

# Social Media & Revolution: the Heineken Class effect

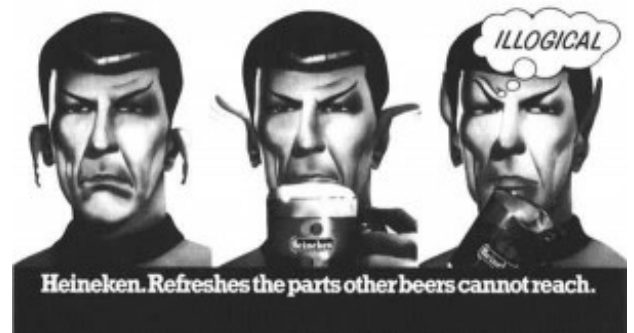
 [blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2011/02/17/social-media-revolution-the-heinekin-class-effect/](http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2011/02/17/social-media-revolution-the-heinekin-class-effect/)

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Are you old enough to remember those Heineken beer adverts about how it refreshes parts other beers can't reach? Perhaps social media has a similar effect in revolutions.

Generally, social media like Twitter, Facebook etc stand accused of being a middle class preserve.

That's not wrong but I have always questioned the implications on the basis of evidence that a) people have access to the Internet through cafes or b) that it is a catalyst and c) that internet penetration is spreading.



But an Egyptian student in our seminar today made me think about it in a another way.

She described how middle-class Egyptians live in a different world to the rest. While out filming a documentary about refuse collection she was appalled to see a policeman beat up a rubbish collector. For her it was an outrage, but for the worker it was a routine part of daily life.

Yet when evidence of police brutality was put online it helped fuel indignation amongst Egypt's elite. YouTube acted as a witness to things that otherwise would have passed un-noticed in real life or mainstream (controlled) Egyptian media.

The difference that social media like YouTube makes is that when evidence for that is put online, it connects the mass experience with the minority, elite classes. It crosses social boundaries.

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