death did not show. Rather, the images of Bouazizi were represented in the countless other images of protests captured in the street. And the constant linking of the protests origins continuously to the instance Bouazizi lit himself on fire. The images built a sort of affinity between a virtual citizenship of photography and the community of resistance, built and being built through the sharing of images of protest (Mackey, 2011). The self-immolation of Bouazizi would become iconic through the capturing of these images and the sharing of other images of protest, making his death synonymous with the revolution taking place in the street. In short, the protests constituted an extension of Bouazizi's self-immolation, which led to his suicide being extended over a period of days, weeks and months, instead of mere minutes.

Unlike the iconic images of Agha-Soltan, whose image came to quasi-represent the entirety of protests occurring during the Green Revolution, Bouazizi's images laid a foundation for protests to come. A loosely connected citizenship of photography, located in the digital and the real was able to use his likeness and connect it to images marking his untimely death. His self-immolation acted as a loose thread that tied together various events within a larger visual narrative montage. The failure to immediately galvanize Bouazizi's status as an icon, and to one specific image within the Tunisian protests probably saved the protests—the protests are not singularly defined by a single act, occurring to single individual, but able to evolve organically with the protests and protestors thoughts and feelings.

The fight for real/digital space: The Tunisian Government's Reaction to the images

The Tunisian government repeatedly attempted to snuff out the flame of revolution that the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi had lit. With a mixture of police brutality, speeches and concessions, the Tunisian governments approach to quelling the protests was multifaceted, but ultimately unsuccessful.

The earliest protests that begun in earnest on the 17th of December were meet with police repression and scores of arrests (Reuters, 2011). On December 20th, Mohamed Al Nouri Al Juwayni, Tunisian Development minister, pledged ten million dollars for an employment programme in a bid to quell the protests in Sidi Bouzid (Rifai, 2011. However, protests continued unabated. The use of police violence punctuated instances of protest, leading to numerous protestors being killed (Ibid), some eleven during the weekend of January 7th alone, (Associated Press, 2011) which was just days before the fleeing of Ben Ali. These deaths were sometimes graphically illustrated by videos captured by citizen photojournalists (See: Hamdan, 2011). Even though arrests mounted, as well as deaths—reaching a total of 147—the protests continued, and grew (Almond, 2011). By the time Ben Ali fled, individuals from all walks of Tunisian life, from farmer to lawyers to online activists were protesting across the country, overwhelming security forces and Ben Ali's government. The protests within the country spread far and wide. Not only confined to large urban centers, rural villages and individuals were involved in large numbers. Images proved to be an important catalyst showing protests in the street, eventually brought more protestors out.

Ben Ali, leader of Tunisia, appeared on numerous occasions, as a bid to end the protests that are gripping the country. On December the 28th, Ben Ali during a televised

speech criticized the ""use of violence in the streets by a minority of extremists" and said the law would be applied "in all firmness"" (Randeree, 2011). Ben Ali even visited the bedside of Mohammed Bouazizi, the individual whose act in many respects began the revolution, and had his photo taken with him in a bid to quell protests.

While the Tunisian government struggled to contain protests in the street, Tunisia was well established to combat revolutionary sentiments online. According to a 2009 Open Net report on Tunisian online security and filtering practices, the Tunisian government pursued pervasive and stifling online filtering programs (Opennet, 2009). Such practices included the use of Western based filtering software (Opennet, 2011), extensive legal mechanism, and advance Web 2.0 'phishing techniques' that steal passwords, lockout users or delete their servers (Cominos, 2011). In the years preceding the uprising, such practices proved effective, enabling the Tunisian government near hegemonic control over access to the Internet within Tunisia. Nonetheless, the extreme nature of Tunisia's web surveillance and filtering developed a core group of activists who developed the necessary tools and skills to circumvent these protests. However, through extensive arrests and physical intimidation, these activists were never safe, and at any time could have their voice silenced.

Even though Internet filtering was extensive within Tunisia where social media portals such as Youtube were blocked, social media platforms such as Facebook remained accessible (Cominos, 2011, p. 8). Cominos notes that "many interested in the events were using Twitter and Facebook as a first port of call for information about Tunisia"(Ibid, p.8).

Nissar Ben Hassen, of *Radio Kalima* was arrested for posting videos of the protests (Jayarajan, 2011). Even though Tunisian authorities maintained the highest levels of filtering, images continued to be posted and shared. Consequently, individuals diversified their use of networks, linking physical, digital, and telecommunication networks to ensure images were still available even when Tunisian authorities blocked sites or took down material.

Some three weeks into the unrest, Tunisian authorities arrested a number of bloggers, and online dissident whom the government deemed to be a threat (Reporters without Borders, 2011). Tunisian authorities security measures had been so pervasive and the threat of arrest so high for contravening Tunisian legal measures, that even weeks into the protests that had begun to engulf Tunisia, many Facebook users were very weary to repost and share the videos of the protests. To repost images online for individual Tunisians located in Tunisia could have very physical consequences, including but not limited to arrests, beatings and deaths. Nonetheless, the videos continued to be spread online by a core group of organized and dedicated activists that had for years developed sophisticated means to circumvent government internet measures effectively, and to an extent, anonymously and safely.

With protests continuing unabated, and internet measure not appearing to stop individuals from sharing and receiving information, Ben Ali even attempted to quell protests during an address to the Tunisian people on January 13th, using a different tact promising to put an end to Internet censorship (Abrougui, 2011). Within a day, Ben Ali would flee, but protests would continue.

The Tunisian government was unable to assert control over both the real and digital. Even though the Tunisian government attempted to quell the protests with heavy security tactics and police brutality, they continued largely unabated. This was partly due to the scale and geographic dispersement of the uprisings within the Tunisia. Simultaneously online, the extensive nature of tools to combat freedom of speech and access for years previous to the revolution in actual fact developed a small but effective network of activists whom could successfully post and publish images online. These individuals were a key point of connection between a citizenship of photography linked digitally, and protests on the ground. It was the difficulty that the protests produced in the real and the inability to control the spread of images online that disabled the Tunisian governments ability to manage the revolution successfully.

Why did the images prove successful: Breaking the Digital/Real Divide

Information was not shared in torrents, rather in trickles. It was images, from citizen photojournalists, linked by viewers and activists online that provided a revolutionary narrative that was punctuated by visceral visual scenes. However, had the images been captured, and remained just on the phone of the individual whom had a captured the image, it is unlikely that a revolution would have ever taken place.

The importance of an image can be often located through the intensity that it travels. In other words, an iconic image and its effectiveness as means to further revolution can be found in the relationship and emotional intensity an individual has with it. As such, an image shared digitally outside of a country such as Tunisia, and is given prominence there, may not have the same effective means to initiate change. That said, images were being shared, published and mobilized amongst a small, but specialized and

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determined core group of activists *within Tunisia*. Even though the world could watch, and it was, the images were still being shared amongst a disperse group of activists on the ground, connected through a multitude of communication networks and mediums both digital and physical. The group of Tunisian activist offered a specific link between these digital and real spaces, where digital tools could be used to spread messages, and spread the messages images were being infused with through encounters to lay individuals in the street. These protestors broke the digital/real divide—a threshold that represents the difficulty associated with translating the often passive interactions associated with viewing or discussing images online and mobilizing these digital citizens and communities to achieve activities in the real—to further the revolution.

In moving across the digital/real threshold, the role of place becomes important. Even though protests can occur organically, and without specifying a specific place or instance when they will occur, the constitution of a specific revolutionary place can aid in facilitating protestors navigating the digital/real threshold. To further exemplify the role that central squares and physical protests within their confines and the subsequent images of both played within the revolution across the region, it is important to discuss the role of the Kasbah, the main square located in Tunis.

The Kasbah represented a "vital space" and insured that the revolution and protest could not be ignored in Tunisia (Hammel, 2011). Particular attachments of emotion and relationship between individuals and place become intrinsic to individuals themselves but also allow individuals to become apart of their environment. According the Phil Howard and Lewis Holloway

this attachment of meaning can be thought of as a way of bringing places into the ambit of human understanding—making a place meaningful makes it belong to us in some way.

Simultaneously, meaningful places become part of who we are, the way we understand ourselves and, literally, our place in the world. In other words, our meaningful relationships play an important part in the formation of our identities (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001, p.71).

While the protests had begun in the small trading towns of the South, such as Sidi Bouzid, it was not until the protests reached the capital city of Tunis did the prospect of overthrowing the Ben Ali regime truly materialize. The lack of proximity of these trading centers both in physical distance and perceived importance, made protest there a nuisance but not a threat. The protests within the Kasbah, and their proximity to major Tunisian government institutions increased the pressure on officials to conform to the wishes and demands of the people. The Kasbah, in particular demonstrations within it, were deemed a central facet within protestors plans to ensure the revolution was not ignored and their demands were in fact meet on numerous occasions. And it was the ability for the protests taking place within these places that proved pivotal. This is because the digital/real threshold works both ways, with the communication developed digitally supporting the creation of meaningful places and places giving a real location for digital individuals to voice their grievances.

Conclusion

Communication technologies played an important role in developing a common thread amongst protestors in the region. Communication across social media ensured that protestors could galvanize common grievances, develop strategy, and attempt a collective mobilization of their shared affliction against the state in the form of protest. These common views are formed in images. Thus, "…the use of digital media to rouse and organize opposition has furnished a common thread" (Howard and Hussain, 2011, p. 41). These common threads are developed through communication networks that are

facilitated across social media platforms. With similar views expressed across these platforms, collective action in the street and the overall revolution may prove more successful. As such Julia McElroy argues, "revolutions are successful when an entire country begins to see similarly. When the civilians communicate with each other and listen to each other's ideas" (McElroy, p.3). Communication technologies achieve this through the convergence of disperse individuals connected within its virtual public space. However, the galvanizations of these disperse voices across social media platforms did not guarantee that protests would be successful.   Numerous protests were sprung by calls for action online, only to fall quickly once in the street. The 2009 Iranian green revolution is case in point; "Technology alone does not cause political change" (Howard, 2010, p.12). The use of intimidation tactics and violence has often plagued protests within the region. Accordingly Habib Ayeb notes that "violently repressed, these protests were not able to threaten the authoritarian system and they were even less able to cause the fall of the dictator"(Ayeb, 2011, p. 468). However, through a core group of activists, who formed a link between the digital/real and were able to transcend its threshold, enabled an effective revolutionary vanguard that could combat the Tunisian government on a multitude of levels. And ultimately prevail.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: A Future for an Effective Citizenship of Photography?

What do a fifty-nine year old arthritic Grandmother from Northern Ontario and forty-nine year-old Dairy Queen shift supervisor from Tucson, Arizona have in common? They are both fighting in the Libyan Desert, albeit from the comfort of their homes and personal computers. In June of 2011, during the height of NATO operation in the Libyan campaign, a Globe and Mail article titled, "How social media users are helping NATO fight Gadhafi in Libya" (Smith, 2011) and two Guardian articles, "NATO, Twitter and Air Strike in Libya"(Gabbatt, 2011), and "Libya air strikes: Nato uses Twitter to help gather targets" (Norton-Taylor and Hopkins, 2011) identified a very peculiar phenomenon that appeared to be happening in the ongoing Libyan Campaign. Users, mainly using platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, were posting coordinates, labeling satellite images and Google maps with pro-Gadaffi troop movements, bases, transports and communication sites. And NATO appeared to be listening. Within hours of identifying an apparent communications command center, Robert Rowely (@RRowley), the Dairy Queen shift manager, noted that the exact site was hit by a surgical NATO airstrike. Before he posted the coordinates online, he contacted individuals he befriended on the ground, whom he meet online, and had them confirm his suspicions. While it is difficult to ascertain the specific influence individuals posting material online have in operations being conducted on the ground—NATO confides it does use Twitter as an intelligence gathering tool, along with other open sources of online information and media reports (Smith, 2011)—the coincidences are remarkable. An individual, using images from the comforts of their home in Arizona, to an extent, is influencing

individuals in the real to commit actions that alter the course of a specific revolutionary

context. This outlines a unique solution, to the imbalance that exists between the power

that a citizen of photography can have in a digital community, and the physical events

that they directly influence through their digital actions. This small example represents an

intriguing next step in balancing the influence between the digital/real citizens and

communities built by photography. Individuals half way around the world can have

effect, albeit when *provided with the right outlet*.

The relationship that exists between the digital citizenship and communities

formed by photography, and the actions partaken on the ground by revolutionaries is

complex. The difficulty this represents is what I term the *digital/real threshold*. In short,

this threshold represents the difficulty associated with translating the often passive

interactions associated with viewing or discussing images online and mobilizing these

digital citizens and communities to achieve activities in the real. This thesis has

illustrated complex role images play within contemporary revolutions. The affective

politics of images, regarding the communities and forms of citizenship they create, both

digital and real, however are difficult to ascertain to an extent. In writing this thesis, I

have come to four broad conclusions regarding the role of images and contemporary

revolutions within the Middle East North African Region, which link to this concept of a

digital/real threshold.

1. An Images Meaning and Their Use is defined by'Citizenship of Photography'

Every individual who *encounters* an image, even fleetingly, is a citizen of

photography. How these individuals—the photographer, the photographed and viewer—

interact with images and with each other determines the meaning and ultimately its use, of any given image. No single individual is able to own the meaning of any given image; meaning of an image is a construction achieved through a social negotiation between the citizenship of photography.

The relationship between the photographer, the photographed and viewer consists of a complex association of individuals. Individuals are connected through social media, which establishes central information networks for these individuals to share their thoughts and feelings of various images. Without social media networks and other communication technologies, an engaged citizenship through images would be difficult to achieve. Particularly since the citizenship of photography is geographically disperse, and politically, economically and socially diverse. Social media and other communication technologies enable this citizenship to negotiate and bridge constraints such as geography effectively. The negotiation that the citizenship of photography engages images and defines an images meaning is social pursuit.

Within the citizenship of photography, every individual does not possess an equal share in relations for how an image is defined. In any given instance, how an image is captured, the role of the photographed/subject, or what the viewer sees and connects the image to, will become preeminently important in the construction of an images meaning. Their respective roles enable each individual to specific insights or opinions, which may augment that of other citizens. For example, the manner which images are encountered by viewers, such as how comments are written or argued all affect how a particular citizen contributes to an images meaning. Traits such as social background, education, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender or sexual orientation, of the citizenship who

encounters an image, will have an affect on defining the meaning of any given image. Similarly, the effect these traits have will be *perceived* by outside observers, believing individuals are engaging images through specific lenses or epistemological frames.

2. In The Digital Age, Important/Iconic Images are Defined Through Communication Use

Social media provides the necessary platform for the citizens of photography to negotiate the meaning of images on masse. Social media links disperse individuals through a digital network, which foundation is found in images. These images in conjunction with digital networks establish a 'virtual public space'. This virtual public space is defined by how images act as a primary hub for connecting individuals in conversation, where acquaintances and strangers alike develop conversation through networks. It is from these networks that iconic images are defined by the citizenship of photography.

Images are made iconic through the multitude of encounters created by the communication technologies that images are published and shared on. In short, these encounters hyper-represent events defined by their images. From these communication networks, platforms and tools, images can be republished, recycled and redefined through the various uses defined by the citizenship of photography. Every post and comment further establishes the importance/iconicity of any particular image. Individual's social or mobile networks are connected to wider networks, both digital/real. This allows the images to move between a wide number of individuals and allow it to become 'viral'.

Communication networks protect the meaning of an image from the control of the nation state. While the nation state can control access to the Internet, they cannot control the multitude of *encounters* that takes place in relation to any specific image. Social media allows images to be quickly shared, manipulated and republished, ensuring that the nation state is unable to ever control every single incarnation or encounter of an image. The disperse networks of individuals that communication technology connects also *deterritorializes* the images from where they are captured, causing further difficulty for the nation state to control images.

However, communication tools and social media themselves do not define the uprisings but the individual users throughout their networks do. Communication technology and social media are *only* tools. Communication tools as an entity does not capture the images or publish them nor makes comments. Individual users do. Social media represents a means for individuals to communicate effectively and develop a central hub for information flow. Social media also represents a shift in how individuals find and access information, in short burst and fragments, which are supplied by individual users in an ebbing and flowing stream of information and conscience.

3. Producers (i.e. the Citizen Photojournalist) Overwhelmingly Influence

The citizen photojournalist, as illustrated in the case of the Iranian Green Revolution and Arab Spring, holds considerable influence within the citizenship of photography. Their power within the citizenship of photography is amplified, in part, through the inability for the citizenship of photography to influence their actions or what images they capture. For the most part, the citizenship of photography is made up of viewers, and even though photographic production is democratized, they are unable to

produce images of their own. This is due to the fact that they may be far removed from the event being captured, unable to gain access, or uninterested in capturing the event in front of them.

The ability of producers to influence others more so then other influence them points to the dystopic reality that is a citizenship of photography. Within a citizenship of photography, all are not equal, and those with the necessary tools, and audience, can dictate how an image will be received, understood, and developed. Even though no single individual can control an encounter, the context, language and means with which an encounter is completed within can be achieved.

4. Modern Revolution Images have Difficulty Breaking the Digital/Real Divide

The digital/real divide that constitutes how modern revolutions are fought, both online and on the ground, represent a major stumbling block for creating effective change. Without individuals who can form a connection between these two distinct communities of individuals, effective change is difficult to achieve. The two case-studies illustrated the major difficulties that exist in mobilizing citizens of photography to be effective in producing or stimulating change. Change and revolution moved forward most effectively when this divide could not only be crossed, but individuals connect with other individuals in meaningful relationships. For the largely digital citizenship of photography, these individual gatekeepers who cross this digital/real threshold marks the means for the citizenship of photography to make meaningful contributions.

While this relationship is extremely complex, it is not entirely elusive, as illustrated with the brief example of Libya. This brief example shows that the citizens of

photography and their communities can produce change and change the tides of

revolutionary favor, for the good or the bad. Platforms such as social media can prove

effective tools in transitioning this divide. But they are only tools, and in the end, it is the

individuals who use these tools that can make change truly happen.

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