DEFINING REVOLUTION? THE EGYPTIAN "REVOLUTIONS" IN 1952 AND 2011

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FARID AL-SALIM
The American University in Dubai (UAE)
falsalim@aud.edu

Abstract: Egyptian society has been shaped by two revolutions: The Free Officer Movement government takeover in 1952 and the ouster of President Mubarak in 2011. Both were revolutions but were very different in character. This paper will comparatively analyze the two events, the "revolutionary actions", and the aftermath of the Free Officers on July 23, 1952 as well as that of January 25, 2011. It will examine the societal climate in which each of these series of events occurred, the nature of the "revolutionary action", and the resultant effects of these events. It will be argued that although both were revolutions, the circumstances that led to them and the way that the revolutionary action was inspired, organized, and executed was very different in 2011 from those in 1952. This paper will seek an examination to each of these "revolutions" in terms of ideology and philosophy, public support, the nature of the "revolutionary" action (viz. the actual mechanism that resulted in the ouster of the previous regime). By analyzing these aspects of each "revolution", one can analyze the applicability of the designation of "revolution" in describing both of these groups of events.

Keywords: Egypt, revolution of 1952, revolution of 2011, revolutionary actions, masses.

INTRODUCTION

Two socio-political upheavals have shaped the history of modern Egypt. Though separated by nearly sixty years, the events of July 1952 and January 2011 were both instances in which the Egyptian governmental structure was upended by new power-seeking groups. Those seeking to overthrow the existing regime used the same rhetoric in both instances, but the way in which the revolutions began and unfolded was drastically different – so dif-

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ferent as to call into question the understanding of how revolutions occur.

In 1952, the Free Officers Movement, led by Major-General Muhammed Naguib and Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, deposed the final heir of the monarchy established by Muhammed Ali. It was a classic "top down" *coup d'état* by an elite composed of disgruntled military officers. The coup was pre-planned and organized well in advance of its execution. There was no meaningful participation on the part of the great mass of the Egyptian people (Bishra 2014: 128).

The 2011 revolution was a popular revolt by the masses. It appeared to be spontaneous. On January 25, 2011, the first day of the revolt, thousands of ordinary people took to the streets to protest the oppressive regime of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. There was no pre-planning, and there was no clear leader. (Ghonim2012: 257) The weeks that followed resulted in the ouster of President Mubarak and set the stage for a democratic election that took place in the summer of 2012 (Ghonim 2012: 257).

Defining revolution

The concept of socio-political "revolution" is one that has permeated historical writing. However, scholars and philosophers have differed in their opinions of what constitutes a revolution and what, if any, separate kind of revolutions exist. From the English Glorious Revolution of 1688, the American and French revolutions of the late 18th century, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, to the to more recent uprisings throughout the world, the term "revolution" has become multifaceted and can refer to any number of social, political, or economic changes. These varying characteristics and uses of term have led to the lack of a clear consensus as to what constitutes a socio-political revolution.

American historian Joseph Clark, writing in 1882, defined revolution as "a radical or organic change in the constitution of

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government, accomplished either peacefully or violently". Clarks stressed that there was a difference between a revolution, which was legitimate, and an insurrection against just authority, which was not. For a revolution "to be proper and legitimate [...] must be a movement against that which is old, worn-out, unnatural, unreasonable, or oppressive" (Clark 1882: 6). The 1947 *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2014) defined a revolution as "a fundamental change in political organization, or in a government or constitution; the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler, and the substitution of another, by the governed" (cited examples were the English Revolution 1688-89, American Revolution 1775-1783, and French Revolution 1789-1799). The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (2007) defined a revolution more narrowly as "a forcible substitution of a new form of government", or with even further nuance, "the complete overthrow of an established government or social order by those previously subject to it".

Writing in 2006, sociologist John Foran focused on the structural change of society's political and class systems, carried out, at least in part, by members of lower classes led and represented by an insurgent elite. Foran cited the definition of revolution stated by sociologist Theda Skocpol in her 1979 book *States and Social Revolutions* when he wrote, "social revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below" (Foran 2006: 868).

Sociologist James DeFronzo, whose 2006 book *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, a comprehensive analysis of revolutions that have taken place throughout the modern world defines a revolutionary movement as a social movement whose leaders call for drastic changes in socio-political institutions. In this view, a revolution is the product of a societal movement that accomplishes its goal of political and societal change (DeFranzo 2006: xix).

DeFronzo enumerated five factors that drive a revolutionary upheaval: *a*) mass frustration; *b*) dissident elites; *c*) unifying moti-

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vations; *d*) crisis within the state caused by defeat in war, or economic depression; *e*) a permissive or tolerant world context.

If one applies these five factors of revolution as criteria for analyzing both the emergence of the Free Officers Movement in 1952 and the events of January 25, 2011, a close comparison can be made between these two crucially important political events. In this way, by accounting for the presence or absence of each criterion in each political movement distinctly, it is possible to discern patterns of similarity and dissimilarity between the movements. It will also be necessary to examine the events and years that followed these events with an eye toward political change, societal and economic transformation, and mass participation. These factors, in addition to the underlying factors that allow for a revolution to occur, must be analyzed in order to discuss the revolutionary nature of each more fully of these movements (Foran 2006: 870).

It is also beneficial to define other pertinent and related concepts that might apply to either of these movements, especially that of *coup d'état*. In contrast to revolution as defined above, a *coup d'état* can be classified as the takeover of a state by an alternate elite, and often led or assured by the armed forces (Lawson 2006: 717). As well, there exists great variation among events designated as a coup. These events can vary from being little more than a change of leadership, prompted most frequently by the armed forces, to more significant political processes that entail dramatic consequences (Lawson 2006: 717). The concept of *coup d'état*, defined as it has been here, will provide the potential of a valuable alternative or counterbalance to classifying both or either of the movements of 1952 and 2011 as a revolution. Defining both revolution and *coup d'état* clearly will avoid any obfuscation that may arise in analyzing the applicability of these terms with regard to the seizing of power in Egypt by the Free Officers Movements in 1952 and the events of January 2011.

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Sources

Scholarly discussions and analyses of the events leading up to, resulting in, and occurring after the removal of King Farouk from the throne of Egypt have taken place in the years following these events, starting in the 1960s with many reexaminations of the events of 1952 still being produced today. A full historiographical analysis lies outside the scope of the present project, but many pertinent volumes and discussions exist. For the purposes of this essay, only a selection of secondary source material will be highlighted.

Since the 1970s, much scholarly attention has been focused on the rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser and the events led by the Free Officers Movement between 1952 and 1954. Raymond William Baker's volume entitled *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution under Nasser and Sadat* was produced during the rule of Sadat, and examines the post-1952 regime and the effects of its rule and the transformative processes that it had endangered. Baker's volume will provide background and a formative discussion regarding the rise of the Free Officers Movement and the actions of the movement in the nascent stages (Baker 1978: 94). Along with the work of Baker, Derek Hopwood's *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981* provides a deeper discussion of the situation in Egypt prior to the events of July 1952, while also dealing with the rise to power of the Free Officers Movement and its initial years as the governing body of Egypt (Hopewood 1982: 68). An addition to the corpus of works that have focused on the political climate in Egypt since 1952 was made journalist Anthony McDermott, in his work, *Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution* (McDermott 1988: 103). Although much of the work of McDermott falls outside the exact content of the analysis herein, he does provide a beneficial chapter concerning the origins of the 1952 movement.

Perhaps no work elaborates the experience of the events of 1952 to the same degree as *Nasser's Blessed Movement*, by Joel Gordon (Gordon 1992: 14). Gordon attempts a revision of Egyptian official histories, focusing on the lack of clear goals and lim-

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ited ambition of the Free Officers Movement when they came to power in 1952. It focuses directly on the "formative period of the Nasserist revolution", as it progressed from a military takeover to an ill-defined political movement (Gordon 1992: 14). With its spotlight on the events of 1952 and their immediate aftermath, the work of Gordon provides a detailed discussion of the early stages of the Free Officers Movement rise to power.

Political scientist Kirk Beattie published his work *Egypt during the Nasser Years* in 1994. Beattie uses interviews with many members of the Egyptian elite to recall the story of the "revolution" and its impact within Egypt (Beattie 1994: 159).

Although it deals largely with events that lie outside the background and first two years of the Nasserist regime, the work and analyses of historian James Jankowski are pertinent to any discussion of the events of 1952, specifically *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Jankowski 2001: 117).

There are various bodies of evidence that can illustrate the contemporary rhetoric employed by the Free Officers Movement and the events of 1952 and thereafter. One of the most important bodies of evidence to explore the concept of revolution in 1952 are the speeches and first-person accounts of Nasser's speeches and writings, foremost of these being his *The Philosophy of the Revolution.* In *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Nasser discusses the build up to the Free Officers Movement and the events of July 1952, as well as the ideological underpinnings that accompanied their forced abdication of King Farouk (Nasser 1955: 33) Though clearly not a scholarly analysis of the "revolution", the recounting of the events by Nasser provides a valuable insight into how the leader of the movement viewed the events.

Khalid Mohi El Din, a member of the Revolutionary Command Council, and a close associate of Nasser published another recollection of the events of 1952 entitled *Memoires of a Revolution: Egypt 1952* (Mohi Eldin 1995: 116). With the account of Mohi El Din, the perspective of the events of 1952 can be more

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fully developed from the standpoint of the leadership of the Free Officers Movement.

Although modern Egyptians and the world are still living through the direct repercussions of the events initiated in January 2011, there exists a corpus of texts that will prove valuable for any discussion of the actions that led to the downfall of Hosni Mubarak. Many of the volumes on the 2011 uprisings in Egypt take the form of individual memoires recounting the events at a personal level from the perspective of members of the Egyptian population who saw, participated in, and lived through the events. In 2011 soon after the events in January, two authors published their perspectives on the revolution. Acclaimed Egyptian writer Alaa Al-Aswany published *On the State of Egypt: What made the Revolution Inevitable*, dealing with the underlying factors that led to the events in January and the eventual deposal of President Hosni (Al-Aswany 2011: 63). Similarly, in 2011, journalist Ashraf Khalil published *Liberation Square*, which focuses mainly on the events of the revolution itself, with some background provided on what he views as the root causes of movement (Khalil 2011: 81).

Novelist and journalist Ahdaf Soueif published her account of the first year of the revolution in *Cairo: My City, Our Revolution* shortly after the revolution, in 2012 (Soueif 2012: 29). This volume provides not only the viewpoint of a native Egyptian who lived through the events, but also sheds light on the female experience of the revolution. This work, apart from its unique feminist perspective, contains another view of the elite perspective. It is also unique in that it utilized a very large proportion of the primary source material available concerning the events of both 1952 and 2011.

Another valuable addition to the body of accounts published in the aftermath of the fall of Hosni Mubarak is *Revolution 2.0* by Wael Ghonim. Ghonim, a native Cairene, computer engineer, and head of marketing for Google in the Middle East and North Africa, was at the head of the early stages of unrest leading to the events of January 25 and played an important role throughout the

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events. His memoir of the events provides, like the account of Soueif, the perspective of a learned Egyptian concerning the events, but as someone who was integrally involved on the mobilization of thousands of Egyptians to incite the revolution, the work of Ghonim is buoyed by his direct involvement in the events (Ghonim 2012: 117).

Journalists, both Western (especially American and British) and Egyptian, chronicled the events of 1952 and 2011 in the pages of their newspapers. These provide another beneficial corpus of material which can help to augment the above accounts.

THE 1952 REVOLUTION

Mass frustration leading up to 1952

The social climate in Egypt during the build-up to the events of July 23, 1952, was marked by severe disenchantment with the current state of affairs in the country. It is plain to see that mass frustration permeated nearly all sectors of Egyptian society, with the exception of the crown and the aristocracy, during the years leading up to 1952. Numerous factors had contributed to this near unanimous dissatisfaction.

First and foremost, frustration was exhibited amongst many Egyptians in response to the continued British presence and influence on the political affairs of the country. Great Britain had occupied Egypt since the aftermath of the revolt against the British-backed Khedive of Egypt led by Ahmed Urabi in 1882. Although Britain granted Egypt nominal independence in 1922, the British reserved for themselves continued privilege in Egypt in four major areas: the rights of foreign interests and minorities, the defense of Egypt against foreign aggression, Suez Canal, and the relationship between Egypt and the Sudan (Gordon 1992: 59). Clearly, this "independence" preserved the continuation of British interference in Egyptian affairs and British troops remained stationed in Egyp-

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tian outposts. Although Egypt was classified as a parliamentary monarchy for the twenty-nine years between independence from Britain in 1922 and the events of July 1952, the British, along with the crown, were heavily involved in rigging elections and placing pro-British minority parties in positions of power (Jankowski 2001: 12).

This symptom of British influence can be seen in the example of the Wafd Party. The Wafd grew out of nationalist uprisings in 1919 led by Sa'd Zaghlul, and throughout the Egyptian "liberal era" of 1922-1952. It exemplified Egyptian nationalist sentiment. The numbers of Wafd party members never exceeded two hundred thousand, but its political power lay in its ability to mobilize millions in its favor at the ballot box of "openly contested" elections (Beattie 1994: 23). Although these numbers should have made its power and influence incontestable, for the twenty-nine years of the "liberal era" the Wafd held power for only seven (Beattie 1994: 24). Power fell not to the popularly supported Wafd in most cases, but to parties backed by the monarchy and the British, especially the Liberal Constitutionalist Party (Baker 1978: 16).

Not only did that British interference breed massive discontent among various sectors of the Egyptian population, but the other main power wielders during the "liberal era", namely the crown and political and economic elite did as well. The crown played a direct role in the thwarting popular political parties, namely the Wafd. Additionally, the king could exert his control by numerous means that brought into question the effectuality of the Egyptian constitution. The king was authorized by the constitution to appoint the upper parliamentary house, to supervise religious institutions, and to dissolve parliament at his will (Jankowski 2001: 14). These royal prerogatives gave the crown power over elections and the parties that would be able to exert influence in the political realm. The ability for groups that sought to challenge the status quo was negligible due to these measures, leaving the majority of the Egyptian population without political representation and at the liberty of the whims of a king in Farouk who be-

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came increasingly viewed as a debauched playboy concerning with lining his own pockets and those of the wealthy landowning classes who largely supported him (Beattie 1994: 25).

Frustration among much of the Egyptian population was also fueled by immense disparities in wealth and economic problems exacerbated during the "liberal era". Increasingly, wealth in Egypt was consolidated in the hands of a few thousand families, while the living standards for many were lessened. From the early to mid-twentieth century, annual per capita income declined sharply, from $109.50 in 1907 to just $63.50 in 1950 (Baker 1978: 21). This number attests to the overall decline of the Egyptian economy, and the broad decline in living standard of many Egyptians. However, in order to highlight the growing gap between rich and poor, a clear example can be seen in land holdings and the agricultural sector. Between 1910 and 1952, the number of people who owned less than one feddan (roughly1.038 acre) ballooned from 783,000 to 2,018,000. However, the average size of land holding among those owning less than one feddan fell by roughly twenty percent (Mabro 1964: 60). The landholding statistics in Egypt in 1952 provide evidence for the stark reality related to the distribution of wealth. Roughly thirty percent of all cultivable land was owned by less than one-half of one percent (0.4 percent) of all landowners, while the poorest two million Egyptians (roughly ten percent of the population) owned less than fifteen percent of arable land and roughly eighty million, nearly forty percent of the Egyptian population was without land (Gordan 1992: 89). The discontent brought about by these vast inequalities in wealth was deepened by the fact that many of these wealthy landowners were involved in the politics of Egypt at this time, including the king himself and the hundreds of members of the royal family. With these rich landowners in positions of political power, land reform that would have alleviated these great inequalities was consistently blocked. These main factors, namely the influence of the British, the ineptitude of the crown and the political elite, and the growing gap between rich and poor fostered mass discontent and frustration (Baker 1978: 64).

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Elites against the status quo 1952

In many instances before 1952, the wealthy elites were working alongside the crown, as discussed above. Similarly, it has also been noted that the economic chasm between rich and poor, landed and landless, was growing ever wider. The decades of the "liberal era" were good to the wealthy sector of the society, and as such, most seemed content with the way that the country was operating. However, one quasi-elite group of Egyptians, the petit bourgeoisie, did seek to change their country.

The Free Officers Movement was firmly against the rule of the crown in the years leading up to 1952. The FOM had a litany of complaints against the monarchy. The basis of these grievances ranged from economic to military factors. The economy played a large role in their discontent. Not only did the widening prosperity gap cause alarm for the Free Officers, but also a severe lack of upward mobility for many citizens. A benefit of the "liberal era" was that education was now more available to middle-class citizens. However, this increase in the availability of education led to a higher quantity of young, educated citizens who found their upward mobility blocked by forces in place in the private sector, namely the preeminence of foreign and non-native Egyptians. This led to burgeoning unemployment and frustration amongst growing numbers of largely Muslim, educated men (Beattie 1994: 27).

Additionally, much of the population, and especially the military leaders who would form the Free Officers Movement were also disenchanted with the crown concerning its handling of the Palestine War of 1948. In this war, the Egyptian army were defeated by the Israelis and its officers disgraced. The disparity between troop numbers, though not all-telling, was astounding, with some estimates that the Israelis were outmanned by Egypt-led Arab League coalition eighty-to-one (Beattie 1994: 28).

Nasser, in response to the death of a fellow army officer and the state of Egypt's armed forces, recalled in his memoirs on the war, "I found myself sobbing with a bitterness I had never before

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experienced in my life. I was weeping for a brave comrade […]. But also, I wept for the battle itself whose reins had been entrusted to the winds" (Beattie 1994: 28). Nasser's response was one that was felt by many. The embarrassing defeat by the Israelis was laid at the hands of the king, with criticisms that the army was poorly led, given defective equipment, and that the war was poorly planned. The debacle in Palestine laid the groundwork for the formation and strengthening of the Free Officers Movement (Jankowski 200: 15).

Additionally, the Egyptian army's officers and the population at large were incensed on account of the influence that the British were playing in their country, even after Egypt had been granted "independence" in 1922. The flashpoint of anti-British sentiment occurred in response to the British attack on Egyptian soldiers while it wounded one hundred more (Hoopwood 1982: 31). As news spread of the attack, rioters took the street, marched on the royal palace, and burned a large proportion of Cairo the next day, referred to as "Black Saturday" Not only did the attack at Ismailiya result in the Black Saturday riots, but it also served to embolden the FOM and push Egypt closer to the brink of dramatic action (Hoopwood 1982: 31).

Unifying factors in 1952

Mass frustration and the role of dissident powerful groups, namely the FOM, led to the eventual deposal of King Farouk. The same circumstances that caused mass frustration and a dissident elite population also served to galvanize different sectors of the Egyptian population against the workings of the state, especially the armed forces. The role of Britain in Egyptian political affairs, and the embarrassment of the defeat of the Arab League by Israel, caused growing dissatisfaction within the population toward the crown and wealthy elite who dominated the government.

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The Wafd, Muslim Brotherhood, and Young Egypt (Misr al-Fatat), and the Free Officers Movement all held varying political beliefs and their ideas covered the extent of the political spectrum. A growing sense of Egyptian nationalism in the face of continued British imperialism was a common thread in the philosophies of these groups. The liberal Wafd disenchantment with British influence can be seen as early as the founding of the party by Sa'd Zaghlul in 1919 (Baker 1978: 31). The Muslim Brotherhood was a far more conservative party founded on Islamic principles. However, in their hatred for British domination many of the Brothers took part in anti-British attacks in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Beattie 1994: 29). Young Egypt's political views took a growing anti-British tone in the years leading up to 1952. In a Cairo police report sent to the British embassy the rhetoric employed by Young Egypt's founder Ahmed Hussein was described as growing clearly anti-British (Abdallah 1985: 53). Finally, anti-British sentiment mobilized the Free Officers as well. In the aftermath of the 1948 War in Palestine, Nasser himself asserts that he sought Israeli advice concerning how they shed the yoke of the British from their country (Nasser 1955: 14). All of these examples attest to the adherence to strong anti-British positions by politically disparate groups within Egypt. Undoubtedly, anti-British sentiment brought a degree of unification among the Egyptian population and is just one example of the galvanizing of different sectors of society in the face of forces viewed as detrimental to their country.

The impact of war: State in crisis and foreign response to the rising tension

The defeat of the Egyptians in the Palestine War in 1948 caused a great degree of embarrassment for the Egyptian army and people and increased the criticism of the monarchy. Likewise, military interaction with the British, especially in the Ismailiya in-

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cident of January 1952, engendered a deeper crisis in the minds of many sectors of the society as evidenced by the burning of Cairo on Black Saturday.

The final factor required for a revolutionary movement to succeed is a permissive world context. In the post-World War II world, the United States was the main world superpower. With its role in the world political scene, it will be instructive to view their responses to the overthrow of the monarchy by the Free Officers. CIA operative Miles Copeland has claimed that the United States coordinated with the Free Officers which included the CIA director Kermit Roosevelt meeting with leaders of the FOM (Jankowski 2001: 37). Additionally, the United States moved quickly in forming a relationship with the new Egyptian leaders, as evidence from a cable from American ambassador to Egypt Jefferson Caffery. In the cable ambassador Caffery states, "it is only a question of time […] before West will be faced with necessity choosing to support, ignore, or oppose regime. Arguments in favor of support multiply as objectives of regime become clearer". As this evidence shows, the United States viewed the actions of the Free Officers with support (Gordon 1992: 116).

Political change after July 23

Egypt was embroiled in drastic political change in the aftermath of the Free Officers storming the royal palace and forcing the abdication of King Farouk on July 23. Clearly, with the resignation of one of the chief motivations for the mobilization of the Free Officers, the political situation was altered as the king left Egypt three days later. After the king vacated the throne, there became a power vacuum in Egyptian politics, and the Free Officers themselves filled this void (Beattie 1994: 69).

After the successful military *coup d'état*, political change was occurring in the policy that was produced by the new leaders of Egypt. In January 1953, the Free Officers Movement under its

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new designation, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), outlawed political parties in Egypt. Many of these had grown powerful and played a role in fomenting the unrest that served as the backdrop for the movement of 1952, and the RCC feared that they would undermine its rule and agenda (Beattie 1994: 71). With the banning of political parties, many of the politicians of the *ancien regime* were put on trial before military tribunals, with a large number being sent to prison. (Jankowski 2001: 29). Along with the outlawing of political parties, the RCC also advocated for a three-year transitional period in government where they would control Egypt and the president would be RCC member Muhammad Neguib (Gordon 1992: 77).

Societal and economic change after 1952

The policy instituted by the nascent movement of the RCC highlights not only the political shift that occurred after they took power, but also serves as evidence for societal and economic change in Egypt. One of the main criticisms levied against the *ancien regime* revolved around the great disparities in wealth among the Egyptian people, especially in landownership and agricultural wealth. The RCC sought to fundamentally shift the Egyptian economy in response to the near universal condemnation of land ownership laws under the king during the constitutional period of 1922-1952.

In September 1952, only six weeks after the king was deposed, the RCC enacted the land reform law in the country (Marbo 1974: 56). One of the most important aspects of the land reform package was that it capped the maximum personal ownership of land at two hundred feddan (Marbo 1974: 64). Any landowner who owned more than two hundred feddans would have their lands above this ceiling requisitioned by the state and redistributed among the peasants who owned very little land (Marbo 1974: 65). With a drastic shift in the policy of the central authority of the state, wealth was redistributed among the poorer classes.

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Clearly, the impact of the policy of the RCC resulted in distinct societal change.

Mass participation in the events of July 23

The actions of the Free Officers Movement resulted in political, societal, and economic change in the months and years following the forced abdication of Farouk, largely without mass participation in these events. Nasser wrote in *Philosophy of the Revolution*, "I imagined that the whole nation was on tip-toes and prepared for action…that we would soon be followed by the solid masses marching to the goal […]. We needed unity but found dissention. We needed action but found nothing but surrender and idleness" (Nasser 1955: 20).

THE 2011 REVOLUTION

Mass frustration during the late Mubarak era

Throughout the later years of the Mubarak era, discontent was growing in Egypt among various sectors of society. If one looks to the memoirs of those involved in the events leading up to January 25, 2011, there is a body of evidence that is instructive in analyzing what the causes of mass frustration were. Ahdaf Soueif writes from the female perspective in the face of the events of January 25. In her memoir on the revolution, she claims, "for a very long time now, our perception is that [Egypt] is not being run in the interests of the Egyptian people. And the primary motivation of the people who are governing us is that they should remain in power in order to continue […] looting the country" (Soueif 2012: 76). Here, clearly, Soueif brings to light that unrest was fermenting because the Mubarak government was not working for its people. Corruption in government, the monopolization

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of the "democratic" process by President Mubarak through rigged elections, and the economic sector of the state being run to enrich the cronies of Mubarak and his son, Gamal, all led to a unification of the Egyptian people against the regime leading up to the events of January 25 (Al-Aswany 2011: 12).

Control over the state by Egyptian State Security, the highest national police authority, fed widespread frustration amongst the masses as well. As Egyptian-American author Ashraf Khalil writes, "Supported […] by the Emergency Laws, and backed by the full power of all aspects of the government, the police devolved into Egypt's largest and most heavily armed criminal mob. The entire relationship of the police to society changed and warped" (Khalil 2011: 26). Abuses of power by the state apparatus led by President Mubarak became the focal point of mass resentment.

Disaffected elites before January 25

Although the calls for revolution against the Mubarak regime were spread amongst various sectors of the Egyptian population, elites repressed by the continuation of emergency law by the authoritarian structure of the Mubarak state were a critical element in the rise of the revolutionary movement. Dissident intellectuals and university students formed Kefaya, the Egyptian Movement for Change (Ghonim 2012: 31). The members of Kefaya were pioneers of the revolutionary movement who, upon their foundation in 2004, criticized the Mubarak regime long before the fevered pitch of 2011. The leaders of movements such as Kefaya were an elite, but a very different elite from the officers who led the 1952 revolution, and they would lead the 2011 revolution in a very different way (Ghonim 2012: 32).

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Broad unifying factors among the masses

The root causes of mass frustration, namely the corruption of the Egyptian political system and the destitution of much of the Egyptian population at the hands of the ruling elite, served to bring together much of the population, as seen through the various sectors of society that participated in the events of January 25, 2011. Among the activist literature dispersed in Tahrir Square during the time of the uprising, the tenor of this anti-establishment thought, especially in a flier written by Egyptian Hani Hafiz entitled "The Egyptian President". It called for a president who did not rule the country in a state of emergency law, and one that did not view Egypt as his own personal property (Hafiz 2012).

Crisis caused by economic depression

Unlike the build-up to the events of 1952 and the impact of the 1948 Palestine War, defeat in war was not one of the root causes of the events of January 25, 2011, and the weeks and months that followed. Economic depression was the major factor that ignited the popular uprising in 2011. In a Gallup poll conducted in 2010, an astonishing ninety-one percent of Egyptians classified themselves as economically "struggling" or "suffering" under the Mubarak regime (Gallup 2011) According to the same poll, although the Gross Domesticate Product of Egypt rose by five percent in 2010, only one-fifth of the Egyptian population believed that the economic situation was improving. Yet, as they were becoming poorer, the majority of Egyptians perceived that Mubarak and his circle of cronies were becoming wealthier (Gallup 2011).

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American responses to January 25

Leading American political figures showed at least passive support for those who rose up against the authoritarian Mubarak regime. In a speech delivered on February 11, 2011, President Obama backed those calling for true democratic reform, stating, "the United Stated will continue to be a friend and partner of Egypt. We stand ready to provide what assistance is necessary – and asked for – to pursue a credible transition to democracy" (Obama 2011). Obama was not the only American governmental leader to commend those striving for democracy. Secretary of State Clinton, in the aftermath of the riots of January 25 in Tahrir Square, stated: "we want to see this peaceful uprising on the part of the Egyptian people to demand their rights to be responded to in a very clear […] way by the government, and then a process of national dialogue that will lead to changes that the Egyptian people seek and that they deserve" (Reynolds 2011).

Changes in the political and societal system after January 25

Clearly, the movement started on January 25 made a great impact on the political situation of Egypt. On February 11, 2011, just eighteen days after the start of the protests, President Hosni Mubarak resigned from the presidency, handing power over to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (AlJazeera 2011). The democratic presidential elections of June 2012 further indicate the degree to which the Egyptian governmental system was in transition in response to the uprising. During the Mubarak era, the democratic voting process was deeply flawed, as seen through the polling numbers. Like his authoritarian forebears Nasser and Sadat, Mubarak undertook democratic referendums in which have been criticized for their maintenance of the status quo. In these referenda, Mubarak never received a favorability rating less than a ninety percent (Ghonim 2012: 29-30).

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However, when one shifts focus to the 2012 presidential election, Muhammad Morsi defeated former Mubarak Cabinet member Ahmed Shafiq by a margin of less than four percentage points, a far cry from the state-espoused unanimity prior to the ouster of Mubarak (BBC 2012). The close competition between these candidates is yet another indication of the political system shift in Egypt as a result of the events begun on January 25, 2011. Society can also be seen as having changed through this election process, as the political was opened to various competing entities.

The masses and the riots

It is undeniable that if one considers mass participation a requisite for revolutionary action, the events initiated on January 25, 2011 meet the criterion. Whereas the lack of mobilization of the Egyptian masses in 1952, the uprising begun on January 25 was a popular mass uprising. Rather than a small group of disaffected military leaders storming the palace and forcing the abdication of the king, the vents in the winter of 2011 attest to the revolutionary wave riding the backs of thousands of mobilized ordinary Egyptian citizens. In his report about the initial day of protest in Tahrir Square on January 25, the "New York Times'" Cairo correspondent described the number of participants in the protests against President Mubarak in Tahrir Square in Cairo as tens of thousands (Fahim, El-Najjar 2013).

Various groups and sectors of society were involved in the demonstrations at Tahrir, including Ahdaf Soueif and her two twenty-two-year-old nieces. Upon their entrance to the square throngs of demonstrations greeted them. She says about their arrival at Tahrir, "you turned 360 degrees and everywhere there was people. I could not tell how many thousands I could see" (Soueif 2012: 42). More personal accounts of the masses mobilized in the nascent stages of the events initiated on January 25 could be included here, but the evidence thus far employed attests to the role

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that mass mobilization of various sectors of society played in the events of the revolution in 2011.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the events leading up to the drama in Egypt in both July 1952 and January 2011 has been undertaken thus far throughout this discussion. I have sought to identify the presence of factors that laid the groundwork for revolutionary action while also focus on three main factors of revolutionary and post-revolutionary action, including political and societal change as well as mass participation. The evidence provided herein allows for a certain measure of analysis regarding both the movements in 1952 and also in 2011.

The present analysis of the events leading up to the actions of the Free Officers Movement in 1952 attests to the frustration caused by massive discrepancies in wealth between the elite and poor classes as well as the continued impact of the British in the Egyptian politics. These served to unify much of the Egyptian population against the rule of the king and led to the calls for changes in the political system. Dissident elites, especially military officers, were the main actors in the overhaul of the political system. The 1948 War in Palestine, and the embarrassment caused by Egyptian defeat therein, provided a crisis in the minds of the Egyptian people, while also galvanizing the Free Officers in their call to action against the monarch.

After the events of July 23, 1952, came a shift in the political system by the adoption of power and institution of the authoritarian regime of the Free Officers and Gamal Abdel Nasser. King Farouk had been deposed and a new political order had taken his place. In society, one aspect of change can be seen in the land reform laws instituted shortly after the Free Officers took power in September 1952. There was no mass participation in the "revolutionary action". The forced abdication of King Farouk was achieved not through a

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call of the masses, but rather through the actions of a small group of actors in the Free Officers Movement. The movement initiated by the Free Officers in 1952 was a regime change, not a true revolution.

In turning to the events leading up to the events of January 2011, mass frustration and unification came about in response to the repressive regime and economic conditions present under President Hosni Mubarak. Dissident elites, represented at least in part during the formative stages of anti-Mubarak sentiment during the mid-2000s can be seen in the Egyptian Movement for Change (Kefaya). Unlike the root causes of the 1952 movement, there was no war that caused crisis in Egypt leading up to the events of 2011. Rather, economic crisis, was the root cause of mass unification and frustration that laid the groundwork for revolutionary action. In the support for change expressed by President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, the protestors perceived that they had an ally in the only superpower at this time, the United States.

In 2011, political and societal change occurred not only through the ousting of Hosni Mubarak as president, but also through the institution of democratic elections. Finally, although mass participation was severely lacking in the events of 1952, it was the influence of the mobilization of thousands in protest that caused the collapse of the *ancien regime* in 2011. The actions taken by thousands in January 2011 attest to the revolutionary nature of these events. With the resignation of Mubarak in February 2011 and the democratic elections in June, 2012, it is clear that one can more closely call the events initiated on January 25, 2011 a true revolution, under the concept crafted by DeFronzo.

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