Abstract

This paper proposes a preliminary taxonomy of the connections between public space and communication in the Arab uprisings. Public space continues to play a significant, and so far understudied, role in the ongoing Arab rebellions. Public space is important for understanding communication in revolutionary times because of the complex ways in which public space articulates communicative practices. The main four domains of the taxonomy consider public space as an arena of collective communication, as a canvass for political expression, as a field of embodied action, and as a potent rallying symbol. Crosscutting these four realms is cyberspace, which expands, alters, or focuses the impact of public space. The proposed tentative taxonomy is based on historical and theoretical understandings of public space in the Arab world, in addition to empirical data from in the form of photos and interviews.