REVOLUTIONS, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, SOCIAL CHANGE:
HOW HAS THE INTERNET INFLUENCED RECENT REVOLUTIONS?

by
Amy Whiteside

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Abstract

Information communication technologies have played a significant role in the history of our world. Whether it was the telegraph, telephone, radio, television or most recently the Internet, each left an indelible impact on the way we communicate, relate and share stories. The use of technology to promote ideologies is of fascinating thought. Technological advancements have empowered the cry of injustice or the voice of human rights. The range and extent of the proliferation of creeds/philosophies, some resulting in the eruption of revolutions, can be traced, in part, to the effectual use of technology. This thesis will explore how the Internet's presence or absence influenced three revolutions.

This thesis makes a contribution to this discussion, by examining three recent revolutions: The Ukrainian Orange Revolution of 2004, the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 and the Iranian Revolution of 1979. I initiate this discussion by stating the historical background of each revolution and the grievances felt by so many in each country. Then, I examine the influence of the Internet on the two most recent revolutions. In the third chapter, I test the influential factors of the Internet in the Egyptian and Ukrainian revolutions with the factors and events of the Iranian revolution to compare historical events and hypothetical constructs that could have happened or didn’t happen due to the absence of the Internet.

This thesis was read and reviewed by Sara Clarke and Lee Drutman and further approved by Sarah O’Byrne and Mark Stout.
List of Tables

Table 1: Presidential Election Results 34
List of Figures

Ukrainian 2004 Presidential Election Map 14
Figure 1: Website Hits 30
Figure 2: Website Guests 31
Figure 3: Website Stickiness 33
Figure 4: Internet Usage and Population Growth in Egypt 44
**Introduction:**

Humans have and will always embody a sense of rebellion, especially when they are under control. Whether it’s rebelling against your mother or father, a teacher or some other authority, it is in our DNA. So it is no surprise that people have rebelled against their greatest authorities, state leaders and governments. Revolts, rebellions, revolutions have taken place throughout history, dating back to BC. Although there are many similarities in revolutions and revolts against leaders and unjust governments, the DNA of revolutions has changed as our society has changed and progressed. Thanks to the increase of education and technology each have played significant roles in revolutions.

Globalization has also played a significant role in revolutions by inspiring the ordinary citizen of their human rights that for many have been violated for generations. Globalization can be defined as the process of international integration arising from the interchange of worldviews, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture. Advances in transportation and telecommunications infrastructure, including the rise of the telegraph and it’s posterity to the Internet are major factors in globalization, generating further interdependence of economic and cultural activities. This being said, technologies especially those such as the Internet, have played a key role in revolutions.

This thesis will examine three relatively recent revolutions, all generally non-violent and each significantly changing the course of their country. The thesis will include the studies of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 and the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Due to the complexity of each revolution, the chapters will state the historical background of the events leading up to the revolution as well as the grievances that played a role in the revolution. Most importantly the thesis
will take the approach of how each revolution was impacted by a particular information communication technology, specifically the Internet. As the reader may conclude, due to the timeline of the three revolutions, the first two chapters will state how the Internet influenced both the Orange and Egyptian revolution whereas the third chapter will be used as a counter example to argue the key findings of influence of the Internet in the more recent revolutions compared to the events and success still found in Iran in the absence of the Internet.

This thesis will strive to argue how the Internet played a role in four significant areas during the revolutions studied: providing an alternative media, delivering broader global reach, increasing the speed of events and spontaneity and generating a new kind of mass mobilization tool. This thesis will then answer the much broader question of what role the Internet (and social media) played in recent revolutions?

To date, the great bulk of academic and popular literature has considered each revolution specifically, some even arguing along the same lines of the impacts of communication on the revolutions. Thus, research has identified the presence of information communication technologies but in many ways has not explored their possible deeper significance. This thesis is primarily comprised of studies of secondary sources due to the time frame, the limits of primary sources and the current research that has already been explored. However what makes this thesis original is the collection of arguments and the comparisons made in the revolutions (case studies).

This thesis explores similarities in the three revolutions: ordinary citizens “fighting” for human rights violated for generations due to unfair leaders, all non-violent eruptions all largely comprised of young people. In all three revolutions students
realized, through education and communication among themselves and the rest of the world their chance and need for revolution in order to secure greater opportunity. It is also interesting to see now after all three revolutions, the unfortunate turn of events that have haunted each country since the original events of the revolution. These subsequent events following each revolution will be discussed at brief during the conclusion of this thesis.

Another unique fact to this thesis is the study of the impact of information communication technologies to each revolution. Many times the historical framework is the most highlighted portion of the studies presented on these events; however, the factors of influence are many times overlooked or missed. Technology, as stated previously, plays a significant role in society and specifically in revolutions. Our world is greatly different today than just 50 years ago thanks to the Internet and its empowerment to connect humans around the world. The Internet has given a censored society a new free format to express themselves and share information around the world in mere seconds. It has empowered the voiceless, and brought not only issues but people together when governments have blocked or silenced them in every other sense. It allows for pictures, and videos to be shared across borders and oceans and allows for stories that would otherwise be concealed, seen by millions. The capabilities of the Internet are almost endless and they continue to increase daily, as their proliferation is now in phones, televisions and even watches today. It is by no surprise that the Internet has impacted not only recent revolutions but also our entire world.

This thesis will begin by examining the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 and surrounding the 2004 presidential elections. During this time, the Internet was still a
new invention, especially to many in Ukraine. A surprising fact is the reach of the
Internet inside Ukraine at this time, which was only 3-4% prior to the revolution.
However, as the chapter further explains, it wasn’t so much the number of actual users to
the Internet but how those whom did have access were able to use this technology to
further reach those without it as well as those in other parts of the world. The Internet
played significant roles during this revolution by giving Ukrainians an independent media
source, a platform to expose corruption and monitor voting, and a key tool in mobilizing
the diverse regions of Ukraine. The Internet also allowed the events and news from
Ukraine to be heard around the world, most critically in the western countries that also
promoted democracy.

Next, the thesis will examine the more recent events of the Egyptian Revolution
in 2011, which is an event that many say kicked off the Arab Spring. This revolution did
not only involve the Internet, but this chapter will specifically look at the influence of
social media during this revolution. Many refer to this revolution as the Facebook or
Twitter revolution as millions of users of social media sites around the world either used
or saw the revolutionary events play out in real time, which was never seen before. This
chapter will also briefly describe the events that took place in Tunisia, which played a
significant role in the Egyptian revolution. During these events, the Internet and
specifically social media sites were used as an alternative media platform as the current
government had full control over all mass media. It enabled the everyday citizen who
previously had no voice, be able to voice his or her concerns not only to their countrymen
but also globally instantly. Twitter saw some of its largest spikes during the protests and
demonstrations of this revolution.
In these first two chapters, the Internet was arguably found to provide significant influence in each revolution in key areas such as providing an alternative media, delivering broader global reach, increasing spontaneity in events and generating a mobilization tool. These findings are shown in a variety of ways in both revolutions and can be argued to have greatly influenced the success of each opposition party in their fight for revolution.

Finally, the third chapter will examine the events of the Iranian revolution, a revolution prior to the Internet. The arrangement of chapters is to set the platform to the development and influence the Internet experienced during its own exponential growth. The Iranian revolution, although similar to the other two revolutions is very unique due to its fight for a return to more religious and traditional ways of life, in comparison to more modern western freedoms. This chapter, like the others will map out the historical factors and grievances that played significant roles leading up to the revolution. Additionally, it will further compare the four key influences the Internet played during the two more recent revolutions stated in chapters one and two and see how those areas of influence compared during the Iranian revolution at the time of the absence of the Internet. This chapter will uncover the other relevant factors both in and outside of communications that played a role in the success of this revolution. Whereas in this chapter it is found that many of the key influential ways the Internet impacted the two recent revolutions the Iranian revolution did lack; however the Iranian revolution did still find ultimate success in overthrowing the Shah.

Any model of such nature occludes as much as it reveals, and no single narrative can hold the richness and complexity of such phenomena as recent popular revolutions.
These next three chapters will strive to uncover the similarities and differences found in these three recent revolutions and explore how information communication technologies, specifically the Internet played a role in each. It will further argue the extent of influence the Internet did play in revolutions and question its true role by comparing it to a successful revolution where it was absent.
Chapter One: Ukrainian Revolution

*Introduction:*

Changes in the media spectrum present challenges both good and bad, but their influence in civil society is one that cannot be ignored. Whether it was the printing press, the first telegraph, the radio or the Internet, each new invention in communication technology has deeply impacted how we communicate and live our daily lives. Where it used to take us days if not weeks to relay one single message now happens instantly. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have and will continue to impact and shape civil society.

A relatively recent ICT, the Internet has greatly impacted our civil society, specifically in regards to the challenges and opportunities it has presented to citizens, journalists, politicians and governments alike around the globe. The Internet has increased international integration emphasizing many countries and regions that had previously been concealed by the larger more prominent countries of the world. This new communication technology also allowed for previously censored voices a new media platform. In connection to these changes, many countries in the last few decades experienced their own revolutions, primarily for greater freedoms or to oust corrupt leaders. Most recently the Internet played a significant role in the Arab Spring; Egypt’s revolution in 2011, was also known as the Twitter Revolution; as well as in Moldova in April 2009 and in Iran in June 2009. The most vivid example to date of the Internet’s role in electoral revolutions was in Ukraine during the Ukrainian Orange Revolution. In 2000, although most Ukrainians did not have access the Internet, they first heard about it through a fraudulent murder of a journalist whom had started using the Internet to tell the
factual stories of the corruption in the current regime. During the next three years, leading to the elections of 2004, Ukrainians, specifically those in the opposition party who wanted a democratic and just leader, used the Internet as a new form of alternative media, a mobilization tool for protests and to share information, and to increase their global voice specifically to the West.

This chapter consists of the study of some primary and more substantially secondary sources due to the availability of primary sources from this time. Revolutionary experts Aslund and McFaul edited Revolution in Orange a scholarly work comprised of many authors, stating their own research in regards to this revolution; this secondary source is largely used in this chapter. The book’s overall argument does agree with the chapter’s hypothesis in that the Internet did play a noteworthy role in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.¹ Prytula’s chapter specifically written in regards to the media’s role highlights the importance of not only the Internet but additional other traditional media forms during this revolution. She concludes her chapter by stating, “the Orange Revolution was the first to happen mostly as a result of globalization and the development of new technologies.”²

In regards to other literature reviewed for this chapter including that from Goldstein, Kuzio, Myroslaw Oates and Wilson, some identified the Internet was not only present, but was so for the first time during a revolution; in addition, the significance of the Internet during the Orange Revolution is debated by many authors. Due to the speed and constant changes to the content and direction of the Internet, scholars continue to


² Anders and McFaul. Revolution in Orange, 122.
debate the degree of influence the Internet has on politics and society. One scholar argues a consensus has basically emerged that the Internet will only “reinforce the existing patterns of political inequality.” Yet others have a more affirmative outlook on the impact of the Internet to civil society, stating the Internet has widened democracy, particularly in the case of linking citizens in oppressive regimes both to each others and to the international sphere. Finally there is a distinctive link between the youth and their embrace of new technologies. It has been shown that younger respondents are more supportive of digital democracy, which is significant as they are seen as “expanding the electorate to include a group that has been traditionally under-represented.” Each claim can be found true depending on the political event or social situation, which is why it is imperative to continue to research the topic of how communication technologies impact social and political revolutions. This chapter will argue how the Internet played a prominent role in the Orange Revolution, and how the Internet was used to specifically strengthen the opposition party, which ultimately led to a successful presidential win in 2004 elections.

This chapter will begin by describing the key events and historical background of Ukraine leading up to the 2004 Orange Revolution, starting with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. In addition, it will examine the factors that led to the political crisis and the formation of the opposition group. The methodology for this investigation to identify the role of the Internet during the Orange Revolution will include examining the

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4 Oates and Gibson, “The Internet, civil society and democracy,” 5.
scholarly work from several acclaimed authors in the fields of Ukraine’s history and ICTs.

Without the Internet, the opposition party may not have had the capabilities to monitor the elections, access imperative information and mobilize the millions of protestors whom came out to the streets between the second elections and the final run-off, which led to the success of the opposition leader, Viktor Yushchenko. This chapter will explore the role the Internet played during the time of the Orange Revolution. This chapter will strive to explain not only how the Internet played a significant part but also allowed the opposition to strengthen in numbers and knowledge to ultimately win the 2004 presidential elections.

**Historical Background:**

On December 25, 1991 the Soviet Union ceased to exist when Russian President Yeltsin replaced Soviet President Gorbachez and the Soviet flag was lowered for the last time. National liberation had been fast and peaceful, Ukraine’s borders were secure and the new President Kravchuk was democratically elected. However Ukraine’s move into democracy did not come without its challenges. Given the sheer speed of the Soviet collapse, Ukraine gained independence without any basic state infrastructure. Also at this time of new independence and supposed new democracy, Ukraine’s populist leader,

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Kravchuk sided much with the old Communists ways rather than acting more radically for a change to democracy.  

During Kravchuk’s first re-election in 1994, Ukraine suffered tremendous economic struggles, and his economic policies lacked support. Although his initial election in 1991 was to be for five years, he was forced into early elections due to this economic crisis and a coal-mining strike in the summer of 1993. His opponent and former Prime Minister, Leonid Kuchma won the 1994 election by attracting both the populist sentiment of the east along with the heavy industry captains, known as the red directors. The latter he represented after his own ousting as Prime Minister in 1993. Although the election came sooner than expected, the elections were peaceful and orderly.

Five years later, President Kuchma ran for re-election. Although corruption had followed him throughout his time in office, the elections surprisingly went without much notice. In fact, the election was not really an election at all, rather a shadow conflict of proxies and fakes. Kuchma’s friends and family had grown rather rich during his first five years of office, while unpopular feelings for him grew within the rest of the society.

At the end of 1999, Ukraine was once again in severe economic troubles; it was the only post-communist country that had failed to achieve a single year of economic growth for the entire decade. With a registered cumulative decline of 61 percent of GDP

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from 1989-1999, Ukraine had suffered the most. Ukraine also suffered from an acute political crisis at the same time. This crisis was revealed in low trust in state institutions, low popularity for President Kuchma and high support for his impeachment, growing tensions between the ruling elite and society, and international isolation. In 2002, the first shock came when the opposition won control of half of the parliamentary seats, creating Viktor Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine party, and for the first time ever in history pushing the Communists party into second place.

*Grievances in Ukraine leading up to the Revolution:*

McFaul, scholar and diplomat, writes extensively on not only the political, social and economic issues of Ukraine but also those issues involving Eastern Europe specifically after the fall of the Soviet Union. In his article from the Journal of Democracy, “Transitions from Communism” he focuses on three so-called breakthroughs of democracy in the early 21st century in the countries of Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine. He commences his article by stating the collapse of communism did not lead smoothly or quickly to consolidation of liberal democracy in Europe. This statement clearly disillusions the simple idea that after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 countries fully embraced democratic governments.

Almost ten years after the fall of the Soviet Union, democracy gained new enthusiasm in the ex-Soviet states. In October 2000, Serbian democratic forces ousted

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dictator, Slobodan Milosevic. Three years later in 2003, Georgian President, Eduard Shevardnadze fell from power through a mobilization of democratic power in Georgia. These two events became historical milestones for the coming events that took place in Ukraine.

Regional divide

Ukraine cannot be understood without first considering the country’s regional divide. The fundamental divide is between the east south and the west central, between the Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking parts of the country. Historically, Ukraine was split into 27 regions and five territories. Unlike many other countries Ukraine was not dominated by its capitol rather the wealth and dominance was spread between three cities: Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and the capitol Kyiv. This regional divide played a sizeable role in the elections, as the west-central region heavily supported Yushchenko and the east-south region supported Yanukoych. In the map below, one can see the large regional divide present in the voting.

\footnote{McFaul, Transitions from Communism” 5.}
Russia’s Role:

The Russian government was cognizant of the importance of the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections. They saw the elections as a crossroads for Ukraine, either they would side more with the West or continue their dependence on Russia. For Russia, there was only one goal: to keep Ukraine in the sphere of Russian influence and at a minimum to maintain their existing relationship. Aleksandr Voloshin, the chief of the Russian presidential administration played the key role in the political strategies between Russia and Ukraine at this time. During the summer of 2003 the Russian government agreed to back whomever was to succeed Kuchma.\textsuperscript{14}

The Russian government used political, social and economic tactics that had brought success in their own presidential campaigns to Ukraine, in hopes to ultimately influence the 2004 elections. Their main tactic was to increase the tensions and confrontations between Ukraine’s eastern region, which heavily supported Russia, and

\textsuperscript{14} Anders and McFaul. \textit{Revolution in Orange}, 146-147.
the more nationalistic western region. The Russian government relied heavily on public
relation tactics to attack Yushchenko and the western regions. They also financially
supported Kuchma’s regime, reports stating upwards of $600 million.15

Formation of the opposition:

Andrew Wilson, author of “Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” states the Orange
Revolution was a “revolution of expectations – what was supposed to happen, did not
happen.”16 He explained the real desire by the Ukrainians was for a regime change not
just a new president. He also cited the cross-cultural support, explaining the opposition
was not only supported by one group. Students, the poor and even small and medium
size businesses all had much reason and motivation to act against the ruling power.17

In 1999 the mood in Ukraine hit a definite low as the country seemed stuck in a
morass of corrupt state monopoly, and President Kuchma and the oligarchs seemed to
have little concern over the steady decline of Ukraine’s GDP. One of the few credible
senior economic politicians of this time, Viktor Yushchenko became prime minister.
Within a year, Yushchenko turned the country’s deficit into a surplus, and the year 2000
marked a definite break through for Ukraine.18 However only months later in April 2001,
Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko was dismissed, even though he and his advisors had
done more for Ukraine than any other before his time.19

15 Anders and McFaul. Revolution in Orange, 148-152.
16 Andrew Wilson. Ukraine’s Orange Revolution, 199.
17 Ibid, 199.
19 Aslund. How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy. 151.
After Yushchenko’s dismissal, tensions among the society and the ruling class began to intensify. As a result and for the first time, an organized opposition group was created, Our Ukraine. This opposition bloc was comprised of a large number of right wing and centrist forces gathered together with the all Rukh groups, other right-center party groups and independents who supported Yushchenko. These combined forces were coming together against Kuchma rather than underlying their differences among themselves. All together the opposition received 221 seats, while the current regime (under Kuchma) obtained 148 seats, in addition to the 80 independent seats, which mainly went to oligarchic representatives. The next two years leading up to the 2004 presidential elections were critical for the opposition party. After their win in the parliament in 2002 and Yushchenko’s leadership role was in place, they felt a unity and for the first time a real possibility for change.

*Factors that encouraged the revolution: Need for an Alternative Media:*

An important factor that many scholars point to in their analysis of post-communist states moving towards democracy is the movement between autocratic and democratic regimes. Prior to the revolution, President Kuchma led Ukraine in a semi-autocratic regime, meaning that it was neither a full-blown dictatorship nor a consolidated democracy. Much of the Ukrainian’s disgust by Kuchma was due to his many attempts to silence the opposition voice, and censoring the mainstream media. For this reason, there was a high desire and need for an alternative media in Ukraine.

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Although “self-censorship” was not enshrined in law, it was well known that the small elite class owned all the major television stations. Station managers received unsigned directives from the President’s office that urged them to cover the news from the President’s office in a particular way, and the managers were under much pressure to please the “key viewer”, the President or their jobs would be at stake.\textsuperscript{21} Representatives of President Kuchma denied any sort of censorship in the mass media, however journalists knew there would be significant backlash on any story or news that came out not in favor of the president.

One prime example was the scandal surrounding the murder of a well-known radio and television journalist, Georgiy Gongadze, whom had refused to self-censor himself and had lost his job countless times due to his independent reporting.\textsuperscript{22} In 2000, he co-founded an Internet newspaper, \textit{Ukrainska Pravda}, meaning truth, to cultivate the truth behind the government’s oppression on freedom of speech in Ukraine. \textit{Pravda} quickly became one of the most popular online news’ websites in Ukraine. However, in September 2000 Gongadze mysteriously disappeared within two months his headless body was found. Soon after tapes were released by President Kuchma’s former bodyguard that supported the claim behind the accusation of Kuchma orchestrating Gongadze’s death.\textsuperscript{23} It is crucial to note, that authors and scholars claim that the Gongadze case was “the first time that many Ukrainians had heard of the Internet.”\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{22} Goldstein. \textit{The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution}, 7.

\textsuperscript{23} Goldstein. \textit{The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution}, 7-8.

\textsuperscript{24} Goldstein. \textit{The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution}, 8.
Channel 5 was the one television exception at this time in Ukraine. In 2003, members of the opposition bought a small television station to express and promote alternative views outside of the President’s control. Although the reach was smaller than the major networks (only reaching 30% Ukrainians) its influence reached wider audiences.\(^{25}\)

**Extreme Dissatisfaction**

Thanks to Yushchenko’s fiscal policies during his time as prime minister, the economy leading up to the 2004 elections was actually booming for the first time since the fall of the Soviet Union. However due to Kuchma’s oppressive semi-autocratic reign over Ukraine, the society by the early 21\(^{st}\) century was suffering from a severe political crisis. Experts at the Center for Economic and Political Studies of Ukraine, also known as the Razumkov Center, found severe dissatisfaction among Ukrainians during the time leading up to the revolution; 77% -85% of Ukrainians wanted change and did not back a continuation of the status quo.\(^{26}\)

There was also a distinct separation between the ruling elite and society.

“Seventy percent of Ukrainians felt they had no influence on authorities, and 92% felt that their human rights were regularly being infringed.”\(^{27}\) By the 2004 elections, trust in state institutions was so low, that more Ukrainians believed in astrologers than those who trusted President Kuchma. Fifty-five percent of Ukrainians said that they would never


vote for Kuchma and an even higher number said they wanted to impeach him. “By the eve of the 2004 elections, the authorities were not trusted, not respected, not believed, lacked legitimacy and lived separate lives from the lives of the people.”

Youth:

The youth during the time of the Orange Revolution were unlike their parents; they were not afraid of the authorities, as their elders had been during the Soviet rule. They looked westward not northeast for culture, fashion and intellectual inspiration, and many had traveled the world either as tourists or in exchange programs. These youths were knowledgeable and not only wanted but demanded change. During the Kuchma’s reign, the youth transitioned from political apathy to political activism. They were vested in electronic communications more than others in the Ukrainian society at that time. They were experts on their mobile devices, sending messages and even some having a video camera that could record real-time events during the protests and the events leading up to them. They were also experts using the Internet to communicate with one another as well as for greater informational sharing. The authorities during this time had never appreciated the power of the Internet and were never able to compete with the online publications.

Methodology:

28 Anders and McFaul. Revolution in Orange, 55.

29 Anders and McFaul. Revolution in Orange, 56.

30 Ibid, 56.
This thesis will answer the research question, what role did the Internet play in the Orange Revolution by using qualitative research. This chapter contains a content analysis using highly regarded sources on the topic of the Orange Revolution and the role of ICTs (information and communication technologies). Prominent authors, Anders Aslund, Michael McFaul, Taras Kuzio, and others will be referenced. Additionally, graphs will display key findings from the predominant websites in Ukraine during this time representing numbers of hits, unique guests and the stickiness of the web pages.

Findings:

Even though Ukraine was not a very high-tech country, the extreme violations of freedom of speech and the political situation may explain the exceptional role the Internet played leading up and during the Orange Revolution. The Internet became an independent media source, a platform to expose corruption and monitor voting, and a key tool in mobilizing the diverse regions of Ukraine. The Internet also allowed the events and news from Ukraine to be heard around the world, most critically in the western countries that also promoted democracy. This chapter will examine how the speed of the events were impacted by the Internet and how the Internet created a new form of spontaneity, specifically through humor, that ultimately encouraged the opposition.

Independent Media (breaking through the censorship)

The Internet lowered the cost of self-publication to zero, allowing more voices outside the mainstream media to become influential. The Internet allowed for journalists, whom previously had been banned from telling the truth, the ability to publish stories of
truth to the masses. The Internet was also a platform for new authors and publishers; it allowed any person with Internet access the ability to publish stories, pictures and videos about the circumstances happening in Ukraine. This gave the every-day person a new voice towards the masses. The Internet also allowed Ukrainians to read uncensored articles for the first time, and in many cases to learn and publicize the truth about Kuchma and his corrupt regime. Many claim the Internet was an invaluable information resource, breaking through censorship blockades for Ukraine.

Exposure to Corruption

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, oligarch groups grew to great power in Ukraine. Aslund defines oligarchs as “politically-well connected billionaires or near billionaires, who were main owners of a company or corporation and who had close ties with the president”. Many oligarchs had served as presidential advisors and all serious oligarchs had notable access to the president. Most notably, Medvedchuk was the head of the presidential administration during the last two years of Kuchma’s presidency. These types of relationships between a corrupt leader and a very-connected select few elites resulted in fraud and corruption and eventually a political crisis throughout Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Internet ran its own criminal, journalistic, legal and political investigations as well as accusing top-level officials of illegalities and providing direct

31 Anders and McFaul. Revolution in Orange, 10.

evidence to back up the accusations. This type of investigative reporting had never been allowed or performed in Ukraine prior to the development of the Internet. The exposure of Kuchma’s corruption during his time as president has been linked to the success of Yushchenko’s win in 2004. However, in order to expose these investigative reports, many journalists needed an ally, which came in the form of Internews-Ukraine. This website played a key role in defending professional journalists against state attacks. Telekritika, an internet publication sponsored by Internews, was a very useful web-based forum for discussing “censored” television coverage of the campaign; many times exposing truth, rather than just relying on the censored mainstream media.

*Monitoring*

Maidan launched four years before the Orange Revolution, it was a legacy of the *Ukraine Without Kuchma Movement*. In Ukraine, Maidan means public square. The websites slogan was, “You CAN change the world you live in. And you can do it now. In Ukraine.” Several technologically savvy and concerned citizens who believed strongly in their slogan above founded Maidan. The main activity of Maidan was election monitoring and networking with other pro-democratic organizations around Eastern Europe. Maidan hosted over twenty seven election monitoring trainings in nearly every

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region in Ukraine. During 2004, Maidan trained over 500 Ukrainians to oversee the presidential elections. The evidence collected by Maidan was vital to proving the existence of the colossal election fraud throughout the 2004 elections.36

Reaching to the West

Author Michael Lipsky writes, “If protest tactics are not considered significant by the media, or if newspapers and television reporters or editors decide to overlook protest tactics, protest organizations will not succeed.” This point was amplified in Ukraine, as the Internet became the nearly exclusive portal for samizdat journalism, which would have normally been censored or highly endangered the author. The websites created an alternative voice that led to an increasing number of people to challenge Kuchma and his regime, which many thought for so long were untouchable. The Internet was also able to generate and spread this alternative, truthful voice not only throughout Ukraine but also throughout the world, especially to key players in the West.

The West had a long time interest in Ukraine due to its geographical location as the borderline country between the democratic Western Europe and the authoritarian post-Soviet Eurasia. The external players of the West (European Union-EU and the United States) both wanted to see Ukraine become a more democratic country. However even with their sympathetic interests for liberal democratic movements, they also still feared Russia, and its great power of its border of Ukraine. The West knew it must keep good relations with Russia during this time, not only for safety but also for economic and

36 Goldstein. The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, 14.
foreign policy motives. The EU also had a major dilemma due to its energy dependency on Russia during this time.\textsuperscript{37}

In the case of the EU, there was a significant split of the old members and the new members, many whom bordered Ukraine and had recently had their own revolutions. The new members had a greater understanding of the corruption and change needed in Ukraine and were much more active than those older members in the EU, whom were more hesitant and cautious. Finally with the influence of both the United States and the new members of the EU, the old members also joined in to support the position of active involvement to bolster democracy in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{38}

United States was more straightforward in their approach and support for a stronger democratic Ukraine. In 2004 the US sent over several political and social leaders to Ukraine, whose main purpose was to ensure Kuchma and his old regime could not succeed. The US also used the threat of sanctions during this time to place extreme pressure on the old regime. After seeing the corruption during the elections, thanks to the Internet monitoring and news coverage, the US once again stated strong statements against Kuchma, enforcing legitimacy during the last elections of 2004.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{Mobilization}

The Internet also played a critical role in mobilizing the large and vast population of Ukraine. With over 47 million people and a diverse regional blend of people, the

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item\textsuperscript{37} Anders and McFaul. \textit{Revolution in Orange}, 130-131.
  \item\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 125-132.
  \item\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 133-134.
\end{itemize}
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Internet played a key role in mobilizing and informing the society. Several websites provided key information about unofficial events, including many of the protests that grew to millions due to the mobilization capabilities of the Internet and of SMS messages on mobile phones. For example, exactly one week prior to the first elections on October 25, 2004 the opposition took to the Internet for a new initiative known as “The Orange Ribbon”. As a result thousands of orange ribbons appeared on cars, ladies purses, backpacks, bicycles, hats, Internet banners and the title page of key websites. Initially started in Kyiv intensity grew throughout Ukraine uniting the opposition’s support not only for Yushchenko but also to express their intense disagreements with the biased media.40

One of the first websites to greatly assist in the mobilization of Ukrainians was Pora, meaning in Ukraine, “It’s time.” Pora was a civic youth organization that supported Yushchenko and the opposition group and targeted the youth of Ukraine as their proclaimed agents of social change. Pora took its inspiration from Serbia’s Otpor and Georgia’s Kmara youth alliances.41 Their website www.pora.org.ua, had a daily focus on the group’s activities related to the Presidential elections and served as a key recruitment and morale-boosting tool. The site also listed email contacts for activists in all twenty-five oblasts of Ukraine.42 Pora promoted, “the active use of modern communications systems in the campaign’s management,” and recognized that their website served as a

40 Anders and McFaul. Revolution in Orange, 118.

41 Goldstein. The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, 16.

42 Kyj J. Myroslaw “Internet use in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” One University Place, School of Business Administration, Widener University, Chester, PA, (2005): 75.
primary source to inform the public by linking the small percentage of Ukrainian elite who were online with the general public.\textsuperscript{43}

Pora was also responsible for the creation of over 150 mobile groups responsible for spreading information and coordinating election monitoring. This included 72 regional centers and over 30,000 registered participants. Mobile phones helped greatly in communications and mobilization in these mobile groups. In addition to using the phones to communicate strategic information, others used the phones in what some called, “Sousveillance” referring to “the monitoring of authority figures by grassroots groups, using the technologies and techniques of surveillance.”\textsuperscript{44} In some cases this led to corruption exposure which would have previously gone unseen.

Ukrainska Pravada, originally Georghi Gongadze’s website, grew to become the most popular website during this time. It also became a template for opposition group political action websites during the 2004 elections. The scope, depth and sophistication of Pravada’s news reporting became an intellectual foundation for the opposition. The news feeds from Ukrainska Pravada from the many regions of the country spread word of the tent cities that were exploding throughout Ukraine in real-time and then were aired and spread throughout the streets of Ukraine.\textsuperscript{45}

Another key element to Pravada was their ability to publish an English version to many of their stories; this allowed for a global audience and also led to a partnership and assistance from the National Endowment for Democracy. Along with their local stories,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{43} Goldstein. \textit{The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution}, 16.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Goldstein. \textit{The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution}, 17.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Anders and McFaul. \textit{Revolution in Orange}, 110-111.
\end{itemize}
they also published re-prints from western sources such as *New York Times, Financial Times* and *Washington Post*. This global impact and influence would have never been possible without the Internet and was a critical element for the acknowledgement and credibility of the events from the opposition to the rest of the world.

**Access**

In this study, it is critical to understand the Internet’s scope and users prior to, during and since the revolution. In 2000, a mere 200,000 Ukrainians (0.4% of the population) used the Internet. By 2006 following the revolution, this number had significantly increased to over 5 million users (11.5% of the population) and by 2010, 15 million Ukrainians used the Internet constituting 33% of the population of Ukrainian at that time (45.4 million).

As stated above, prior to the revolution, the Internet only reached a very small proportion of population 3-4%, approximately 1.5 million people. This was due to the lack of Internet access, expensive computers and problems with old telephone networks. Due to such a small percentage of the population actually having Internet access and intriguing question is how did the Internet play such a strategic role? One theory is the characteristics of the users on the Internet. Many of the people whom had Internet access were political activists who proactively sought news and information from the Internet, but were also quite proactive in communicating through the web by forwarding emails and participating in online chat conversations. This theory is defended by a study from

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46 Kyj J. Myroslaw “Internet use in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” 73-74.

Stephen Bandera, and was built on the framework developed by the Institute for Politics, Democracy and Internet (IPDI) at George Washington University. In this study they claim that Ukrainians during the time of the Orange Revolution who used the Internet were more likely to be online political citizens than their American counterparts. Compared to Americans, a larger percentage of Internet users in Ukraine helped to circulate online political news and information, even though the population was much smaller.\footnote{Goldstein. The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, 11.} These particular activists also were known to print online articles and distribute them to their relatives, friends into many of the rural areas that did not have access at this time. Many times these articles were then republished in regional presses, allowing for the online articles that would of normally may of gone unseen, penetrate all corners of the Ukraine.\footnote{Anders and McFaul. \textit{Revolution in Orange}, 108.}

In addition, due to the activism by those online even in limited numbers, the word spread quickly due to the censorship on the traditional media platforms. This resulted in advances in access and online readership within months if not weeks as the events of the Orange Revolution took place. Again, prior to the revolution, only a mere 1.5 million out of 47 million Ukrainians used the Internet. By the end of the Revolution, over 8%, close to 4 million Ukrainians had access.\footnote{Ibid, 117.} Although this was still an overall small population, it was a significant hike of usage in such a short period of time.

What was also astounding was the audience on the Ukrainian websites, these sites were not only seen and read by Ukrainians but by those around the world. Leading up to
the events of the Revolution and the start of the 2004 presidential elections, huge peaks in
visitors to websites started appearing. In September 2004, Ukrainian news’ websites
attracted 6.3 million visitors, 8.3 million in October and by November an astonishing
19.3 million visitors. However the largest peak happened later in December, when
Viktor Yushchenko won the third elections. *Ukrainska pravada* was the leading site on
the Ukraine Internet. During the third round of elections, the site drew more than
150,000 readers (1.8 millions hits). This site was vital in many ways, and some even
claim it was writing a chapter of modern history in Ukraine.  

51 These numbers are clearly shown in Figure 1, when Pravada, reached an unforeseen peak of 1.8 million hits on
December 27, 2004. Other peaks on the Internet that should be noted are November 22,
2004 following the second elections.52

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52 Kyj J. Myroslaw “Internet use in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” *One University Place, School of
Business Administration, Widener University, Chester, PA*, (2005): 77.
Speed

Although seen by the arguments above, there were many ongoing factors that led to the Orange Revolution. To some, the timetable seemed quick; by others, it was seen to have “been coming” since the fall of the Soviet Union. However, it is almost undeniable to not credit the Internet for the astonishing results of the revolution that took place in a mere 17 days. During the crucial hours and days following the second round votes, *Ukrainskaya Pravada* stated the exit polls most sensitive to Yushchenko as well as other allegations of fraud and corruption. During this time the readership grew from 350,000 to one million hits per day.\(^{53}\) Figure 2, not only shows the enormous peak on November

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22, 2004 following the second elections, it also shows the unique guests, not just hits. This graph means that one website, *Ukrainska Pravada* accounted for 30% of all Internet users in the country. One can also see by Figure 2, the extremely low, almost non-existent, Internet appearance that Kuchma’s regime had during this time, represented by the Allies guests.\(^{54}\)

![Web Site Guests](image)

**Figure 2** Number of site guests during high web activity days.

**Spontaneity**

Although the opposition did crescendo throughout the years of 2000 to the presidential elections in 2004, there were also many spontaneous moments during this

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\(^{54}\) Kyj J. Myroslaw “Internet use in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” 78.
time. First, if asked during his time of being Prime Minister, I would highly doubt Yushchenko would have ever thought he would run for president only years later.

Second, as discussed previously, although many had wished for the cessation of the autocratic regime of Kuchma, many, especially those who lived during the Soviet rule, never thought they would see or experience the opposition’s party victory.

The spontaneity of the Internet was also evident in a sense of humor and satire. As described above, the Internet allowed for an entirely new freedom for the media; creating a new form of freedom of speech and expression. As seen during the Howard Dean campaign in the United States during the 2004 elections, the notion of cultural icons and political gaffes had a much longer life and higher stickiness among a population than your average news story. Among the many tools the Internet presented to Ukrainians, one was a platform for satire, jokes and puns created in online chat rooms. On September 24th, 2004 while Yanukovych was traveling in a heavily Yushchenko district, someone in the crowd through an egg at him. In a clearly over-dramatized gesture, Yanukovych fell to the ground, and was carried away by his bodyguards. Although Kuchma’s team tried to confiscate all of the videotapes of the incident, one survived and made it to Channel 5. Soon after the incident, websites were filled with jokes and puns and skits based on the egg incident. An online game even was created called: “The Boogerish Egg”. Obozrevatel was a popular tabloid styled website, that allowed their users to indulge in some humor via the Jolly Eggs feature. The popularity and stickiness (how many times a particular computer accessed the same website) of Obozrevatel can be seen in Figure 3. Again it is also seen in the lack of online
appearance the Allies group had, with never showing more than 5 visits by a guest per day at any time during the campaign.\textsuperscript{55}

It was this creativity by the opposition party that helped many Ukrainians join the political conversation and feel like the discussions and issues related to them.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{Elections:}

\textsuperscript{55} Kyj J. Myroslaw “Internet use in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” 79.

\textsuperscript{56} Goldstein. The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, 12-13.
The Ukrainian presidential elections of 2004 marked the fourth presidential elections since the fall of the Soviet Union. According to Ukraine’s electoral law, elections included a two-round system, the first elections were on October 31, 2004 and the second on November 21, 2004. According to the official commission, Yanukoych was declared the winner after the second round of votes on November 23rd. However, as soon as the polls were closed on November 21st, mass falsifications were evident.

Quickly following the closing of the polls on November 21st, some 30,000 protestors came out and the first tents were set up on Khreshchatyk, Kyiv’s main street. By November 22nd, the opposition was mobilized, messages spread by mobile phones and the Internet resulted in over 200,000 people coming out in protest. The crowds expanded daily reaching over 1 million. All protestors came out in something orange and all were well behaved; no drinking or rowdy behavior was allowed or tolerated.57

Due to these events and protests, the Ukrainian Supreme Court annulled the official second-round run-off results and ordered a repeat, held on December 26, 2004. Yushchenko was announced the winner with 52% of the votes, against Yanukovych’s only receiving 44%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>First Round, October 31</th>
<th>Second Round, November 21</th>
<th>Rerun Second round, December 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viktor Yushchenko</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viktor Yanukovych</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Election Committee of Ukraine, www.cvk.gov.ua

Conclusion:

From the years between the Gongadze case when most Ukrainians “officially” acknowledged the Internet, throughout the political events and protests during the Orange Revolution, it can be certainly seen that the Internet played a significant role. Without the Internet one can argue that the civil society of Ukraine would have lacked a platform to voice their opinions and tell the truths of the corruption and fraud advancing under the current government. It can also be said that the election monitoring and falsities during the second elections would have been either overlooked, or unknown without the Internet, which ultimately may have led to the success of Yanukovych rather than Yushchenko. The Internet also played a crucial role in the mobilization of the opposition as well as its role as an information resource to where, when and how one could participate in the protests leading up to the second run-off elections.

However it is important to note, the Internet did not cause the revolution, nor did it bring the ultimate success of democracy. Revolutions of non-democratic or semi-autocratic societies normally embody certain conditions: a general situation of contention in the country; the lack of coverage or free traditional media and the availability of strong opposition groups and voices. Due to these other relevant factors, one may argue that the Internet or in general ICTs are not as significant when comparing them to political and social change. One could argue that the Orange Revolution would have still occurred due to the political disgust of the society and the opposition party. On the contrary, the strength of the opposition may have never reached the level of success without the Internet due to its facilitation to spread previously censored media and information, its
role in mobilizing individuals across the diverse region, and its microphone-quality to spread the trials and corruption to all parts of the world.

There are of course many larger and broader questions that arise after looking into the role that communication technologies played in Ukraine. One such question is how and if an ICT can inherently expand civil engagement and democratization; how and will governments, especially those authoritarian governments, adapt to these new technologies to use them to their own advantage? Continued research in this field is needed to answer any of these broader questions.

The role of ICTs will continue to increase throughout future political and social changes. As stated in the beginning, how we communicate is critical to how we live our lives, as technologies expand so will the way we live our lives. In the next essay I will examine how yet another ICT within the Internet, social media, played a role in the Middle East, specifically within Egypt.
Chapter Two: Egyptian Revolution

Introduction:

On January 17, 2001, during the impeachment trial of Philippine President Joseph Estrada, loyalists in Congress voted to set aside key evidence against him. Within minutes, the people of the Philippines were enraged by anger as they perceived their corrupt leader might be acquitted without any punishment. After a mere two hours, a protest was organized in a major crossroads of Manila. Prompted by anger, a forwarded text message reading, “Go 2 EDSA. Wear Blk.” was spread to thousands. In the next few days, millions of Philippines arrived disrupting the main traffic downtown. This major disruption, uniquely propagated text messages, eventually led to the country’s legislator’s reversal of action that allowed for the evidence against their leader, President Joseph Estrada to be presented. By January 20, just three days after the impeachment trial, Estrada’s fate was sealed and he was gone. This event marked the first time social media played a pivotal role in such a movement that resulted in the removal of a nation’s leader.

The ongoing events of the Arab Spring have introduced much dialogue in regards to the influence social media has had on revolutions and movements toward democracy. Scholars and journalists continue to argue their broad opinions on social media’s effect throughout the Middle East. New York Times columnist, Nicholas Kristof, stated “On one side are government thugs firing bullets. On the other side are young protesters firing

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“tweets.”⁶⁰ Although his reference pertains to the events in Iran and Moldova, prior to those events in Tunisia and Egypt, they are quite relevant even on issues the Arab world is facing today in both Israel and Syria.

Nevertheless, it is easy to over-simplify many of these events by calling them the “Facebook revolution” or “Twitter revolution” and not accentuate the underlining causes of the events; such as: extreme discontent due to economic, political and social problems of their nation, and for many the high levels of corruption of their own government leaders. This chapter will first layout a brief outline of how social media has grown and its impact to our globalized world; further it will examine the role of social media in the recent events in both Tunisia and Egypt by reviewing scholarly articles, news stories and social media analytics.

Expansion of the Internet:

Since the rise of the Internet in 1990s, the world’s users have grown from the sheer millions to the astonishing billions of regular citizens, government leaders, activists and everyone in between. The Internet has made our world much smaller by creating links to one another all over the world. Email allows us to communicate within seconds to one another; search sites allow us to find the answer to almost any question within seconds and social media has given regular citizens the power to mobilize and engage with others by sharing their own stories and opinions on both domestic and international levels.

Conventionally, social media has been defined by: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+ and blogs. The Arab Social Media Report shows that social media

throughout 2013 has not shown any signs of slowing down either globally or within the Arab region. Globally Facebook dominates with over 1.1 billion “monthly active” users, while Twitter has reached over 500 million in March 2013. Additionally LinkedIn has 200 million users, Google+ has exceeded 500 million users and shares over a billion items a day, and YouTube just in the Arab region, has 285 million video views per day.

The total number of Facebook users in the Arab world stands at 45,194,452 (as of the end of June 2012) up from 37,390,837 at the beginning of January 2012, and with an even more astonishing figure of an increase by 50% from a year ago in 2011 with only 28 million Facebook users. Egypt constitutes for about a quarter of total Facebook users in the Arab region, and has added over 1.6 million just in the first six months of 2012. Twitter has also made its mark in the Arab region, with its membership at 2,099,706 at the end of June 2012. The estimated number of daily tweets in the Arab region is over 5 million tweets per day, just under 4,000 per minute and 67 tweets every second. Both Facebook and Twitter have shown strong growth in numbers of Arabic users and content posted in Arabic, indicating that these tools are being adopted by broader segments of society and not just with those with a specific level of education and knowledge in

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64 Ibid., 14.
These numbers are quite significant and must be understood when examining the role of social media in during the Arab Spring.

In order to fully understand the role of social media tools in the recent events of the Arab Spring, specifically in Tunisia and Egypt, a cross section of reports was analyzed, from Twitter analytics to news articles and academic journals. The following sections of this chapter will examine the historical events that took place in Tunisia and Egypt during the start of the Arab Spring. Both website statistics from primary sources as well as scholarly secondary sources will be used to study the influence social media played during these revolutions. The statistics and many of the scholars agree and support that the Internet and specifically social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) and SMS text message technology all played a role in these revolutions, however this chapter pulls from this to argue this specific chapter’s hypothesis. This chapter will pin point three key forms of influence as a result of social media: a tool for mass mobilization, a form of unconventional press and an essential tool for generating awareness both domestically and internationally. This chapter will further attempt to prove how social media introduced both speed and interactivity that were previously never possible through traditional media.

*Historical Events:*

During the first months of 2011, the world witnessed a series of events in North Africa and the Middle East, which soon became known as the Arab Spring. Citizens throughout these countries called for an end to corruption, improved living conditions,

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65 Ibid., 24.
democracy and the protection of human rights. Tunisia was the first nation to witness this type of uprisings. In 2008, an American blogger, Ethan Zuckerman started drawing more attention to Tunisia and specifically to the corruption of their leader and President Zine ed Abidine Ben Ali. He disclosed the decades of gross family corruption through videos that mocked the leader. Although corruption was well known by the people of Tunisia, many in the west were unaware of the levels of corruption. Due to WikiLeaks, this quickly became common knowledge.

On December 10, 2010 the police told a young street vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, he could not continue his business unless he paid a bribe that he obviously could not afford. After the government refused to hear his cry, he set himself on fire in a protest. Soon after the protests arose, videos were uploaded onto Facebook, which was one of the only video sharing sites not blocked by the Tunisia government. Also at this time, print and broadcast media were all controlled within Tunisia, so SNS were the only outlets available to spread the word of the uprising. By January 14, 2011 Ben Ali had fled the country, and the world started paying attention to Tunisia. Overwhelming support was expressed by many neighboring Arab nations, and many of them were overwhelmed with the feelings of “if they can do it, we can do it to” regarding their flight for freedom.

At this same time and even dating back to 2007, Egyptians had also been influenced by the spread of social media and saw its power as a tool for protests. In 2007, an activist Ahmed Maher noticed that a Facebook page for an Egyptian football


team had attracted 45,000 “fans” and was curious to see if a political movement could be formed through this new social network. In March of the following year, Maher and his colleague Israa Abdel-Fattah created a page they called “April 6 Youth” which supported an industrial strike. Within three weeks, this Facebook page attracted over 70,000 members. 68 This strike, turned to protest not only got Mubarak’s attention, but also greatly embarrassed his regime. Although the April 6 Youth group tried to continue to foster more protest, police began heavily monitoring the group’s online activity and thwarted their activities before they could reach full fruition.

A few years later in June 2010, Khaled Said, an Egyptian blogger, was dragged out of a cyber café and beaten to death by police. The café owner gave full details of this terrifying murder in a taped interview, which was quickly uploaded to the Internet. 69 Within a week of the murder, Issandr El Amrani posted the details on an international blog site, Global Voices Advocacy. From this blog, a Google executive created a Facebook page, “We are All Khaled Said” which attracted over 350,000 members before January 2011.

Methodology:

This chapter will answer the research question, how did social media and phone messaging (SMS) technology influence the Egyptian Revolution and the Tunisian Revolution. This case study provides an opportunity to examine how a revolution develops and is directed with these new technologies. This type of examination thus


highlights the specific ways in which the Internet facilitates revolutions. A content analysis will be conducted by using highly regarded sources on the topic of the social media and the events of the Arab Spring in the MENA region. Prominent authors, Clay Shirky, Nicholas Kristof, Elizabeth Iksander and E.B. Boyd as well as others will be referenced.

**Findings:**

This chapter will further examine how the events of both the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions were impacted due to the usage of the Internet and social media. In order to understand the influence made by the Internet, social media and SMS phone messaging technologies it is crucial to understand the statistics of usage and users of the region during the time of the revolutions and the significance and increase seen in these technologies during this time.

It has been found that through the Internet and specifically social media and SMS phone message technology that the opposition parties gained a great mass mobilization tool enabling them to change the traditional trajectory of mobilization among their supporters, a new form of alternative media allowing them to voice their grievances beyond the censorship of their own governments, and empowered them to share their stories, pictures and videos across borders influencing and encouraging others across the globe to join their cause. This chapter will further attempt to prove how social media accelerated the events in Egypt, allowing for the oppositionists to over throw their leader Hosni Mubarak in a mere seventeen days.
Increase of Internet and Social Media

According to the Arab Social Media Report, February 2010 was the first time Egyptians used Facebook during a presidential campaign. Later in December 2010 Tunisians used social media for their primary source of coverage of the Tunisian revolutionary events. These two examples are just a few of the highlights of social media usage in 2010. It is also imperative to understand the significant growth in the Internet usage in the Arab region and specifically in Egypt. In Figure 4 below, one can see the substantial growth in Internet usage to population growth spanning from 2000 to 2012. The largest jump can be seen from 2009 to 2012 during the events of the Egyptian revolution. In regards to social media specifically, Egyptians made up approximately 22% of Facebook users in the Arab region, constituting to 4.7 million users during 2010.

Figure 4: Internet Usage and Population Growth in Egypt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>USERS</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>% Pen.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>66,303,000</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,100,000</td>
<td>71,236,631</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10,532,400</td>
<td>81,713,517</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>12,568,900</td>
<td>78,866,635</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>29,809,724</td>
<td>83,688,164</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Social Media as a tool for mass mobilization:

Mass mobilization is defined as a process that engages and motivates a wide range of partners and allies at national and local levels to raise awareness of and demand for a particular cause. It also can be referred to or known as social or popular mobilization, meaning the mobilization of a civilian population as a part of contentious politics. Due to government-imposed fear and censorship among mass media, the Internet has allowed for a new trajectory for mobilization. Whereas before citizens could speak freely of their views to one another and even on mass media, as the corruption in the Arab region increased their fear and their means to communicate became highly diluted. The Internet, and especially at this time social media, gave the opposition a new tool of mobilization.

The trajectory of mass mobilization also greatly changed during this time due to the Internet. Whereas even before censorship when Egyptians could use traditional media for mobilization, they were only able to do so on particular levels. The distribution of pamphlets, brochures and faxes limited the communication in a very one-dimensional way. Information could be shared but there was little to no interactivity among this mobilization. The Internet and specifically social media allowed the oppositionists not only to share information but they were also able to instantly communicate to one another. In regards to mobilization for protests and demonstration, this allowed for communication even when things changed last minute.

As protests and movements in both Tunisia and Egypt gained strength in early 2011, many from both countries began to exchange and disseminate information to one
another. They exchanged information, ideas and words of encouragement through social media. During both revolutions, Egyptians and Tunisians were using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and personal blog posts to send updates and upload pictures of the events. This exchange among oppositionists - in Egypt and Tunisia - gave a new form of hope and encouragement to one another, as they were able to share their struggles and successes simultaneously. An Egyptian female activists and blogger, Nawara Negm, posted information and cell phone numbers urging Egyptians to send text messages to encourage Tunisians during their protests.

On January 21, 2011 Negm posted an entry titled “Be noble and demonstrate on January 25.” This was a call for her fellow Egyptians to join the protests on the “Day of Anger” January 25; quickly the calls for protest and revolt from the people of Egypt spread throughout all facets of social media. Twitter’s hashtag #jan25 and #Egypt became viral and Facebook pages, blog posts and YouTube videos were all used to spread organizational and safety information. The #jan25 hashtag during the day of the protest was used in more then 25 unique tweets per minute. These tweets provided protestors with critical information ranging from warnings of tear gas to locations of where free food was being passed out to protestors, but some of the most significant tweets were those directed toward the international community.

As recent history depicts, the Egyptian protests were quite successful from the “Day of Anger” (January 25) followed by “Day of Rage” concluding into the “March of


75 Eltantawy and Wiest. “Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution” 1216.
Millions” (February 1) all-resulting in the forced departure of President Hosni Mubarak.  

Although these revolutions were not created nor solely successful due to social media, their factors allowed for greater mobilization, greater engagement and many argue the speed of these movements was only possible due to the instant communication capabilities of the Internet.

Social networking sites can serve as a tool for mass mobilization. Mentioned above, tweets were used not only to advertise where and when protests would take place, but they were also used to inform one another of safe havens and where to access key necessities during these extreme times. In respect to Facebook, Ahmed Maher’s page was an essential player to not only initiating the social media dialogue in Egypt, but it served as a key mobilization tool for people to come together under one cause. The social networking sites of Facebook and Twitter allowed for people for the first time to organize and express themselves on issues that were hidden behind closed doors for so many years.

Social Media as an Unconventional Press:

Social media has also allowed for a new sense of freedom of expression for millions whom live in governments where these freedoms are still illegal or constrained. Throughout many parts of the Middle East, as well as other parts of the world, freedom of expression is not available to their citizens. Traditionally, limiting communications has been justified by the potential negative impact its content could have on the nation’s security; however, in reality governments crack down on communications because they

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fear the negative impact on watchdog-journalism and opposition on their own positions of power. 77 In the past, these limitations resulted in many disgruntled citizens to be forced to keep quiet; however thanks to social media, this all changed. For the first time, regular citizens were allowed and enabled to report real-time stories not only among their friends but also to the world.

During the stretches of the revolutions, Al Jazeera relied heavily on reputable bloggers and Twitter for up-to-date stories that previously could have never been heard inside these monitored and inhibited areas. 78 Al Jazeera used a strategy to identify key bloggers before protests broke out, informed by the situation in other areas, to act as citizen reporters. At this time, Al Jazeera established a citizen media platform called: Sharek, which during its peak was receiving up to 1,600 videos per day. 79 Although this type of journalism can have its accuracy problems, it was vital for citizens to be able to report and send in their own videos to large news and media agencies. This also allowed for those directly involved in the protests and revolutions to shape their own narrative.

Social Media as Promoting Awareness across Borders:

Another vital trait of social networking sites is its ability to generate awareness both domestically and internationally. Not only do Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and personal blogs allow people to voice their own thoughts and opinions, but it allows them to do this on a global scale. This is extremely critical when your own government does


79 “Al Jazeera’s Early Start Reporting Revolutions”
not give you this freedom. Even though many citizens were unhappy and shared these common feelings among neighbors, this was as far as these thoughts and feelings of discontent were heard. The Internet and SNS allowed for them to be heard around the world in real time, especially as millions came together under the same critical causes. Egyptian protestors were able to disseminate a continuous stream of texts, videos and images from the streets of the revolution directly to millions both in the Middle East and around the globe through social media technologies, many becoming headline news stories on global networks of Al Jazeera and CNN. 80

The United States initially found itself in a difficult situation as the protests and activities of the Egyptian revolution began. The United States, since its existence, has always fallen on the side of freedom and self-determination and encourages those ideologies not just at home but throughout the world whenever possible. However, Egypt at this time and for many years prior has been one of the United States closest allies in the Middle East. 81 In order not to intensify instability in this region, the United States’ position had been in favor of the authority power.

However, during the revolution in January 2011, Americans were inundated with information through the media (primarily from social media such as: Twitter, YouTube and Facebook). Live videos, pictures and real-time stories began taking over not only the media in the region but in the West, specifically in the United States. Whereas before the Internet and social media these pictures and videos and stories would have never been

80 Eltantawy and Wiest. “Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution” 1218.

seen or heard beyond their cities and towns, these events were now seen and heard by millions. This exposure brought immediate pressure to Washington and the other western allies forcing them not only to acknowledge the events in Egypt but to act on them and in favor with the people rather than the government. As the information continued to stream in, the United States was forced to shift its position from the support of Mobarak, to the support of the people of Egypt and to the revolution.\textsuperscript{82} Social media technologies can be seen as extremely important and instrumental in their capabilities to communicate messages to massive global audiences allowing for collective action and social change.\textsuperscript{83}

*Social Media enhancing the speed of events and spontaneity*

There is no doubt the Egyptian revolution for the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak happened extremely quickly. The first official mass protest of the revolution began on January 25, 2011 with the “day of rage” and within only 17 days on February 11, 2011 Hosni Mubarak resigned as president handing over power to the army. The speed of these events has been attributed to the Internet in its role of mass mobilization. As previously stated, social media sites were used as protest and event information outlets to inform the opposition on when and where the next demonstration would happen. It also allowed for consistent news feed to stream from the actual ground to anyone whom had Internet access across the globe. These two factors increased the numbers of protestors in the square as well as increased the pressure on powerful western countries to act against

\textsuperscript{82} “How Social Media Accelerated the Uprising in Egypt.”

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 1218.
the regime and for the people. Both were fundamental to the success of the overthrow of Mubarak.

**Further Recommendations:**

After reviewing the identifiable trends in social media that impacted the recent revolutions in the Middle East, this chapter will now propose a few recommendations. The first recommendation is specific to the United States. The United States, as an international leader, must impose the international community to take a greater stand for a stronger and more transparent media. An independent and transparent media is essential for a democratic society. The United States must look past its foreign policy position with these particular governments and take a deeper look inside the country and to the real issues the people are facing. Diplomacy means to go further than the media and to be present on the ground to respect the voices of the citizen, especially in those countries suffering for the harshest of human rights violations.

Secondly, it is important to evaluate the current situations of the region, after the uprisings. The process of political and social change is long and challenging, and there is still much to be seen in how Egypt will define its new democratic nation. In the last year, the youthful protestors with so much hope for change have continued to see much divide in the nation; with their first parliamentary elections resulting in the lead of the two most prominent Islamists parties. This fail to establish a cohesive political party is only the beginning in Egypt’s long and challenging transformation into a democratic nation.\(^4\)

Through continued civil unrest, social networking sites will continue to be a journalistic outlet for these people. As much as it is important for social media to be used as a role to influence those outside of the impacted country, it is important moving forward to capitalize on the newly acknowledged ability of the Internet to affect events inside the countries by facilitating the free flow of information.\footnote{Elizabeth Iksander, “Connecting the National and the Virtual: Can Facebook Activism Remain Relevant After Egypt’s January 25 Uprising?” International Journal of Communication 5 (2011): 1235.} In this regard, one of the most critical roles social media should play is not to replace traditional media, but to ensure the transparency in traditional media and to discourage state propaganda.\footnote{Iksander, Connecting the National and the Virtual: Can Facebook Activism Remain Relevant After Egypt’s January 25 Uprising?” 1235.}

A further study of the use social media in Egypt could investigate the role of social networking in newly established political parties and social societies after an uprising, and the people’s influence in this new democratic nation.\footnote{Madeline Storck. “The Role of Social Media in Political Mobilisation: a Case study of the January 2011 Uprising,” (2011): 41.}

Conclusion:

This chapter has examined the role the Internet, social media and SNS phone messaging technology played during the recent revolutions in the Arab region, specifically those in Tunisia and Egypt. Though there is variety of opinions on it’s specific level of influence, it is has been argued that social media played a recognizable role in serving as a mass mobilization tool, an alterative media platform and as an essential tool in generating awareness to both the regional and international communities as well as accelerating the speed of events. Social media not only helped mobilize
individuals during the protests, social media also awakened many in the West to the trials that had been burdening those in the Middle East for so many years. The Internet and social media also allowed, for the first time ever, a new level of exchange among communication, allowing not only for information to be shared but for it to be an interaction consisting of instant back and forth communication. In this way the Internet provided a completely new trajectory for mobilization, which was found to be extremely successful in these revolutions.

It is important to remember in any analysis of the Internet and specifically of social media, in its role to political activism, that throughout history there has always been key individuals whom been played significant roles in revolutions and change. To this factor, this chapter argues the importance not to over-credit social media’s role in the success of these events. Without the driving forces of the economic, political and social injustices of the nation and those whom are willing to say enough is enough, and to sacrifice everything for change, there would be no Philippine, Tunisian or Egyptian revolution.
Chapter Three: Iranian Revolution

Introduction:

In February 1979, the world witnessed the first successful modern, religiously led revolution. This revolution was known as the Iranian or Islamic Revolution and it was the first time clerics led Islamic regime replaced its Western-oriented monarchy. Due to its unique circumstances, this revolution is key in the study of revolutions.

Revolutions, defined by author Mohsen Milani, are a rapid, fundamental change in social structures as well as in a state’s personnel, institutions, and foundation of its legitimacy, accomplished from outside the legal channels and accompanied in part by a movement from below.

Unlike the two revolutions mentioned in the previous chapters, the Iranian Revolution was not motivated by success of modernization or democracy, but rather for a restoration of Islamic traditions and customs. Whereas many revolutions, such as those of the French, Chinese and Russian revolutions were future oriented, the Iranian Revolution has been past oriented, aspiring to reconstruct a society that existed during the rule of Prophet Mohammad and Imam Ali in the seventh century. This revolution took place in a time prior to the advent of the Internet and other new technologies, which are highlighted by their impact in the other previous chapters. One may question, if the overall thesis is the qualitative relevance of information communication technologies, specifically from the Internet, than why would this chapter be focused on a revolution.

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90 Milani, The Makings of Iran’s Islamic Revolution, 3.
prior to the Internet? Because the Iranian Revolution took place prior to the invention of the Internet, this chapter can be seen as counter example to the others. However this chapter will test the influential factors of the Internet in the Egyptian and Ukrainian revolutions with the factors and events of the Iranian revolution to compare historical events and hypothetical constructs that could have happened or didn’t happen due to the absence of the Internet. In order to thoroughly examine the parameters of influence of the Internet, it is critical to study a revolution prior to the Internet’s existence to see how the functions, later performed by the Internet, were managed. This chapter will attempt to prove how existing networks – that were nonexistent during the more recent revolutions - enabled strong mobilization and engagement during the Iranian Revolution. It will also argue that the Iranian revolution did significantly lack in comparison to the speed of events, alternative media and global reach.

Scholars and authors alike have written much on the Iranian revolution, it can even be argued this revolution is highly researched and studied due to its significance not only as a social revolution but one that was unlike many others due to its fight for a return to tradition rather than to modernization. That being said, this chapter leans on secondary sources that are available but also argues those previous studies against new findings in this thesis. This makes this chapter and this thesis an original work by comparing the three revolutions, finding key influential factors through the Internet. This chapter does acknowledge and agree with the arguments of established networks playing a significant role in mobilization and engagement during the revolution.

The Iranian Revolution was not only the first of its kind, it was also very unusual and in many ways perceived as an unimaginable event. Author and scholar Kurzman
even titled his book “The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran.”\textsuperscript{91} He states how Iran, just a year prior to the revolution, was seen as a stable regime, led by a monarch with decades of experience, 2,500 year-old dynasty, billions in oil exports and the largest military in the region. In 1978, just a year before the revolution, President Jimmy Carter stated that Iran was an “island of stability and tranquility” in a troubled region.\textsuperscript{92} One may question how could this regime fall in such a short time frame with an opposition leader exiled from Iran during the most critical events of the revolution.\textsuperscript{93} Although it may appear unlikely, it can be uncovered by studying the political, cultural, economic and military aspects during this time that led to extreme discontent and disarray of the Iranian people. The Iranian revolution was very much like a late-twentieth century product, the result of various kinds of uneven development. Iranians suffered from an identity crisis created by the process of cultural westernization and a need to hold on to their religious traditions.\textsuperscript{94}

As discussed in the first two chapters, both the Hungarian and Egyptian revolutions were also very unique and were the first of their kinds in many ways. Each of these revolutions involved generally non-violent protests and demonstrations by unlikely opposition parties. Each also involved diverse opposition groups consisting of students as well as those both highly educated and those less fortunate. Due to the speed and


\textsuperscript{92} Milani, \textit{The Makings of Iran’s Islamic Revolution}, Introduction.

\textsuperscript{93} Kurzman, \textit{The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran}, 1.

spontaneity of the events, each revolution also held a high sense of surprise to both their regime’s leaders and to other world leaders.

As previously stated in the first two chapters, the Internet did not cause either revolution - Ukrainian Orange Revolution or the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 - nevertheless according to my research the Internet did play a significant role in the following areas: providing an alternative media, delivering broader universal reach, increasing spontaneity in events and creating a mobilization tool. This chapter will first provide the reader with key historical background of Iran and then further unravel the grievances felt by the Iranian people during the years prior to the revolution. Secondly, it will then take the key findings from the previous chapters and test them against what happened during the Iranian revolution by the absence of the Internet to see how they either still succeeded in these areas or fell short due to the lack of this impactful information communication technology.

Historical Background

The Iranian revolution must be understood from a microscopic and historically grounded perspective, one that examines the interrelation between state, society and organized politics, within an international political and economic context. Iran is not only strategically located in the Middle East where most of the world’s Muslims reside, it is the only country that is occupied with 90% Shi’a Muslims. No other country has

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nearly as high of a population, and dates back to 1500s when Shi’ā Muslim became the state religion of Iran.\textsuperscript{96}

Beyond religion, one must also understand the role of the Shah of Iran. Like rulers of the old regimes in France, Russia and China, the Shah was an “absolute monarch.” In many senses, he was even more powerful than prior monarchs, due to his accessibility to a modernized army and a ruthless and secret police force, known as the SAVAK. A modern Iranian state emerged in 1920 after Reza Kahn, a colonel, seized power in a coup and expanded his army to unify the country.\textsuperscript{97} During the late 1920s and 1930s, Reza Shah, influenced by Turkish contemporary Mustafa Kemal, focused on modernization and the creation of a strong centralized government.\textsuperscript{98} Although Reza Shah paid tribute to Islam, a number of his policies progressively alienated many of the religious scholars. These traditionalists lost much of their power and wealth as modern secular courts, lawyers, judges and teachers replaced them. This is seen as the first modern regime offense towards the traditionalist Shi’a Muslim customs in Iran.

Iran adopted its official country name originally from Persia in 1935. In 1941, the Shah of Iran, due to the Anglo-Russian occupation in WWII, was deposed in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Shah Pahlavi ruled over Iran until he was overthrown after the Iranian Revolution; he reigned for 37 years.

After WWII and the overthrow of the nationalist Mosaddeq regime in 1953, the situation in Iran greatly changed with the strong support of both the United States and


\textsuperscript{97} Skocpol, “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution” 268-269.

Britain. During this time, the United States, due to concerns over Russia and strong economic and business interests with Iran, gave significant funds to Iran.\textsuperscript{99} During the 1960s and 1970s, domestic underpinnings of the Iranian state changed as the state became increasingly addicted to revenues from exports of oil and natural gas.\textsuperscript{100} By the mid-1960s, the state did not need to collect taxes from its own people, due to their strong economy and industry exports. This created a disconnect between the state and its people. The Iranian state bought off their own people, rearranged their lives, and repressed any dissidents among them.\textsuperscript{101}

During the early 1960s, the Shah embarked on a campaign to modernize and westernize Iran. He launched the “White Revolution,” a program of land reform and social and economic modernization. However, during the Shah’s reign, a key anti-government spokesperson emerged, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The June Uprising of 1963 led to the exile of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1965. Some historians like to call this uprising of 1963 a dress rehearsal for the actual revolution.\textsuperscript{102} Khomeini strongly argued against the Shah’s new campaign and his close ties with the United States. He viewed these as a direct threat to Islam.\textsuperscript{103} The crucial issues Khomeini fought against during this new modernization program led by the Shah were dictatorship, subservience to the United States and positive relations with Israel. Khomeini attacked the United States


\textsuperscript{100} Skocpol, “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution”, 269.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 269.

\textsuperscript{102} Milani, The Makings of Iran’s Islamic Revolution, 4.

\textsuperscript{103} Esposito, The Iranian Revolution, 21.
control over Iran and denounced America as an enemy to Islam, partly due to their strong ties with Israel.\textsuperscript{104}

Although he was exiled, Khomeini continued to preach to students and pilgrims that the Shah was an agent of anti-Islamic foreign imperialism, and he called on all educated Shi’a Muslims to assert their right to lead “the Islamic community” in direct opposition to such “unjust authority.” Khomeini’s appeal and message gained robust significance among students in Qum, Iran and spread throughout much of urban Iran via the networks of religious leaders.\textsuperscript{105}

In January 1978, reportedly at the instigation of the Shah, an article was released in a popular newspaper, violently attacking and slandering Khomeini. The article was entitled “Iran and Red and Black Colonization” and signed with an alias.\textsuperscript{106} Among its personal attacks towards Khomeini, it ended with the strong suggestion that Khomeini was receiving large sums of money from the English to encourage and extend his fight against the Shah. Due to the subsequent tumult, this was seen as a miscalculated step by the regime. Rather than Iranians turning their support away from Khomeini; a day later, theological students in Qom staged a massive protest that brought violent confrontations and at least seventy deaths. This article and protest by students in Qom in January 1978 is seen as a key turning point in the events leading to the revolution.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{104} Keddie, \textit{Modern Iran}, 146-147.

\textsuperscript{105} Skocpol, “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution”, 274.

\textsuperscript{106} Keddie, \textit{Modern Iran}, 225.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 225.
Grievances in Iran leading up to the Revolution:

Politics:

In the early 1960s, the Shah stated the majority of Iranian’s were illiterate and not ready for western concepts of democracy. However only years later, and at an accelerated pace during the 1970s, Iranian society underwent land reform, massive migrations from the countryside to the cities, rapid industrialization, and a sudden expansion of modern primary, secondary and university education. This campaign of modernization led by the Shah was seen by many as an excessively rapid transformation. Urban Iran grew to almost 50% of the entire state’s population; all urban strata relied heavily on privileges, employments and services on escalating state expenditures. Rather than promoting these ideals and allowing them time to resonate with society, the Shah, along with his regime, pressed them through without external thought. Being a monarch, the Shah’s word was final, without questioning. Although not uncustomary, the Iranians felt violated and coerced.

As stated previously, after WWII and for many years following, the United States allied with Iran, mainly on reasons involving western business interests and the Anglo-American desire to use Iran strategically in the Gulf against Russia and possible trouble with bordering radical Muslim neighbors. This allowed for large funds and armed sales to Iran for strengthening their military and hence aligning with a dictator.

Later in the 1970s, United States President Jimmy Carter launched a strong international human rights campaign. This campaign concerned the Shah, although historically one can note the reciprocal visits the Shah and President Carter made in late

\[108\] Skocpol, “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution”, 267

\[109\] Skocpol, “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution”, 269.
1977. These visits were strongly grounded on an oil agreement rather than human rights, but many argue the agreement was signed by the Shah in order for the United States to overlook the human rights violations in Iran. Occasionally the Shah was asked human-rights questions; they pertained more to torture and arrests, rather than of liberalization and civil-rights. However it is noted by diplomats and policy makers at this time that this campaign did not put any significant pressure on the Shah.\textsuperscript{110} It can also be noted that neither the United States government nor major American business interests wanted to see any fundamental change in Iran’s orientation.\textsuperscript{111}

\textit{Cultural:}

As previously stated, almost 90\% of Iranians are Shi’a Muslims and no other country has nearly as high of a proportion. This uniqueness has been cited in the cultural explanations of the Iranian Revolution. Shi’as became associated with revolutionary zeal both with the Soviets and Western observers stating that Shi’a Islam is “well suited” for protest movements due to their ideologies.\textsuperscript{112} The objective of the advancement and spread of revolutionary Islam was rooted in the Koran’s mandate to Muslims to realize and circulate God’s message throughout the world.\textsuperscript{113} The Iranian revolution occurred at a favorable time in an opportune historical context. In the 1960s and 1970s, much of the Muslim world experienced a resurgence of faith. Greater attention to religious

\textsuperscript{110} Keddie, \textit{Modern Iran}, 214-215.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 165.

\textsuperscript{112} Kurzman, \textit{The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran}, 53.

\textsuperscript{113} Esposito, \textit{The Iranian Revolution}, 30.
observances such as prayer, fasting and family values, accompanied by a deeper confirmation of Islam in state and society, was highly regarded at this time.\textsuperscript{114}

Shi’a clergy during the 1960s and 1970s felt personally attacked by the Shah during his modernization program. Author Keddie described the grievances of the religious opposition as, “westernization seemed inextricably tied to a decline in Islamic practices, quite aside from its economic ill effects.”\textsuperscript{115} This westernizing modernization produced a broad base of dissatisfaction not only in Iranian Shi’a Muslims, but also in much of the Middle Eastern Muslim society.\textsuperscript{116} Land reform evicted many individual clerics and religious institutions and cut the clergy’s ties to the landowners. This movement also displaced the Shi’a clergy in many of their historically important social functions in the sectors of education, welfare and legal reforms.\textsuperscript{117} Nevertheless, numerous educated Shi’a Muslims still embodied significant positions. Students followed the politically aggressive and populist brand of Islamic traditionalism.\textsuperscript{118}

\textit{Economic:}

Iran, along with other countries, experienced an economic oil boom, during 1973-1974. During this time, Iran established great economic growth resulting in transformation from a so-called third world country. The (short-term) oil boom created premium profits, rising wages, and employment opportunities while urban Iranians

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 31.

\textsuperscript{115} Keddie, \textit{Modern Iran}, 223.

\textsuperscript{116} Esposito, \textit{The Iranian Revolution}, 31.

\textsuperscript{117} Skocpol, “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution”, 274

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 274
experienced escalating inflation and an influx of foreign skilled workers. By 1975, the world demand for Iranian oil tapered and many oil projects were terminated. Both foreign and state workers quickly found themselves unemployed.\textsuperscript{119} Due to the structure of the government and its divide with the Iranian people, urbanites blamed the state for all of their troubles. New wealth ended abruptly and many scholars argue it was not poverty but rather the taste of wealth, which resulted in such crisis.\textsuperscript{120}

Not surprisingly, income gaps widened throughout the 1960s and 1970s in Iran. The increase was particularly dramatic after 1974, when oil prices rose dramatically. Studies show unprecedented increases in income inequalities for both the rich and poor and for those living in the cities and the countryside. By the late 1970s, there was an extreme economic crisis. Inflation, economic recession, urban overcrowding and glaring income gaps were felt by many Iranians whom were disgruntled by these issues, as well as issues culturally, politically and religiously.\textsuperscript{121}

\textit{Military:}

Iran was recognized for developing and acquiring one of the strongest and largest militaries in the region. However they came to find out their preparation did not adequately train them for the ensuing revolution. Although the Shah controlled massive armed forces and the SAVAK (the Shah’s brutal secret police), these individuals were not

\textsuperscript{119} Skocpol, “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution”, 270.
\textsuperscript{120} Kurzman, \textit{The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran}, 85-87.
\textsuperscript{121} Keddie, \textit{Modern Iran}, 168.
trained for weapon training or crowd control, which resulted in huge calamities for the regime during the numerous protests, demonstrations and strikes.\textsuperscript{122}

During the winter of 1978, protests and strikes were erupting throughout the country. The state revenues were threatened by the oil workers’ walkout that led to even further economic problems.\textsuperscript{123} During this time, students from Tehran University became unsettled; and on November 5, 1978, they stormed out of their fenced in university and onto the streets of Tehran, sacking and burning dozens of compounds. This incident resulted in the Shah immediately dismissing the civilian prime minister and appointing a military government.\textsuperscript{124} Subsequently, the military flooded the streets with armored vehicles to dismiss protesters. At this time, the military control also curtailed foreign media coverage. Although this halted the violence, the revolutionary regime mounted momentum.

During the fall and winter months of 1978, there were too many protests to arrest. At this point, the military began to question their own future.\textsuperscript{125} The opposition directed intense and repetitive entreaties to military personnel to desert the regime and join their forces. Although the effectiveness of this pressure was unclear, many military men requested furloughs and early retirement during this time. Due to the large number of opposition and the depleting military; the Shah felt he was losing control over his country. The once exceedingly resilient Iranian military broke down severely during the years and months before the revolution.

\textsuperscript{122} Keddie, \textit{Modern Iran}, 237.

\textsuperscript{123} Kurzman, \textit{The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran}, 105.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 105.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 114-115.
It is critical to identify the political, cultural, economic and military grievances that occurred during the years leading up to this revolution. Similarly to the revolutions described in the previous chapters, problems and discontent do not lead to absolute success of a revolution; many other factors are involved, such as the power of the opposition, the success of mobilization and the production of outside communications that can be heard around the world, in order to insure and elevate the people’s concerns past their corrupt leaders. Next, this chapter will review those key findings of influence from the Internet found in the previous two chapters and identify how the Iranian opposition was able to still find success in their revolution with its absence.

Methodology:

This chapter will answer the research question, how did the events of Iranian revolution compare to those events in more recent revolutions by testing three key findings of the Internet’s impact. This chapter can be viewed as a counter example to the previous two chapters. This case study provides an opportunity to examine how a revolution develops and is directed in the absence of the Internet. This type of examination thus highlights the specific ways in which the Internet facilitates revolutions. A content analysis will be conducted by using highly regarded sources on the topic of the Iranian Revolution and the key findings from my previous two essays. Prominent authors, Charles Kurzman, Nikki Keddie, John Esposito among others will be referenced.

Findings:

Even though the opposition party during the Iranian revolution did not have access to the Internet, there was a strong core collectiveness among the opposition thanks
to established networks and fearless leaders, religious calendars and practices. The liberalization of the state and the United States human rights policy, perceived by the Iranians as the weakening of the support between Washington and the Shah, gave the opposition a new lease on life and psychological boost to mobilize the population against the regime.\(^{126}\) The success of the opposition can be viewed as a result of a dependence on Islamic traditions and customs, rather than reliance on modernized technology. Religious resurgence and overall discontent with the Shah were instigating factors, as well as the embodiment of true sacrifice seen by many of the oppositionists. However comparing the events and timeline to the revolutions in the first two chapters, one can hypothesize different outcomes if the Iranian Revolution had at its disposal, the Internet. One can further see how the Iranian revolution did have a slower timeline than the Ukrainian and Egyptian revolutions, as well as it lacked any sort of real alternative media. Additionally, the opposition was able to formulate a broader reach to the outside world, enabling them to engage and share their grievances globally gaining them more support.

*Alternative media*

Iran, much like the other countries investigated for this thesis, has been abridged by a freedom of speech. The Shah was the ultimate decision maker, resulting in the purest form of dictatorship ensuing extremely limited rights for Iranians. Although the Shah developed a strong campaign for western modernization; the changes towards so-called new freedoms were disfranchised from real freedoms for his citizens. These new programs coerced citizens to abandon their will, and cultural and historical traditions to

follow the Shah’s ultimate dictatorship. To fuel rebellion, repression itself became a mobilizing force. The opposition circulated hoax audiocassettes with an indistinct voice resembling the Shah’s mandate to shoot demonstrators in the streets. Oppositionists hoped these tapes would enrage others to join rather than to fear the Shah. Audiocassettes were also used by Khomeini, described later, as another way of alternative media.

Due to the Shah’s tight control over the state, Iranians feared any type of expression toward the regime. However, hope was restored after the introduction of President Carter’s human rights campaign, where he energetically promoted international human rights. This promotion of freedoms gave Iranians a perceived view that the ties between the Shah and Washington would weaken due to the current violations they were experiencing. The opposition was also encouraged by this campaign to openly circulate letters and petitions about their current human rights violations enforced by the regime. These letters were a vehicle for greater freedoms and a hope to not be as severely repressed as before.¹²⁷ Through interviews and statements, professionals and intellectuals were determined to utilize the American human-rights policy to wedge an opening to express and document grievances, hoping for some kind of governmental change. It is also important to note that these papers were written not by the radical or extremists but by moderates.

Further, due to this newfound courage, a series of poetry readings with political content at the Irano-German Institute in Tehran in October of 1977 attracted unprecedented crowds and began virtual oppositionist demonstrations. Again it is

¹²⁷ Keddie, Modern Iran, 214.
important to note that although the Carter campaign did encourage letter writing, these documents were never circulated but passed from hand to hand. Due to the Shah’s regulations, they were banned from the press.\textsuperscript{128}

Beyond the spread of letters, speeches and other written documents, the opposition was able to use audiocassette tapes of Ayatollah Khomeini speaking about the revolution. These tapes, like many of the radical letters, had to be shared secretly, but they have been noted as playing a key role in the movement’s mass mobilization. These tapes were coveted with great significance and empowered those listening to not only continue to fight but emphasized the importance of unarmed resistance and noncooperation. It is noted in one of Khomeini’s speeches, “The clenched fists of freedom fighters can crush the tanks and guns of the oppressors.” It was imperative for the opposition to fight for their religious freedoms and to not give into violence. However, one must note violent attacks were present during these times but they were few, unorganized and spontaneous.\textsuperscript{129} It is also interesting to note the use of audiocassettes as a media tool.

The viral spread of letters, cassettes, and poetry were all tools to attack the lack of freedoms of expression seen in Iran. The creativity seen by the educated professionals in their letter writings to the west in regards to the human rights violations, as well as the unrivaled leadership of Khomeini even during exile, were two key factors for the success of voicing the opposition. However, in comparison to the Internet’s capabilities, both the written documents and tapes used during the Iranian Revolution significantly fell short of

\textsuperscript{128} Keddie, \textit{Modern Iran}, 216.

the proficiencies of the Internet as alternative media. During the more recent revolutions, the Internet lowered the cost of self-production to zero, allowing more voices (of the opposition) outside the mainstream media to be heard. It also allowed for any person to be an author and publisher, rather than the limited scholars and leaders whom spoke and wrote during the Iranian revolution.

*Global Reach*

An important part of any revolution is the opposition’s ability to inform not only those in their country but also to voice their grievances to the entire world, especially to those in countries with more power and influence. Iranians knew this was true and understood the important role it would play in the success of the revolution. However, due to limits and censorships on their media, this was no easy task.

In the 1970s, an astounding number of Iranian students were studying abroad. It is noted over a hundred thousand were abroad in universities, many of whom strongly opposed the Iranian government. Many students formed and participated in student associations (that also participated in political opposition activities) in their respected universities. Through their propaganda, foreign Iranian students were among the first to awaken the West to the brutalities taking place in Iran by the Shah and SAVAK. The publicity of foreign students helped enlist Western support for violations against human rights.\(^{130}\)

Although the demonstrations, protests and strikes continued to increase throughout 1978, it wasn’t until late fall when the United States acknowledged the possibility of the regime’s fall. Until this point, American policy makers, both in

Washington and Tehran, convinced by their limited Iranian contacts and reliance on Iranian officials, thought the Shah and his regime would remain in power. This in itself demonstrates the convoluted communication between the United States and Iranians. It almost seems impossible, through the diplomatic trips by both presidents and the hundreds of thousands of students studying around the world, that more of an outcry would have reached America. However without legitimate freedom of expression, the voices of the opposition were silenced by the Shah and his regime.

In comparison to the other revolutions mentioned in previous chapters that were influenced by the Internet, one can clearly see a restricted global impact for Iranians. Prior to the invention of the Internet and with regime-controlled mass media, the opposition party was forced to stay silent on the world screen. There was no alternative media or global space to project their voices and grievances. Seen in other revolutions, specifically that of the Ukrainian revolution, the Internet was able to expose the corruption of the leadership to the masses. This tool of exposing corruption would have been extremely valuable during the Iranian revolution, especially as the western diplomacy, leading up and during the revolution, was tainted by profits of oil sales and other business endeavors rather than recognizing the corruption of the Shah.

**Spontaneity**

Unlike the diversity seen in the populations in more recent revolutions, the outstanding factor in the Iranian Revolution was the networks that were pre-established before any disarray erupted in the state. As previously mentioned, the networks of the Shi’ā Muslims played a significant role in mobilizing the events leading up and during
the revolution. Even years before the revolution, Khomeini used the networks of the educated Shi’a Muslims and the clergy to spread his teachings on the Shah’s anti-Islamic foreign imperialism. These networks became crucial to orchestrating and sustaining widespread popular resistance.\textsuperscript{131}

After a failed attempt in protests in the early 1960s, Khomeini, along with his followers accepted that this was not the right time for revolution in Iran. However rather than giving up their dreams of Islamic revolution, they founded Islamists schools, established publishing houses, printed journals and issued thousands of photocopied proclamations, all with the intent to raise consciousness among Iranians. Khomeini did not believe in 1970 that this work he had established would impact the near future, but trusted with time and perseverance, change would come at least for the next generation.\textsuperscript{132} Little did he know at that time, that only a mere six to seven years later, radical changes would take place due to these early establishments built in place to collectively mobilize people and information.

Khomeini had this dream and ideology of an Islamic revolution for years, if not decades, before the 1979 revolution. This fact is known by the establishment of key organizations and networks that he along, with his followers, created in the 1960s. They had dreamed of this revolution and had been planning for it years before its creation. This becomes a central fact when comparing the Iranian revolution to the others described in this thesis. Yes, the actual events – protests, strikes and demonstrations- were unforeseen by the regime and outside key leaders; however it had been strongly encouraged years prior due to the resilient desires and visions by Khomeini and his

\textsuperscript{131} Skocpol, “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution,” 274.

\textsuperscript{132} Kurzman, \textit{The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran}, 31.
followers of such a reform. From the research found in this chapter, it may be argued the level of spontaneity found in the Ukrainian Orange and Egyptian revolution was not present as in the Iranian revolution. This key fact may also strengthen the argument that the Internet allowed for more spontaneity in these later revolutions, compared to the need for a established and well-planned revolution to find success prior to it’s availability and invention.

*Mobilization*

This thesis shows that in order to find success in a revolution, especially led by ordinary people, there must be a large number of proponents in order to overthrow or bring large attention to the issue. Mobilization is key to the success in revolutions, and was key within the Iranian Revolution. Thanks to the earlier establishment of organizations and networks by leaders such as Khomeini, many Iranians were aware of the issues and convinced it was one worth fighting for.

Along with the established networks, Iranians also used their religious establishments such as mosques, as a safe haven for mobilization. The Shah’s SAVAK was known to be notorious even prior to the revolution, and to this fact ordinary citizens were under strict control in most if not all-public spaces. They could not speak out publicly against the Shah or his regime without severe punishment; however to the religious rights, mosques acted as a safe haven for much of the opposition, as the SAVAK’s were not welcomed or allowed to interrupt any meetings or ceremonies at these religious houses. Again it can be seen how the opposition wisely used religion for their favor.
Another unique tool used during the Islamic revolution in Iran was the use of the Islamic annual calendar of collective rituals. Forty-day mourning ceremonies are observed by both Sunni and Shi’a Muslims; these periods of time also began to mark protest dates. These ceremonial dates allowed the revolutionary base to grow from its base in Qom to dozens of cites around Islam. This was not only critical for organizational reasons; it also was a brilliant decision by the opposition, as they knew the government would risk massive demonstrations if it outlawed such traditional mourning gatherings during the proper and traditional intervals. These calculated and known dates allowed the opposition to regroup and spread the word orally. It also, ritualistically, brought people together without any argument on date and place due to strict traditions.

It is noteworthy to observe how the Iranian revolution was able to involve historical traditions in order to promote political uprisings and demonstrations, especially as a mobilization tool. When studying newer revolutions, it can be argued that technologies encourage and mobilize their participants. A question could be asked, “Does globalization and new technologies disrupt traditional networks and social calendars?” If so, do these elements of modernization create further disconnect or force new forms of connection? One can see the reliability and dependability by traditional Shi’a Muslims to meet for religious obligations subsequently served to fuel political unrest.

133 Kurzman, The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran, 54.

134 Keddie, Modern Iran, 226.
Conclusion

When studying revolutions, it is imperative to understand the complexity of historical, political, societal and religious factors that interplay to create environmental unrest. In all three chapters, the majority of the people in these countries had been abused by their leader and suffered human rights violations. Many had undergone these violations for generations, but due to their passion and sacrifice as well as unforeseen and remarkable circumstances, they were able to mobilize and revolt. The timing of each revolution was crucial as well as the opposition leadership. However, specifically noted in this thesis, the tools available to enable and/or overcome these violations and lack of freedom were also extremely significant.

The success of the Iranian Revolution can be explained by both internal and external factors. The opposition party, thanks to their fearless leaders, was able to establish strong networks throughout the country as well as other parts of the world primarily in universities; enabling the oppositionists to communicate their concerns and wishes for a return to Islamic tradition. They were also able to collectively mobilize a vast number of Iranians (from many different sectors) for their causes of both a return to religious traditions as well as an end to human rights violations and overthrowing the Shah. In regards to external factors, the opposition party was able to use the fortunate timing of President Carter’s human rights campaign to encourage more Iranians to publically articulate their grievances against the Shah especially in regards to human rights violations. This also led to a perceived view that the ties between the Shah and Washington would weaken due to the current violations they were experiencing, which further motivated the opposition.
Each of these factors played significant roles in the success of this revolution, and not one can supersede over the other due to the complexity of the revolution. It can be concluded by the review of the chapters of this thesis, that technologies do influence revolutions, however, they are only a part of the overall success. The Iranian Revolution occurred prior to the invention of the Internet, so one cannot fully postulate the differences that may have occurred due to its availability. However, due to the key findings found by the influence of the Internet in the other two more recent revolutions, this thesis can argue how the speed of events, the global reach and alternative media form may have been more effective if the Internet had been available during this revolution.

Two major setbacks are present in the Iranian revolution regarding these matters. One is the lack of knowledge and truth available to those outside of the country of Iran. It can be noted that even though Iran and the United States shared great diplomatic relations, the injustices and discontent felt by the Iranians was either hidden or overlooked due to the control of the Shah. Secondly, is the lack of any true alternative media. Although the opposition was able to use some letters, poetry and audiocassettes, these forms of media were limited by not only the unavailability of reproduction but also the limits of those authoring this information and the perimeters of the extent. When a dictator has complete control over the mass media, as seen in all three revolutions, the people are forced into silence unless they are able to find or create a strong alternative.

The Iranian Revolution will continue to be studied among scholars for decades due to the opposition’s remarkable and fascinating ability to overthrow the Pahlavi dynasty, one that had been established for over 2,500 years, in less than two years of direct confrontation. This chapter only skims the surface of the complexity of this
revolution, but it is hoped that the reader will be able to identify its unique factors with those of more recent revolutions. It is not to be assumed one revolution was better or more successful than another but each to its own, and each hugely important to the overall study of revolutions and the influence of both internal and external factors, specifically those of information communication technologies.
Conclusion

The study of revolutions and the factors that are involved in each is extremely important especially as globalization continues to expand and technologies continue to evolve beyond our imaginations and expectations. Technologies continue to save lives, unite people’s ideologies, and take us to places we could never have previously imagined. However they can also tear us further apart by circulating the inequalities that persist in many parts of the world. As the saying goes, once the poor has tasted wealth, it becomes that much more tempting and befalls a hitch when they cannot hold on to it. Food, safety and shelter are the necessities of life, and all humans are deserving of them; however as technologies uncover other “luxuries” of life, this can emphasize inequalities, which can foster dissent among large populations. As globalization increases throughout the world, there is an increased observance of inequalities. It is within our human nature to cry against injustices and to advocate for freedom. These voices have now found a new platform, via the Internet, that transcends borders to global prominence.

Globalization has also altered human networks; whereas before these networks had boundaries and limitations, many if not all of those, have been eliminated by the invention of the Internet. Our networks now expand throughout every corner of the world and have become instant through emails, text messaging and other social media sharing. However due to the expansion of our networks, it can be argued that other more traditional networks have been harmed or have even disappeared. This is an interesting point that is introduced when examining the networks found in the Iranian revolution to those in the more recent revolutions.
In this thesis, several conclusions can be made regarding the level of influence of the Internet had in recent revolutions. In the Ukrainian, Egyptian and other Arab Spring revolutions briefly mentioned, the Internet played a significant role. Most predominantly, the Internet provided an alternative media form for citizens at a time where their voices had been silenced due to their government’s censorship. The Internet’s alternate media form empowered the opposition to share their stories, pictures and videos across borders and oceans uncovering extreme human rights violations to those around the world. This allowed for unprecedented universal reach that influenced not only other caring citizens around the world but also pressured powerful countries to demand change against corrupt leaders and their regimes. This new international reach further encouraged the opposition party in a variety of ways through the encouragement of concerned and caring humans around the globe who for many exposed to these types of violations for the first time.

The Internet can also be argued to have created a faster timeline for the events in these revolutions and an added sense of spontaneity to the events due to the other factors of influence. It can be clearly seen by the timeline of both the Ukrainian and Egyptian revolutions both successfully revolting in less than three weeks. In comparison to the Iranian revolution that took place in over a year, if not longer depending on how one counts the early establishments of networks set up by Khomeini and other Islamic opposition leaders.

The Internet has also provided a great mobilization tool for the opposition, allowing them to communicate where and when protests and other demonstrations would take place as well as encourage a sense of greater community. It can also be argued that the Internet did and continues to change the trajectory of mobilization and how we know
it. Whereas before one was only able to mobilize within certain boundaries, much like the networks, due to the creation of the Internet humans are now able to mobilize and engage with one another without boundaries. This empowers oppositionists to not only mobilize those locally but mobilizes international support.

However, it is important to state the Internet was not the fundamental factor of the revolutions. It played a significant role, where available, but other vital factors ultimately created the opposition and resulted in success. Strong opposition leaders, severe human rights violations, and heavy grievances by the majority of the population, as well as favorable timing, all played significant roles in the success. But with government censorships and regime control, the opposition sought to mobilize their participants and inspire and encourage them to take on the issues of the revolution with alternative publicity.

Censorship brings up another relevant question between this thesis and furthering discussion on information communication technologies and revolutions. Are certain communication and network functions necessary for a successful revolution and is an alternative media necessary? Through the conclusions found in this study, I argue that communication and network functions are necessary because without them there would be little to no way to expose the information about the revolution or cause. In order for a revolution to be successful, it is almost inevitable there be a strong number of people in support; due to the simple fact that in most cases they are trying to over throw the current regime. In order to mobilize large numbers, there must be effective communication and networks available. And due to the increase of government censorship, an alternative media is normally a must. This being said and as more and more oppositionists use the
Internet as their alternative media, governments are becoming smarter and identifying the Internet as an alternative and beginning to block it as well as other more traditional media forms.

As it has been stated, the speed of revolutions has been greatly influenced by the Internet. This influence can be argued both positively and negatively. In a positive light, it allows for change to happen quickly. However, with this quick change, it is potentially making revolutions less permanent due to the time it realistically takes to build a movement capable of change.

It is also important to note a successful revolution does not ensure the wanted change or lasting results for the opposition. In many cases, revolutions bring a glimmer of hope to those whom overthrew the corruption, but without thoughtful and lasting leadership, as well as new regulations and legislation, these changes come and go as quickly as the events of the revolutions themselves. Unfortunately, since the initial writing of this thesis, each revolution described has suffered further setbacks in their country’s fight for democracy and for human rights.

Most recently Ukraine has seen an outbreak in protests due to their government’s decision of dropping plans to forge closer relations with the European Union, which has further spurred a global standoff between Russia and western powers.135 This crisis is arguably stemmed from more than twenty years of weak governance, a lopsided economy, heavy reliance on Russia, and sharp differences between Ukraine’s eastern and western halves. This has deeply impacted all Ukrainians and as well as increased tension between Ukraine the United States and Russia.

Egypt has also unfortunately seen its fair share of continued turmoil after its revolution in 2011. On January 25, 2013, marking the revolutions two-year anniversary, hundreds of thousands of Egyptians gathered in Tahrir Square for a protest against Morsi, the leader that was “fairly” elected after the initial 2011 revolution. Throughout February and March of 2013, massive protests continued throughout the cities of Egypt. On June 30, 2013 millions of Egyptians poured into the streets calling for Morsi to step down on the first anniversary of his election. Eight people were killed in clashes outside the Muslim Brotherhood’s Cairo headquarters. By July 3rd, the military removed Morsi from office, in what is still arguably called a coup by the military.\textsuperscript{136} Since this overthrow of Morsi, Egypt has once again found itself in a state of emergency with no real government or leader in power. Many foresee military leader, Field Marshall Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, taking power. But after months of protests and continued fights, Egypt still currently finds itself as a country with no leader and deep concerns for its future.

Finally, the historical framework after the Iranian revolution in 1979 is by far the most complex. Just months after the revolution, Iranians anger against the US hit an all time high. On November 4, 1979 thousands of young Iranians, many college students, swarmed the US embassy compound in Tehran seizing 66 Americans inside.\textsuperscript{137} This resulted in a 14-month standoff and led to the deaths of eight Americans. The hostages were held for 444 days and were not released until President Reagan took the oath of office in January 20, 1981. Later in 1989, Khomeini, the fearless leader of the revolution


died; however, this did not ease any of the tensions between Iran and the US, at least on the official level. However it can be argued that today the government seems to be more anti-American than their general population. Continued problems surrounding regional, and more specifically nuclear arguments, remain between the United States and Iran.

After studying these three revolutions, it is imperative to identify the limitations of this thesis and to identify the next steps in further research. My recommendations would be to study and examine the numerous events that have taken place since the initial events of these three revolutions studied in the thesis, Ukraine, Egypt and Iran. As briefly discussed above, each country has seen significant changes since their revolutions and each are once again suffering from their own crisis. I would recommend additional studies regarding the specific events that took place immediately after each revolution, to see if the events or lack thereof impacted the long-term effects. I would further recommend comparing those events that took place after each revolution to other revolutions that happened in our recent history that have seen more sustainable results. By comparing the more sustainable results with those that have not found long-term success and/or change, one may be able to hypothesize what generates long-term success in change during and after a revolution.

Another important question that could be further studied is the sharing of personal stories. Does this further uncover extreme human rights violations? And if so, what are the consequences to this? I think an interesting case study would be those events currently taking place in Syria, although the government does have tight control over the media – pictures, videos, and the extreme violations. Can social media disguise and

138 “1979: Iran’s Islamic Revolution”
protect the innocent victimized by acts of violation? How does this influence how the world will and should react and how will the new regime, if successful ensure these violations cease?

In regards to technology and its impact on revolutions, I would recommend further examination of recent revolutions as well as events that have occurred since the technology has existed. This thesis was limited to only two case studies of examination of how the Internet influenced revolutions. To advance this research, I recommend additional studies of revolutions such as, but not limited to, those during the Arab Spring, as well as those recent protests and events in Turkey, Brazil and Venezuela. Regional influence is also important to understand, seen in the recent events of the Arab Spring; many times revolutions in one country can encourage others nearby who may also be suffering and in need of change.

Lastly, I would recommend studies investigating how governments have reacted to the Internet and to expanding technologies. Governments are starting to make more formal laws and greater censorships not only on mass media but also on these alternative means. It may be an interesting point to compare the regulations that China has placed on their media for the past few decades and compare it to other authoritarian governments. Another interesting study may be on the recent events from Turkey, and their bans on social media, specifically on Twitter. As technologies continue to allow for the general public to voice their grievances and concerns, authoritarian governments will most likely continue to try to find ways to block them.
Technology can be and will be used by both sides of a revolution. It can either be seen as violating or protecting—mobilizing or dispersing. Ideologies will be debated and dispersed faster and more globally. Revolutions may never be the same.
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Amy Elizabeth Whiteside

**Education**

John Hopkins University, Washington DC, August 2011- Completing in May 2014
Masters of Global Security Studies

**Bachelor of Science in Advertising,** Concentration in Business, May 2009
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.
Graduated *Magnum Cum Laude* Advertising GPA: 3.80
Study Abroad Program, Santa Reparata International School of Art (SRISA), Florence, Italy- Summer 2007

**Experience**

*Embassy of the State of Qatar*  
**Government Affairs Coordinator, May 2012- Present**
- Research and conduct bi-weekly Congressional reports on committee hearings, political polling, foreign and domestic nominations and investment, business and energy policy issues to His Excellency and to Doha, Qatar
- Prepare and report up-to-date analysis on all Congressional and US government current events that impact the State of Qatar
- Strategically manage both the Deputy Chief of Mission and Ambassador’s schedules to meet with key Congressional members, as well as assist with travel and logistical operations
- Cultivate relationships to build the Embassy’s stakeholder list
- Assist with event planning for Congressional dinners and receptions, Iftar dinners and other cultural events and high-ranking delegation visits
- Interact daily with Congressional and government leaders both domestically and globally to improve US/Qatar relations

*Barbara Franklin Enterprises*  
**August 2009- May 2012**
International Consulting firm, working for 29th US Secretary of Commerce, Barbara Hackman Franklin

(a n advocate of women’s rights in the business sector and a leader in corporate governance)

**Director of Media, Research and Special Projects, August 2011-May 2012**
- Project Administrator for “A Few Good Women…” oral history project  
  - Point person for all marketing and communications for “A Matter of Simple Justice…Untold Story of Barbara Hackman Franklin and A Few Good Women” released March 2012
- Principle liaison with all media and speech contacts  
  - Manage all media and speech logistics, including scheduling and ensuring preparedness for the interview
- Conduct timely and accurate research for corporate level meetings and media engagements
- Write and maintain current biographical information for Barbara Hackman Franklin that emphasized her areas of expertise, formatted for use by various audiences (corporate, government, online and global)
- Trained 4 employees for Executive Assistant position

**Director of Special Projects, February 2011 – August 2011**
- Create, organize and manage 2000 + photo project
- Identify annual savings topping over $60,000
- Manage and track office budget (over $100,000)

**Executive Assistant and Special Projects Coordinator, August 2009 – February 2011**
- Fulfill daily office responsibilities including correspondence, managing calendars, expenses, and mailings
- Plan all domestic and international travel, dinners, meetings, and events
- Assist in development of office procedure manual
Leadership and Volunteer
Protocol School of Washington
Certified in Diplomatic Protocol & Etiquette Certificate Program
National Community Church
New Connections Leader and co-Leader for 2014 Mission Trip to Thailand, against human trafficking
Higher Achievement (DC Metro Area)
Children’s Miracle Network
Active member and volunteer