

Comparing Ideals For the Future: The 2011 Egyptian Revolution



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Project Description and Analysis

- ❖ An uprising began on January 25, 2011 to overthrow Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.
- ❖ The Egyptian Activists of 2011 aimed to change the structure of government from a country led by appointed officials to a democratic government.
- ❖ Protestors were fueled by political and legal issues including corruption, police brutality, lack of free election and freedom of speech, and economic issues such as the high unemployment rate.
- ❖ We categorized responses into discussions of commonly articulated themes: democracy, freedom, corruption and the role of the military. A unified voice was not found in the collected oral histories and held contrasting views concerning issues central to Egypt's future.
- ❖ The differing views suggest that the activism in 2011 allowed the Egyptian people to imagine multiple futures that had previously been thought impossible.



<http://www.newstimesafrica.com/archives/13002>

The dead of Khaled Said is said to be the catalyst for the protests in Tahrir Square. Said, a 19-year-old business man, became the epitome of police brutality during Mubarak's reign. Police seized the man from an internet café in Alexandria and beat him to death. Activist planned demonstrations on the Egyptian holiday "Police Day" due to this event.

This is a photo of a woman holding a picture of Khaled Said during a protest.

Egyptian Voices

Oral histories were conducted with English speaking Egyptians in Cairo and Suez during a Public History seminar through the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse in the summer of 2012. During these interviews we discussed the revolution, the current state of Egypt, perspectives on democracy and hopes for the future. This project aimed to assess one basic question: What did the interviews reveal about the hopes of ordinary Egyptians who had watched or participated in the revolution? The following quotes are from these interviews and reflect ideas of democracy as well as Egypt's future.

"I would say democracy means you're free... You can have your freedom of speech, you can criticize. Where ruling are really servants for the people. You've never had that. I don't think they think 'I'm a public servant'. The word servant never enters their mind.. Competent governments will be elected. And if they're not competent, find, the democracy wheel is working and balance and checks to eliminate corruption... It'd be a process to take us into the 21st century." – Khaled El- Ayat, professor of computer science at the American University in Cairo.

"I think democracy with lots of illiteracy can cause chaos and poverty. You cannot have democracy with poverty and illiteracy because if someone is really poor and you just give them money they will do whatever you want, it is not as they are choosing out of their own will, they don't know what they want, they just want to be fed" – Nadia Montrasser

"I believe that one day that Egypt will become a great country, the revolution will not stop, the most important thing is that the revolutions have to be inside us. Not saying it will happen in our life... but the revolution won't stop, one day I told you Egypt will change, maybe in the next president you will find a democracy system with a better country, people are ruling Egypt are not Egypt ahhh but now I'm not afraid but it will happen one day, maybe not today, but tomorrow, maybe next year, or after two or three but one day, because Egyptians will know how to make change, if we find the next president no good, they know the way to Tahrir Square to revolt against him" – Peter Raafat



Protesters gathered at Tahrir Square in Cairo
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/01/201112515304871490.html>

18 Days in Tahrir

- ❖ 25 January 2011: The Day of Revolt. Thousands of protestors marched to Tahrir Square. Similar marches occurred in cities throughout Egypt. While the protests were generally non-violent there were some civilian and police casualties.
- ❖ 27 January 2011: The Egyptian government shuts down internet and cell phones hoping to discourage further protests.
- ❖ 28 January 2011: The "Friday of Rage" protests begin. Thousands gathered in Cairo and other Egyptian cities. The police attempted to block access to Tahrir Square and diffuse crowds but people resisted and pushed back police lines. Civilians are killed and at least 1,030 people were injured.
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- ❖ 1 February 2011: Mubarak addressed the nation and stated that he would not run for another term and promised political reforms.
- ❖ 2 February 2011: Violent clashes continue including the use of live fire into Tahrir Square. Snipers shoot into the crowd.
- ❖ 4 February 2011: "Day of Departure" protest. The government's violence stimulates support for the uprising.
- ❖ 5 February 2011: Negotiations began between Egyptian Vice President Omar Suleiman and opposition representatives.
- ❖ 8 February 2011: Hundreds of thousands of protestors poured into Cairo's Tahrir Square for the largest demonstration yet.
- ❖ 10 February 2011: Mubarak formally addressed Egypt amid reports of possible military coup, but instead of his expected resignation, he states his powers would transfer to Vice President Suleiman and he would remain in Egypt as its head of state.
- ❖ 11 February 2011: Massive protests in response to Mubarak's speech across the country until 6:00pm. Mubarak resigned and the Supreme Council of Egyptian Armed Forces assumed leadership of the country.

The Current State of Egypt

- ❖ Current Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi granted himself unlimited powers to "protect" the nation and the power to legislate without judicial oversight or review of his acts.
- ❖ On November 22, 2012 thousands of protestors demonstrated against the president which resulted in violent clashes between members of the Muslim Brotherhood-supported Freedom and Justice Party and anti-Morsi protestors. A number of Morsi's advisors resigned in protest and many judges spoke out against his actions as well.
- ❖ On December 8, 2012 Morsi annulled his decree but added that the effects of his declaration would stand.
- ❖ On January 25, 2013 (the second anniversary of the start of the 2011 revolution) protest occurred across Egypt.
- ❖ Unrest continues in Egypt