The role and impact of social media on Arab networks on Arab Spring: a case study on the Egyptian Revolution

Mai Nabil Allam

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The Role and Impact of Social Media Networks on Arab Spring: A Case Study on the Egyptian Revolution.

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
by Mai Allam

under the supervision of Dr. Hussein Amin
May/2012
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A Thesis Submitted to

Mai Allam

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication

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DEDICATED TO:

My Mother

Ganat Bahgat

You are always encouraging, motivating and teaching me how to succeed. I owe you and I will always owe you all the success that I reached and I will reach in my life.
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ABSTRACT

The American University in Cairo

Thesis, Master of Arts, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

Title: The Role and Impact of Social Media on Arab Networks on Arab Spring: A Case Study on the Egyptian Revolution

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Month/Year: May 2012

The wide spread of social media allows undisciplined groups to share and communicate quickly at a reduced cost so that they can easily form collective actions. Thus, electronic revolutions begin worldwide as all people for the first time in history are politically conscious and interactive. This study examines the role of social media in the Arab uprising with the Egyptian revolution as a case study.

This primary research linked both the uses and gratification theory to the new usage of social media and the spiral of silence theory to people confidence in forming collective actions.

A survey was conducted among a purposive sample of Egyptians (353 participants) to examine role of social networking websites in the Egyptian revolution and relationship between using these websites and political participation. An in depth interviews were conducted with nine media experts and political activists regarding role that social networking websites played in the Egyptian revolution.

The findings support the spiral of silence theory whereby people are encouraged to go to the street and demonstrate when they know through the social networking websites that they hold the majority opinions and that most of the Egyptians are against Mubarak’s regime.

Experts opinions support the survey findings that social networking websites have a crucial role in the Egyptian revolution in motivating the protesters and facilitating communication but there are many causes that pushed Egyptians to demonstrate such as poverty, oppression, and corruption. Without the protesters’ blood and persistence, the revolution would have never succeed.
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1. Introduction

“Technology is indistinguishable from magic.” Truly, Arthur C. Clarke used the most precise description for technology because it is changing a day after another not just from time to time. And it’s interesting to know that 90 percent of all the technology available nowadays was introduced only 75 years ago (Rashad, 2005). Yet, the Internet technology is starting to be a necessity in people’s life that they become part of their daily practices.

1.1. The Internet worldwide

The diffusion of the Internet technology in the early 1990’s was considered a great revolution in the world because people can finally contact each other within minutes or even seconds. Also, the Internet forces the governments to an extent to be transparent because information is now shared among people worldwide. Internet users are active users who search for information they need and do not depend on governments, authority figures or private media to provide them with information. Active users also think and analyze any sort of information they get before trusting it as credible information (Boyd, 2007).

1.2. The Internet in Egypt

The introduction of the Internet in Egypt was in 1993. It was limited only to universities networks and decision support centers with an estimate number of 2000 to 3000 users. By 1994, the Internet service provider has drastic improvements to reach the
end users and the IDSC (Information and Decision Support Center) acted as Internet service provider. In 1996, the speed of the Internet service increased by 20 times and started to provide services to the private sector as well. The year 2000 witnessed a great development from the slow analog telephone line connection to the fast reliable digital telephone line with available speeds from 64kbps and 128kbps. Finally, the introduction of the DSL technology in all regions in Egypt with a speed up to 24Mbps was made to users in their homes by ISPs. The two largest ISPs shareholding companies are TEdata and LinkdotNeIt (Rashad, 2005).

1.3. Introduction of social media

The social media which involves all kinds of online media that allow people worldwide to communicate with each other through sharing information. Social media tools include text-messaging, e-mail, photo sharing and social networking websites examples Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. In spite of the continuous debate that social media tools are the main cause for the revolutions that are taking place worldwide and especially in the Arab region, one cannot say that they are the direct cause of the political actions that are taking place in the world. Social media especially the social networking websites are part and have a great role on Egyptian revolution, but these websites are not the reason behind the revolution (Bahney, 2006).

1.4. Social media and politics

At the same time Shirky (2011), it cannot be ignored that the social media especially the social networking websites such as the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube
play a significant role in most of the political movements that are taking place worldwide and specifically in the Arab region. Thus, most of the world’s authoritarian governments and even some democratic ones were trying to limit people’s access to these social networking websites by blocking the Internet, closing some political pages and some social networking websites. Arab governments disregard the fact that the websites that are designed for political purposes are easy to be monitored and shut down. However, social networking websites that are designed and implemented for broader use mainly for socializing are fairly hard to monitor and censor. This is referred to by Ethan Zuckerman of Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet and society as the “cute cat theory of digital activism,” whereby tools that are designed to defeat the state can be shut down with political penalties where as those designed for broader use such as sharing information and “pictures of cute cats are harder to shut down.” Therefore, the method these autocratic governments are using by shutting down political websites in extremely useless (Shirky, 2011).

1.5. United States and Freedom of expression

In contrast, the U.S. State Department believes that part of the U.S. policy and Americans beliefs about the freedom of expression is to have “Internet freedom.” Thus, the U.S. argues for the people’s right to use Internet freely as being part of its “specific policy aim” (Shirky, 2011).

According to Clay Shirky, a professor of New Media at New York University and the author of Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age, Hillary Clinton, the U.S. Secretary of State, delineated in January 2010 that the process whereby
the United States would “promote Internet freedom abroad,” will have different kinds of freedom that includes the following:

- “The freedom to access information (such as the ability to use Wikipedia and Google).”

- “The freedom of ordinary citizens to produce their own public media (such as the rights of Burmese activists to blog).”

- “The freedom of citizens to converse with one another such as the Chinese public’s capacity to use instant messaging without interference (p.2).”

Clinton even points out to the “instrumental” approach to Internet freedom, which concentrates on people’s rights to use Internet freely without any censorship from the governments on any website such as Google, YouTube or that of The New York Times. Yet, this approach “overestimates the value of broadcast media,” accessing to information and having computers. On the other hand, this approach “underestimates the value of media that allow citizens to communicate privately among themselves,” “the value of tools for local coordination” and the importance of other tools that have the same functions as computers such as the mobile phones (Shirky 2011).

1.6. Benefits of Social Media

According to the sociologists Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld (2011), people form their opinions through the two-step process whereby mass media alone cannot change people’s mind. The first step is that the media transfer opinions to opinion leaders and then the opinions are shared among family, friends and community members. Here, the
social media makes a huge difference as opinions can be shared and discussed among people worldwide whether these opinions are political, educational, or social…etc.

Another main advantage of social media is that it allows undisciplined groups to share and communicate quickly and at a reduced cost so that they can easily form collective actions. Unlike in the past where collective actions were only possible for disciplined groups such as the government, non-governmental organizations or businesses as they are more organized and have easier ways to communicate with each other, direct their members and take more organized and effective collective actions (Shirky, 2011).

1.7. Revolutions worldwide

Marshall (2011) said that social media swept electronic revolutions through the world and for the first time in history almost most people are “politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive.” The revolutions in many Western countries erupted mainly over fraudulent elections or against presidents who remained in power for a long period such as in Manila, Spain, Belarus, Moldova, Thailand and Chile. (Marshall, 2011).

1.7.1. Revolution in America

In addition, Gelder (2011) believe that even America the most democratic country, witnessed protest movements after the global economic crisis in 2008. The US government wants only the poor and the middle class to pay the bill of the crisis. It increased the cutoffs in many of the public services instead of taking taxes from the upper
class, whom the poor and the middle class believe they are the main cause behind this economic crisis (Gelder, 2011).

Moving on Cuba, China and Iran are all facing protest movements that are also mobilized for on social media and specifically the social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. However, their protest movements are ineffective due to the governments’ strict control over their citizens and over social media (Miroff, 2011). In African countries whether in North or in South, demonstrations are arranged through sending text messages on mobile phones. This is as countries are suffering from poverty and Internet connections are not spread among the whole population as in other more developing countries (Gumede, 2011).

1.7.2. The Arab uprising

The Arab region witnessed most Electronic Revolutions that were mobilized through the use of social networking websites such websites helped people in having collective actions and overcame their fears and encouraged enough to go to streets and speak out.

Most of these electronic revolutions whether in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan and Syria are due to the totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and repression system that the Arab people are still living in and facing in their daily life. These people are suffering from high unemployment rate, corruption, high food prices, and violations of most human rights such as freedom of expression. Thus these people find through social media, a mean to express their political opinions and found their opinions are
shared by almost everyone which in return, encouraged ordinary people as well as political activists to speak and express their opinions, beliefs and thoughts freely (Buisier, 2011).

1.7.3. The Egyptian revolution

The Egyptian revolution is taken as a case study for this research in order to analyze the role of social media in mobilizing people and its effect in the success of revolution.

As for the role of social networking websites in the Egyptian revolution, it is classified into different stages. According to Rafat Ali, the founder of paidcontent.org, Facebook was used in the first stage whereby people used it to plan, organize and arrange the protest movements by deciding where and when they will meet (Crovitz, 2011).

On the other hand, Twitter was actually used during the revolution by protesters to keep themselves, other ordinary people and people worldwide updated with what was going on by sharing news, comments, and photos. Besides, videos were uploaded and shared on YouTube as the percentage of people using and watching videos on YouTube was extremely high (Crovitz, 2011).

However, the role of social media in the Egyptian revolution cannot be ignored or minimized as it was through the use of social media tools, Egyptians were able to down fall this autocratic regime after almost 30 years of oppression, corruption and poverty. Without the protesters willingness, blood and persistence to end this regime, the uprising
would have never succeeded. But then again social media has had a great and effective role in the success of the uprising that forced Mubarak to resign (Croitz, 2011).

The crucial role of social media is dependent on the confidence it builds in people. Political activists know that other people will support their opinions and demonstrate especially after knowing that it is a “collective action” and not an individual one (Buisier, 2011).
Chapter 2: Statement of the problem:

This research study is addressing the impact social media has had on people especially in their political activism. This is because the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are considered the main motivators behind the global political awakening that has led to the different revolutions worldwide and especially in the Arab countries such as Egypt’s revolution. Facebook especially, is considered one of the main tools that have helped in the success of the revolution, knowing that it is the ninth most popular brand online. Facebook has the greatest average time spent per person constituting three hours and 10 minutes putting Facebook among the most popular 75 social network websites available worldwide. Also, Twitter and YouTube both have a profound effect due to the ease and pace in uploading and sharing videos among Internet users. Problems facing this research are as follows:

2.1. Official Monitoring

The problem facing this research study is the official monitoring of social networking websites from the government especially from the state security and the fear most Egyptians used to have from using social networking websites to discuss any political matters. Thus, very few users can use social media for political negotiations due to their fear from the Egyptian government torture before the Egyptian revolution.

2.2. Few Political Activists

Few Egyptians are courageous enough to share their political beliefs and debate it with other political activists due to torture the state security used to exercise on people
opposing the old regime, the former president and his followers especially the National Democratic Party.

2.3. Government control over Internet

Finally, the Egyptian government was highly controlling the Internet through different ways. For instance, the government shuts down many political websites that promote political debates and political actions such as demonstrations, even if it is a peaceful one. Besides, blocking the Internet during first days of the Egyptian revolution was intended to act as a barrier, for people to have difficulty communicating and reaching each other; however it had a diverse effect on people, for many Egyptians were annoyed from blocking the Internet and decided to join the demonstration instead.

2.4. Significance of the study

This is one of the early researches that studies the role of social media in mobilizing the Egyptian revolution. This research paper studies how social networking websites turned from being a socializing network to becoming not only the central point for political organizations, but also acts as “political actors” that are trying to reach outcomes by themselves.

Second, the research study also measures the degree of usage of social media as the main source of information during political crises. This study also seeks to assess if people actually depend on social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as their main source of information during the Egyptian revolution; or whether
they tend to rely more on traditional media such as television, newspapers, and radio during such political crises.

Third, this research study also explores the degree to which social networking websites allow more democracy, self-expression and self-actualization during political crises. It measures if new social networking websites have given ordinary citizens the right to express themselves, their beliefs, thoughts and experiences in a free democratic atmosphere without fear of authority figures and without any control or monitoring on the content being written.

Fourth, it studies the main uses and gratifications of the social media during political crises. In this respect, this research studies reasons why people use social networking websites during political crises and how exactly the use of such social networking websites benefits the protesters and ordinary people during and after the Egyptian Revolution.

Finally, it tackles if social networking websites really act as a motivator for the Egyptian citizens and encourage the protesters to go to the streets and speak out; since they know that a sufficient number of people support their opinions.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework:

This research paper examines how social media specifically social networking websites shaped and mobilized the public’s political thoughts that created the Egyptian Revolution. In order to examine their role, two main theories are applied in this context.

3.1. The Uses and Gratifications Theory:

The first theory is the *Uses and Gratifications Theory*. It involves a shift of focus from the purposes of the communicator to the purposes of the receiver. It attempts to determine what functions mass communication is serving for audience members. The uses and gratifications theory tries to answer questions such as the reason behind using the Internet and other forms of media as the theory has been used to answer the same questions regarding the traditional media (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

The *Uses and Gratifications theory* was developed by Elihu Katz (1959). The theory is more concerned with what people do with their use of the media and less concerned with what the media do to people. It challenges the notion of audience passivity and assumes that audiences are active. *Audience activity* can be defined as the deliberate choice by users of media content to satisfy their needs. People use the media according to their individual needs whether social or psychological.

The necessity of the *Uses and Gratifications theory* is that it helps the researcher in having a vivid understanding of how people use social networking websites and the purposes for such usage. Taking into consideration, the Internet and the World Wide Web
grew at a more rapid rate than any other previous mass medium, encourages different age groups to access social media (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

Thus, as mentioned earlier, this research paper through the Uses and Gratifications theory is studying why and how people are using social networking websites during a political crisis. It studies whether the usage of social networking websites during the Egyptian revolution is different from the usual usage of these websites. According to a study conducted by Chang in 1998, people use the Internet for two main reasons. Media attributes of immediacy whereby people use the Internet to know something right away and for stability by which people refer to the Internet to know the news when they want to. This is similar to what happened during the Egyptian revolution in which people followed social networking websites to get the latest news about Tahrir Square and the protest movement.

3.2. The Spiral of Silence

The second theory applied in this research is the Spiral of Silence theory, which devotes much more power to the mass media than many other theories. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1973, 1980) developed the Spiral of Silence and found that during election time people mute their opinions, if their opinions are inconsistent with the view of the majority. The spiral of silence occurs when individuals who perceive their opinion as popular express it, whereas those who do not think their opinion is popular remain quiet for fear of isolation and criticism. People who feel they hold the majority viewpoints are encouraged to speak out confidently (Severin & Tankard, 2001).
As a result, media attend to the expressed opinion. These views gain credibility when they are carried by the media as the dominant opinions, whether they are really dominant or not. Therefore, people who perceive that they are in a minority are inclined to speak out less (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

The result is a snowball effect, which means that the views can snowball through the media and become consensus views without being sufficiently challenged. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann came up with the spiral of silence theory in which minority views are intimidated into silence. Her model raises doubts about the Libertarian concept that the media provide a marketplace in which conflicting ideas fight out fairly. There are always exceptions such as the innovators, who like to speak out first even if minority to preserve their copy right of what they discover.

Noelle-Neumann argues that mass communication has three main characteristics that when are mingle together produce a powerful effect. These three characteristics are cumulation, ubiquity and consonance. Cumulation means the accumulation or the build up of specific ideas or messages over a certain period. Ubiquity means prevalent spread of the mass media. Consonance refers to the unified message that is shared by all the other mass media channels at the same time such as the television, radio and newspaper. Thus, if all these three characteristics are combined together they produce the profound effect of mass communication (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

As for this paper, the effect of the Spiral of Silence is appropriately to examine if social networking websites actually encourage protesters to go to the streets through overcoming the fear of collective action. Political activists or regular public feel that they
held the majority view so they are more encouraged to go out and speak as they feel that their opinions are supported by others. That is why for the first time in Mubarak’s era people are encouraged to go out to the street and protest as they felt that a sufficient number of people are supporting them, not only in Cairo but also all over Egypt and the Arab world such as Tunis.
Chapter 4: Literature Review:

Social media is a term that is used tremendously nowadays by most people worldwide, yet there are different forms, definitions and functions for social media. The best way to explain the term social media is by breaking it into two separate words. Media can be described as a communication instrument, thus social media is a “social instrument of communication.” In other words, social media is an Internet-based application that is concerned with building social networks among people with shared interest, beliefs and activities (Mourtada and Salem, 2011).

4.1 Definition of the social media:

It is the grouping of all the new sorts of the online media, which share all or at least most of the coming five characteristics (Mayfield, 2008):

- **Participation** → Social media aside from the traditional media allows the active audiences, not passive receivers of the media messages to contribute and give feedback.

- **Openness** → Social media services not only lifted any form of barriers for audiences, but also encouraged them to participate, give feedback, vote, comment, access content and share information with others.

- **Conversation** → Unlike traditional media, social media services permit the two way communication. Media are no more broadcasting content to be transmitted and distributed to the passive audience.
Community → The introduction of social media has helped audiences to communicate across different communities especially those who share common interests such as political views, religion or certain bands.

Connectedness → Almost the majority of social networks prosper on their connectedness through the liaison of different websites, resources and people.

4.2 Basic forms of social media:

There are basically seven forms of social media, although they might quickly be developed and new forms could be added (Mayfield, 2008).

Social Networks: will be discussed later in the next section, but briefly it allows its users to connect with their friends to share information and communicate through building their personal web pages. The most leading ones are MySpace, Facebook and Bebo.

Blogs: are considered the most known form of social media. “Blogs are online journals,” in which the most recent entries appear first.

Wikis: These kinds of websites permit its audience to edit and add information performing as a “communal document or database.” The most known and used wiki is Wikipedia, which is an online encyclopedia that has over than two million English language articles.

Podcasts: This service offered for instance by Apple iTunes, by paying subscription to receive audio and video files.
Forums: They just came up before the term “social media” and considered a powerful and popular element of the online communities, whereby there are areas of discussion around specific topics and interests.

Content Communities: These are communities that organize and share one certain type of content. For example, the most known communities that are formed around are photos (Flickr), bookmarked links (del.icio.us) and videos (YouTube).

Micro Blogging: Social networking combined with bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of content (‘updates’) are distributed online and through the mobile phone network. Twitter is the clear leader in this field.

4.3 Definitions of social network:

It is the grouping of people into certain groups, especially those who share common interests such as cooking, forming friends, finding jobs, golfing, gardening and sharing information (‘What’, 2011).

Online is the most popular form of social networking, although it could also be in person. Online social networks are usually formed through websites, therefore it is called the “Social Websites” which function as a separate community for Internet users. Most social network websites group individuals by focusing on particular interest for people to join. Yet there are a number of websites known as “traditional” social networking websites that do not focus on particular interest and their memberships are open as everyone is allowed to be a member no matter what their hobbies, views and beliefs are (‘What’, 2011).
Thus, according to Danah M. Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison (2008), social networking websites could be defined as web-based services that permit its users to do the following:

- Construct a public or a semi-public profile within a bounded system.
- Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection.
- View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

### 4.4 Benefits of social network:

There are a number of benefits that social networking websites provide for its users. The most prominent is the number of friends that one can form through the online community.

Forming friendships through social networking websites is completely different because individuals worldwide have the right to access the Internet and be a member in any of the social networking websites.

Finally, these diversity that the Internet has allowed for its users, help individuals to learn about different languages, countries and cultures that could have been impossible to learn about (“What”, 2011).

### 4.5 Explanation of social networking Websites:

Social networking websites have achieved wide recognition among Internet users a few years ago, in spite of the fact that they have been around for nearly a decade in different forms. These different forms of social networking websites and the various
reasons for their creation did not prevent them from having specific common concepts (Carfi and Chastaine, 2011).

**4.6 Main concepts of social network:**

There are two main common concepts that most of the social networking websites share despite of the different reasons that they might be established for (Carfi and Chastaine, 2011). These two concepts are the following:

- **Profile:** Whereby for each and every individual in these social networking websites, he or she has an online profile that “serves as the individual’s identity” in this online community. For example, in the professional milieu, the individual’s profiles always has information regarding his or her skills, education, resources, interests, experiences as well as affiliations.

- **Connections:** all the social networking websites allow their members to form connections with other people. These connections are either implicit ones whereby they are formed based on old relations or they are explicit connections meaning that they are newly set and formed by the members themselves.

Thus, social networking websites truly hold a great power. Since social networking websites were able to turn the Internet from static web pages to quite dynamic ones in which members connect and share their different skills, experiences and interests (Carfi and Chastaine, 2011).
4.7 Constitution of social networking websites:

Since the introduction of social networking websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, and Cyworld, they have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these social networking websites as part of their daily life practices. Most of the websites share the same technological features, but as for the usage and the cultures that emerge from the websites it is distinguishable to a great extent (Boyd and Ellison, 2008).

Some of the websites promote its members to form new friendships with strangers who share common interests, activities and political beliefs, while others are more concerned with preserving pre-existing relationships. Beside, some of the websites are furnished to diverse audiences with different cultures and backgrounds. On the other hand, there are other websites that attract audiences based on the fact that they are having a common nationality, religion, language, racial and sexual orientation (Boyd and Ellison, 2008).

Social networking websites also differ in their technological communication tools such as blogging, photo/video-sharing and mobile connectivity as well as the new information included. Interestingly, there are some social networking websites that are designed specially for the dogs and cats such as “Dogster” and “Catster” respectively, and their owners must manage their profiles. In spite of the fact that the primary intention of the designers of social networking websites is to be widely accessible worldwide, some websites attracts only homogenous group of people who isolate themselves by age, educational level, and nationality without the willingness of the site’s designer (Boyd and Ellison, 2008).
4.8 History of social networking websites:

The following history for the social networking websites was studied by Danah m. Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison (2008).
4.8.1: SixDegrees

The first identifiable social networking site SixDegrees.com was launched in 1997 whereby users can create profiles and list their friends and beginning in 1998 surf the Friends lists.

The main aim of SixDegrees is to help people to communicate with each other through sending messages. Although it was successful in attracting millions of users, SixDegrees was not able to remain as a sustainable business, so in 2000 the service closed. This is because many people were not interested at that time in forming friendships with strangers and complained that there were very few things to do after accepting the friend’s request.

From 1997 to 2001, there were tremendous community tools that supported social networking websites beginning with “supporting various combinations of profiles and publicity articulated Friends.” For instance, AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente that allowed their users to form their own profiles whether personal, professional or dating ones and at the same time users can identify friends on their profiles without having the approval for those connections.

4.8.2: LiveJournal:

In 1999, LiveJournal was launched whereby it listed one-directional connections on user pages. It was able to ensure more privacy settings as “people mark others as friends to follow their journals.” In addition, Cyworld, the Korean virtual world’s sites, were
also launched in 1999 and in 2001, adding SNS features that are independent of other websites.

**4.8.3: Ryze:**

In 2001, Ryze.com was launched to help people influence their business networks. The founder of Ryze reports that he first introduced the site to his friends and then “primarily members of San Francisco and technology community, including entrepreneurs and investors behind many future SNSs.” Interestingly, people behind the creation of Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were closely matted in both personal and professional wise, as they believed that they could work and support each other without competing. Yet, Friendster became the most prominent, LinkedIn became a powerful and successful business service, Tribe.net was only able to grow while attracting a niche user and Ryze was never successful in attracting mass users.

**4.8.4: Friendster:**

Friendster was launched in 2002, as a social complement to Ryze, which unlike other websites was not concerned with connecting people with strangers of similar interest, but rather was concerned with meeting “friends-of-friends” believing that this will result in more romantic partners than with strangers. The main three groups that help Friendster in gaining its popularity are bloggers, gay men and attendees of the burning man art festival. Then its popularity grew to reach 300,000 users only through word of mouth before the coverage of the traditional press that began in May 2003 (O’Shea, 2003).
Friendster was faced by both technical and social difficulties and with the rapid growth in the number of users; the site starts to falter regularly (Boyd, 2006b). As a result, most of the early adopters of Friendster have left because of the “combination of technical difficulties, social collisions, and a rupture of trust between the users and the site” (Boyd, 2006b).

Starting from 2003, many social networking websites were launched that tried to replicate Friendster early success by targeting specific demographics. Professional websites such as LinkedIn, Visible Path, and Xing focused on attracting business people, while social networking websites are targeting mass audience.

4.8.5: MySpace:

MySpace was launched in 2003 in Santa Monica, California, hundreds of miles from Silicon Valley and according to Tom Anderson, its co-founder; it was initially designed to compete with Friendster, Xanga, and AsianAvenue. The founders wanted to attract the former Friendster users especially after spreading rumors that Friendster membership will require paying a fee. Thus, messages were posted on Friendster to encourage users to switch to other social networking websites such as MySpace and Tribe.net.

As a result, MySpace was able to grow rapidly building its growth on the early adopters of Friendster. One of the most prominent groups that encouraged people to switch was the indie-rock bands that left Friendster because of the difficulty in compiling with its profile regulations.
A band such as the Indie-rock that originated in Los Angeles, was one of the reasons for the success and growth of MySpace. This is because bands start to create profiles with their fans and send VIP passes for popular clubs. In return, this helped MySpace to surpass the success of Friendster. Also, the “bands-and-fans dynamic was mutually beneficial” for the success of MySpace, as both the bands and fans want to reach and contact each other.

Two distinguishable features differentiate MySpace from all the other social networking websites. First, MySpace continuously adds new features based on the demand of its users. Second, MySpace allows its users to personalize their pages by not restricting them from adding HTML in their profiles forms or “copy/paste code culture emerged on the web to support users in generating unique MySpace backgrounds and layouts.”

In 2004, many teens in the U.S. started to join MySpace not as older users because they were in Friendster, but because they are interested in connecting with their favorite bands or they are encouraged to use the site from older family members. MySpace in turn changed its policy to allow minors to join and with this exponential growth, three different populations were formed: musicians/artists, teenagers, and the post-college urban social crowd.

In July 2005, after News Corporation purchased MySpace for $580 million and gained a great media attention, MySpace was plagued for moral and safety issues. The site was accused because of sexual interactions between adults and minors and a quick
legal action was required, as panic for a moral sexual concern quickly spread among the users (Bahney, 2006).

4.8.6: Facebook

Facebook began in early 2004, founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and fellow computer science students Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. The website's membership was mainly targeting university students at Harvard only. To join, a user must be having a harved.edu email address. As the site expanded to other universities, users were also required to have a university email address, which kept the site as an intimate and private community. In 2005, the site started to include professionals and eventually every one.

Facebook was distinguished from the other websites by giving its users the opportunity to have their profiles publicly available to all other users. The second feature that differentiates Facebook is that it gives its users the ability to build an “Application” to allow users to “personalize their profiles and perform other tasks, such as compare movie preferences and chart travel histories” (Mourtada and Salem, 2011).

Moreover, the total number of Facebook users in the Arab world increased from 11,978,300 users in January 2010 to 21,361,863 in December 2011, which constitutes an annual growth rate of 78 percent with an average penetration rate of 6.77 percent with the Arab region as a whole by the end of 2010. This average penetration rate increased to 7.5 percent by April 2011. As for the number of users, it increased from 21,377,282 on
January 5, 2011 to 27,711,503 as of April 5, 2011. Thus, the total number of Facebook users increased by 30 percent in the first quarter of 2011 (Mourtada and Salem, 2011).

UAE has the highest penetration rate for the Facebook as 45 percent of the population has a Facebook account. On the other hand, Egypt constitutes about 22 percent of the total Facebook users in the Arab region with around 4.7 million users. Yet, the Gulf countries dominate the top five Facebook users compared to the percentage of their population. Interestingly, Iraq and Djibouti are among the few Arab countries that the number of their Facebook users exceeds the number of Internet users, which means that people there rely more on their mobiles. Thus, Internet freedom does not affect Facebook penetration in the Arab region as countries with low scores i.e. high censorships and filtering are having high Facebook penetration. This accounts to the creative youth between the age of 15 and 29 who constitute 75 percent of the Facebook users in the Arab region and implement ways to overcome filter and censors. In addition, the large youth demoFigureic is the main reason behind the increase in the number of Facebook users in the region (Mourtada and Salem, 2011).

The following Figure shows the increase in the number of Facebook user during the Egyptian revolution period (Mourtada and Salem, 2011).
Although most of the social networking websites are targeting wider audiences, few ones are interested in targeting niche people with specific interests or characteristics, for example, activity-centered websites like Coushsurfing, identity-driven websites like BlackPlanet, and affiliation-focused websites like MyChurch. By now, there is no reliable data concerning the number of websites available and the number of people who use such websites, but social networking websites are exceedingly growing in popularity worldwide.

4.9 **Growth of social network websites:**

According to a research on social networking websites that was conducted by the Nielsen Company in 2009, the growth rate in ‘Member Communities’ is more than twice that of any of the other largest four sectors (search, e-mail, general interest portals and communities, software manufactures and member communities).
The largest growth has been achieved in the UK, Spain, Italy and Switzerland reaching more than 10 percent growth points in each of these countries than it did the previous year.

4.10 **Time spent on social networking websites:**

The research conducted by Nielsen Company even added that there is not only an increase in the number of members on the online community, but also the time people spend on these social networking websites is also increasing at a preceding rate.

The whole time that people spend online globally has increased by 18 percent between only December 2007 and December 2008. Yet, there is 63 percent increase in the amount of time spent by ‘Member Community’ websites. In most countries, the time spent by ‘Member Community’ has doubled and in Switzerland, for instance the share of time has tripled from 3 percent to 9.3 percent.

According to the last research conducted by Nielsen in 2009 regarding the different social networking websites, Facebook for example witnessed a massive increase by 566 percent accounts from 3.1 billion minutes to 20.5 billion minutes. The time people spent on Facebook is so high due to being the ninth most popular brand online and having the greatest average time spent per person, which constitutes three hours and ten minutes among the most popular 75 social networking websites available worldwide.
4.11 **Audiences served:**

Although social networking websites are initially established to target younger people, they widen their target market to reach older people. Facebook first initiated this shift, which was fairly successful in broadening and widening its audience. According to Nielsen research, Facebook was able to add “almost twice as many 50-64 year olds visitors (+13.6 million) than it has added under 18 years old visitors (+73 million). Thus, by now one third of the Facebook global audience aged between 35 and 49 and one quarter is over 50 years old (Nielsen, 2009).

4.12 **Social networking websites and political participation:**

According to John Tudor, “Technology makes it possible to gain over everything, except over technology.” The idea that social networking websites such as the Facebook are having a profound political effect is not surprising news for anyone especially after the various revolutions that are taking place in the Arab region in the last few months that spread from Tunisia to Egypt, to Bahrain, Libya, Yemen and other parts of the Arab region. It is obvious that “Twitter, Facebook and YouTube have been an integral part of political upheaval and change in the Middle East” (Lloyd, 2011).

Moreover, according to the political scientists Brian J. Gaines and Jeffrey J. Mondak (2011), the groups that are formed online through social networking websites do share and have some common features of “traditional real world networking groups” especially when these groups are linked to political actions. Thus, social networking websites especially Facebook turned from just being a central point to form political groups and
organizations and “emerge as political actors in their own right” (Lloyd, 2011). In other words, social networking websites are imbedding themselves into the ongoing political debates, trying by themselves to form attainable outcomes.

4.13 **Social Networking websites usage in politics:**

The social networking websites are used in forming political actions for different reasons. First, ease of use of these websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Second, these websites also help in overcoming “barriers to political mobilization” (Freeland, 2011). Thus, most people worldwide are now having a free medium whereby they can express their political beliefs freely without censorship and fear from the governments.

4.14 **Groupon effect:**

The Groupon effect as described by Chrystia Freeland, a journalist at *The New York Times*, is that when people hold a certain opinion and find that the majority are support their opinion, they are more encouraged to speak out since their views are widely shared. This is known as the “collective action.”

She believes that both television and the Internet, especially social networking websites, help opponents of the dictatorship regimes to know that there is an adequate number of citizens supporting them, so they are more encouraged to speak out. Opponents feel through Facebook groups that their views are widely shared and that everyone who does not want this dictatorship regime will go to the street, which is known as the Groupon effect.
This can be better explained through the “Spiral of Silence Theory” whereby the spiral of silence occurs when individuals who perceive their opinion as popular express it, whereas those who do not think their opinion is popular remain quiet for fear of isolation and criticism. People who feel they hold majority viewpoints are encouraged to speak out confidently. Thus, opponents to the regime whether the political activists or ordinary people are more encouraged to speak out and demonstrate after being supported by the majority of people from their countries.

4.15 Social networking websites and role in protesting:

According to Freeland television, Facebook and Twitter “have been more powerful in solving the problem of collective action, by giving people unhappy with their governments the confidence that their views are widely shared.” In other words, the new technological progress has eased the way for provoked societies to come out and express their “collective anger.” As long as people get over this collective action problem, going to the streets and protesting could be as powerful as it has been in Egypt and Tunisia.

Thus, social networking websites are effective and powerful in helping us to know whether we share our views with the public or it is only a personal opinion (Freeland, 2011). Yet, still inaugurate a new regime is the most difficult step that could not be achieved with the social networking websites.

Moreover, social media could differ in languages being used, but the similarities between the different social networking websites are quite clear in use. Besides, blogs are now considered one of the main threats and challenges to media providers as they can
cause real societal changes by now are having over 200,000 active blogs in the Arab region (Ian, 2011).

According to Clay Shirky, a professor of New Media at New York University and the author of Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age, Internet users population worldwide is tremendously growing “from low millions to low billions” since the rise of the Internet in the early 1990s. Shirky added that this increase in the number of users, required civil societies to use social media as a fact of life which involves many actors including the citizens, governments and non-governmental organizations, activists, firms in different fields and even software providers. This increase in the population of social media users helped people in having a greater access to information and more chances to be involved in public speech to have the opportunity to “undertake collective action.”

4.15.1: Global political Awake

As mentioned earlier with the evolution of the social media specifically the social networking websites almost all people for the first time in human history became “politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive” (Marshall, 2011). This global political awakening leads to a global political activism. Taking in consideration that human dignity is behind this global political awakening especially that the Internet creates a community of shared beliefs and values that motivates Internet users worldwide to end the “long alien colonial or imperial domination” and have better economic conditions with respectable cultures and personal dignity.
Thus, the world is entering a new revolutionary era which is the era of “Global Political Awakening.” This revolutionary era in spite of being for different countries, areas, and people and under different circumstances, yet, it is almost for the same reason. Most people are suffering especially in the Arab countries from the poor economic conditions, unemployment, corruption whether public in the government or private even within private businesses. Also, the increase in the gap between the rich and the poor is widening (Marshall, 2011). One of the examples of how these countries are corrupted and want to prevent their citizens from their minimum rights is Morocco which prevents its private media from reporting the revolutions that are taking place worldwide to isolate its citizens from the demonstrations and the other protesters worldwide (Gumede, 2011).

Interestingly, this political awakening is not only affecting the Arab regions or the areas where demonstrations occur, but it is also affecting the Western powers, multinational corporations and international institutions that act as a threat for these entities. This is because they are now forced to find new ways in dealing with the new circumstances after they were fairly benefiting from the old regimes, so they are faced with a real strategic challenge (Marshall, 2011).

Fidgety and offended youth of the third world from the poor economic conditions that they suffer from in their countries as a result of the corrupted government represent a “political time-bomb.” This revolutionary feeling is a combination of the “socially insecure lower middle class” that is “inflamed by a sense of social outrage.” In other words they are “revolutionaries-in-waiting” who are connected and motivated through the
social media. They are just waiting for the right time to explode their anger, hatred and frustrations from the controlling regimes (Marshall, 2011).

As for the controlling and autocratic regimes, they are faced by a real challenge as in the earlier periods it was much easier to control one million people than to actually kill them. While nowadays after the introduction of the Internet and social media it is fairly easier to physically kill one million people than to control them. In spite of the importance of these revolutions and these global political awake, there will be some “failures, problems and regressions” that these revolutionary countries will face, but at least the ‘Awakening’ begun for the long run benefits (Marshall, 2011).

4.15.2: Electronic Revolutions worldwide

Revolutions that arise from the social media specifically from the social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, did not start in the Arab region. They started in many foreign countries a while ago. For instance, on January 17, 2001 Manila witnessed the first electronic revolution as Shirky (2011) mentioned that during the prosecution of the Philippines’ President Joseph Estrada when “loyalist in the Philippine Congress voted to set aside key evidence against him.” Demonstrations were arranged in only two hours after the decision was publicly announced that the corrupted president “might be let off the hook.” Thousands and then over a million of Filipinos protested at Santos Avenue street, which is a major crossroads in Manila. Protesters communicated with each other and gathered by forwarding text messages saying “Go 2 EDSA. Wear blk” and then choking traffic in downtown Manila (Shirky, 2011).
Moreover, the Philippine strategy has been implemented many times after its success whereby sometimes the protesters succeeded while others did not. For instance, in Spain 2004 also through the text messages a demonstration was arranged against the Spanish Prime Minister Jose’ Maria Aznar, for wrongly blaming the “Madrid transit bombings on basque separatists. Also, in Moldova in 2009 after a fraudulent election was discovered protesters arrange massive demonstration through text messages, Facebook and Twitter (Shirky, 2011).

On the other hand, one of the unsuccessful demonstrations that were also arranged through the social media is in Belarus in March 2006 against the President Aleksandr Lukashenko which left him having more power and control over the people and on all sorts of social media by using torture with the protesters. A similar scenario also occurred in the Red Shirt uprising in Thailand in 2010. The protesters gathered through using the social media as their main tool for communication and occupied downtown Bangkok. The Thai government killed dozens of the protesters in order to disperse them (Shirky, 2011).

Other recent movements that Shirky (2011) stated that were also arranged by social media, but unfortunately did not succeed including a “movement against fundamentalist vigilantes in India in 2009, the beef protests in south Korea in 2008, and protests against education laws in Chile in 2006.” All these movements have used social media tools especially the social networking websites as a tool to communicate with each other. Yet, these electronic revolutions had not succeeded because the state did not lose
its power to react i.e. using the social media, as a tool for communicating to protest does not guarantee that the demonstration will succeed.

4.15.3: The American Uprising

The social media uprising is not unique to autocratic regimes, as it also happens in democratic countries. Nowadays, the United States which is considered one of the most democratic governments is facing different protest movements. The first two movements are in Wisconsin and Ohio, that are arranged by public employees, university students, firefighters and school teachers in order to remove “collective bargaining and unilaterally cut benefits” (Gelder, 2011).

Also, on February 26 Day of Action, there was another protest movement that is arranged in different cities around the country in order to target “corporate tax dodgers.” Besides, there was another demonstration that was mainly intending to protect the poor and the middle class in their work (Gelder, 2011).

The demonstrations are prepared and inspired by a group of people that represent different segments in the US such as firefighters, nurses, students and others who created a group called “US Uncut group” as a kind of objection and fighting against the cut offs that are executed by the government (Gelder, 2011). Here, social media played a crucial role in helping these people to communicate with one another in the different states and share their information. They even created a website named the Uncut website whereby they stated their goal as follows:
“To draw attention to the fact that the Bank of America received $45 billion in government bailout funds while funneling its tax dollars into 115 offshore tax havens [...] And to highlight the fact that the poor and middle class are now paying for this largess through drastic government cuts.”

The poor and middle class Americans are suffering from the economic circumstances that happened and complaining that they are the only ones who are paying the bill through losing their jobs and educational opportunities. That is why they use the social media to arrange protest movements because the companies that are the main reason for this economic collapse are using “tax loopholes and offshore tax shelters” to find ways to evade them from paying the taxes at the time that if they pay their taxes the government will not need all these cutoffs (Gelder, 2011).

Adding to this, most Americans need from the government more investment in different fields such as education, infrastructure and environment protection, which will lead to more huge cuts in both the state and federal budgets. The problem is that the government is favoring the rich side by increasing its cutoffs and reducing services to the poor and middle class. Thus, the US Uncut group is demanding from the rich and big corporations to pay taxes and help their country to overcome this critical stage instead of only asking for more sacrifice from the poor and middle class (Gelder, 2011).

4.15.4: Cuba Uprising

Although social media websites have been the dominant tool that help in the success of most of the revolutions in the Middle East, this is not the case with Cuba.
Cuba is considered the “least connected country in the hemisphere,” as after some Cubans tried to organize through the Facebook a protest movement, “no one showed up” (Miroff, 2011).

The Cuban people and even their government are fairly different from the Middle Eastern people. As for the government, it falls under a totalitarian system and not under the autocratic regime as the Middle Eastern countries. The Cuban people are pretty frightened from their regime as they associate their economic wellbeing with the continuity of the regime. Thus, the government has a huge “capacity for social control.” That is why the Cubans are not ready enough to go to the street and protest as in the Middle Eastern countries (Miroff, 2011).

Social media websites are not the only reason behind the success of the electronic revolution as without the people’s willingness to change their country, social media websites can do nothing. A clear evidence is the Cuban citizens since they are indifferent to the extend that even for the prisoners who have been released only after an agreement between the Catholic Church and the Spanish government, most of them left the country and went to Spain and were not eager to do any changes in their country (Miroff, 2011).

Only very few Cuban citizens are looking for change and try to organize some demonstrations. Yet, whenever they arrange any protest movement, the government instead of using guns and tanks, it applies another strategy whereby “pro-government crowds surround protesters and scream obscenities and insults at them” (Miroff, 2011).
Thus, in spite of the powerful effect of the social network websites in most of the Arab countries by becoming one of the central tools in the success of these revolutions, in a country like Cuba they are merely useless and ineffective (Miroff, 2011).

4.15.5: China uprising

Social media is a double weapon at the time that it is used by protesters to arrange demonstrations. It is also used as a destructive weapon for the autocratic governments. Governments can use the social media as a tool to get in touch with its ordinary citizens. Yet, a country like China during the Egyptian revolution blocked all the Internet websites and searches that contain the word “Egypt” and deprived its citizens from their right to know and access information. By this China violates one of the fundamental human rights that its citizens should be having, in order to prevent them from forming a similar revolt (“Will”, 2011).

On the other hand, the Chinese people were one of the early people who used social media tools to share information and documents about their corrupted government. For instance, in May 2008 many parents especially mothers arranged protest movements after losing their children in the “collapse of shoddily built schools” as a result of “collusion between construction firms and the local government.” The Chinese people used the social media to share documentation that proves that the school collapse is due to government corruption to turn it from “an open secret to a public truth” (Shirky, 2011).

The Chinese government was mainly frightened from spreading awareness among people because of social media, but it has nothing to do with it. This shared awareness
create “the dictator’s dilemma” or it could be more precisely described as being “the constructive dilemma” as it’s the dilemma that usually leads to the end of this corrupted and autocratic regime (Shirky, 2011).

This destruction is generally because the states after having a full control over the flow of information and what reaches the public, found themselves being inconsistent in the events occurring and that the public is fully aware of what is going on through social media and what is being falsely announced by the states (“Will”, 2011).

4.15.6: Iran uprising

In Iran, the uprising was mainly against Mir Hossein Mousavi whereby Iranians also used the social media tools to encourage people to protest against “the miscount of votes.” This was called “the Green Movement” that happened during June 2009, but it turned to be totally unsuccessful after an aggressive attack (Shirky, 2011).

As social media has a divesting effect on people, it could also be used as weapon by governments instead of actual fighting. For example, CIA operatives could better use their computer and start “tweeting and sharing anti-Ahmadinejad” campaigns on Facebook to demand a quick uprising and change in the country instead of entering an actual war (“Will.”, 2011). This is exactly what happened during the “Green Revolution” when Western nations were supporting the protesters through social media in order to “destabilize the Iranian government” (Marshall, 2011).

Moving to the situation in the Middle East, the revolutions that are taking place from Tunisia to Egypt and are now moving to North Africa prove many things. Too much
oppression will lead to a wave for ordinary people and push them to get out streets and
demand their rights of freedom and the end of totalitarianism and cruelty. It is more of a
“political correctness meeting ethical relativism.” As when oppression and injustice
reaches that extent, “universal values and standards” turned to be the central change that
people demand. The uprising that is taking place in the Middle East is clear evidence that
people lost their tolerance and that they are not just demanding “civil and political rights
but economic and social opportunities.” Most Arabs are not just demanding political
freedom and economic wellbeing; they are also demanding the basic human rights that
they are deprived from under these autocratic regimes. Examples of the rights they are
demanding are freedom of expression, right to use Internet and social media without any
sort of censorship (Praag, 2011).

4.15.7: Tunisia Uprising

Tunisia is known as having one of the Arab world’s most repressive governments
and has been ruled by Zine el Abedine Ben Ali from 1987 for 24 years with the worst
political crisis. It is now going through a transitional era. Demonstrations in Tunisia
started on December 17, 2011 after a 26 years old college student committed suicide. He
did so in front of a government building as a kind of objection to the extreme suppression
of his government that deprives him from his only means of income that is an illegal
vegetable vending cart. The demonstration was also because Tunisians were suffering
from such as high unemployment, lack of political freedom, regional inequalities,
inflation, disrespect of human dignity, stealing of the country’s resources and First
Family corruption (Ghazi, 2011).
At the same time, YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, WikiLeaks, blogs, forums and Twitter have opened the way for the Arab masses to freely express their political opinions and frustrations against their oppressive governments to the whole world without any sort of censorship (Ghazi, 2011).

Tunisian, instead of using Facebook to socialize with others and uploads their personal photos, they used it to express their aggravation with unemployment, hunger and corruption. Thus, Facebook acts as a “battlefield between Tunisian authorities and web activities” during the Tunisian demonstrations whereby Tunisians were regularly uploading “up-to-the-minute Twitter feeds of street demonstrations” and “images of alleged police brutality” which are very shocking that infuriate people even more (Ghazi, 2011). Yet, the success of the revolution is because of the direct demonstration of the Tunisian people, so naming it the “Twitter Revolution” is deceitful and unfair (Marshall, 2011).

Interestingly, the Tunisian state television was to the last minute trying to hide the truth from the people in spite of all the information and videos they were exposed to. The state television announced that the demonstrations were just “isolated events” and that everything is going normal. At the same time, all other satellite channels such as Al Jazeera were airing that the demonstrations were in Tunisia as a whole and every one is engaged in the protest movements by a mean or another. Sarcastically, Al Jazeera and all the other satellite channels were getting their news from the social media especially Facebook and YouTube videos since they were banned from reporting from Tunisia (Ghazi, 2011).
Moreover, no one was expecting or accurately estimating the profound effect of the anger of the Tunisian people as for example France’s President Sarkozy admitted that “he had underestimated the anger of the Tunisian people and the protest movement that ousted President Zine al-Abedine Ben Ali” (Marshall, 2011). Even the Tunisian authority was quite astonished from their effect especially after “Anonymous” hackers were able to temporarily shutdown eight Tunisian government websites. In return the government tried to stop the far reaching effect of the protesters by closing some Facebook pages for the “most vocal activists in the Tunisian cyber-community such as Sofiene Chourabi, a journalist for Al- Tariq al- Jadid magazine and a strong critic of the government” (Ghazi, 2011).

As for the Tunisian people, they call their revolution “Sidi Bouzid revolt” referring to the city where the whole demonstration began and not the “Twitter revolution.” According to Taoufik Ben Brik, for the Tunisian people these protest movements or electronic revolutions give them one meaning described as “the revolution gives us the opportunity to dream” (“Revolution…,” 2011).

Tunisia is now in transition period, trying to form a stable, fair and effective political base. By the mid of February 24th 2011, officially registered political parties are trying to succeed among the Tunisian people by putting social justice as their main priority. For example, reducing the high unemployment rate is one of the main concerns for the success of any political party as it is one of the reasons behind the revolution. Also, reducing the cost of living, end of privatization especially in the public service
sector and formation of parliamentary democracy are some of the main demands of the Tunisian people (“Revolution…,” 2011).

In addition, the Tunisian people have lost their fear thus the temporarily government that is ruling now knows quite well that any kind of “betrayal of the revolution” will lead to massive demonstrations. Also, the Tunisian people refute the idea that any representative from the old regime plays any role in the new government as this is also considered “betrayal of the revolution” (“Revolution…,” 2011).

4.15.8: Libya Uprising

Moving on to Libya as the tension is increasing and the effect of the Social media is widening to attack the long presidential rule of the dictator Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi. He is internationally known for the longest political presence in the Middle East. He has warned his citizens after the Tunisian and the Egyptian revolution from using Facebook. Yet, political activists in Libya kept using the social networking websites to push people to go to the street and ask for reform (McHugh, 2011).

Unfortunately, many of the political activists who have been using the Facebook to ask for the resignation of Gaddafi have been arrested. The Libyan state television as the Tunisian and the Egyptian state television denied all the protest movements that were taking place in Libya. According to one of the Libyan government figures to the CNN on February 16, 2011 requested anonymity “There is nothing serious here. These are just young people fighting each other” (McHugh, 2011).
On the other hand, social media helped people in reporting the truth from Libya and spreading information worldwide in less than seconds. Twitter, at the time the Libyan state television was airing that there is nothing in Libya, the Libyan authority were using “helicopters, troops, thugs, security and foreign mercenaries all against unarmed protesters.” This in turn leads to the murder and injury of many Libyan citizens by the Libyan security forces that are supposed to protect its citizens and not to kill them (McHugh, 2011).

Yet, Libyans do not give up and there are many anonymous activists arranging for protest movements through using Facebook and Twitter such as the “Day of Anger” group. As a result, the Libyan government sporadically blocked texting and Internet connection to try to hinder these demonstrations. Since most telecom companies are owned by the government, they sent threat messages to all the citizens on their mobile phones reading “From Libya’s youths to anyone who dares to cross any of the four red lines come and face us in any street on the group of our below country” (McHugh, 2011).

Social media tools in the case of Libya have been used as a double edge weapon. As although the Libyan activists were using social networking websites to motivate people to protest and ask for reform, the government on the other hand used text messaging to threaten its citizens and at the same time has the power to completely isolate its citizens from what is happening worldwide (McHugh, 2011).
4.15.9: Yemen Uprising

As for the Yemen uprising whereby Yemen is the poorest nation in the Arab world that has been since 1978 ruled by the dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh. People were protesting whether they are students, activists, opposition groups or ordinary people demanding the resignation of the president saying slogans such as “Get out get out, Ali. Join your friend Ben Ali” (Marshall, 2011).

The circumstances in Yemen were fairly deteriorating in the recent years. Poor economic conditions with a very high unemployment rate nearly 40 per cent among men aged 20 to 24. Also, the Southern movement in the south that were fighting for their liberation since 2007 and the rebel movement in the north also fighting against the government both have made the situation worse. As a result of all of this oppression that the Yemeni’s people kept suffering from for almost 33 years, their anger and frustration were the main motivators behind their success. This is as they were able to force Ali Abdullah Saleh to resign after this long dictatorship (Marshall, 2011).

4.15.10: Jordan and Syria Uprising

Similar protest were also arranged through social media especially Facebook in both Jordan and Syria against unemployment, high food prices, government corruption and asking for the end of the ruling regimes of these dictators. However, in both countries the government and the president were able to control the protests through using cruelty and torture among the protesters (Marshall, 2011).
4.15.11: Bahrain Uprising

After being inspired by the Egyptian and Tunisian uprising, thousands of the Shiite protesters went to the streets demanding the resignation of the Sunni Muslim family that has been ruling over a majority of Shiite population. The effect of these protests is not only in Bahrain but also act as a risk of instability in Saudi Arabia that is ruled by Saudi Sunnis royal family and are willing for a “generational transition of power” (Abocar, 2011).

The royal family is afraid that the Shiites, who represent around 15 percent of the Saudi population, will demand more “social, economic, and religious equality.” Thus, they will try to assist Bahrain to the extent that it may “provide logistical and military support to the Bahrain monarch if needed” as Farouk Soussa, a Middle East chief economist at Citi in Dubai expects. Yet, it is unexpected that Saudi will react quickly, it is more expected that they will wait as the clashes in Bahrain between the Shiite and the authority has been there since the mid-1990s (Abocar, 2011).

4.15.12: Israel and Palestine Uprising

Taking the Middle East conflict online, one of Israel’s main concerns is improving its image worldwide. Thus, it uses social media as a tool to communicate with people worldwide and try to address the “Israeli side” of the conflict. It has an informative websites in four different languages: English, Arabic, Persian and Hebrew. Also, it has two Twitter accounts, a YouTube channel and a page on Facebook (Ahituv, 2010).
At the same time, the Palestinians are also having their own page on Facebook and a YouTube channel to present their side of the story that is managed by ISM, International Solidarity Movement. Interestingly, Israel feels that the winning side is Palestine’s side in spite of the tremendous and extensive presence of pro-Israel organizations since the number of anti-Israeli blogs outweighs the number of pro-Israel ones (Ahituv, 2010).

On the other hand, the real advantage of social media especially social networking websites such as Facebook for both Palestinians and Israeli’s is that it is the only platform whereby both sides can communicate freely although there is some kind of censorship and in some cases different websites get blocked. Yet, social media offers ordinary people whether the Palestinians or the Israelis a way of communicating that might remove biases and stereotypes and provide a meeting point where they can actually reach solutions such as The Peace Blog (Ahituv, 2010).

This could be impossible to take place for ordinary Palestinians and Israelis to communicate in real life without social media. Now, both parties can express their views freely without any biases (Ahituv, 2010).

It is not surprising that Israel fears the revolutions that are taking place in the Arab world fearing these revolutions might affect the stability of its system. According to Israel Vice Prime Minister Silvan Shalom “I fear that we now stand before a new and very critical phase in the Arab world.” This fear is primarily because Israel was having very good relationships with the old autocratic regimes in the Arab world for their own interest although apparently they pretended they were anti-Israel (Marshall, 2011).
Moreover, civil society organizations in Israel are gaining high power in the recent years particularly the ones dealing with issues concerning “poverty, workers’ rights and violence against women and children.” The power that these civil society organizations gained has put the Israeli Knesset and Cabinet under pressure, as they want to gain this power back. That is why in one of the articles of the Israel intellectual newspaper, Ha’aretz, the author of the article wrote, “Israel may be on the eve of revolutions” (Marshall, 2011).

4.15.13: Africa Uprising

The effect of social media is not limited to Arab countries, but it’s expanding also to many African countries that has been ruled by long-time autocrats. African citizens are suffering even from harder circumstances than those of the Arab countries. For example, Zimbabwe has been ruled for 31 years by Robert Mugabe, Cameroon for 29 years by Paul Biya, Uganda ruled by Yoweri Museveni for 25 years and Jose Dos Santos has been ruling for 32 years and is preparing to pass the presidential power to his children (Gumede, 2011).

After the African countries gained their independence, its demography entirely changing, as most of the populations are young people, who are knowledgeable, have access to the Internet and social media. These young people whether in the African or the Arab countries can now see how “better off their peers in Western countries live, compared to them” (Gumede, 2011).
For African people, social media especially Twitter represent the only mean of acquiring information and knowing what is happening worldwide. The state whether in south or north Africa is almost fully controlling the public and private ones. This is to prevent the dissemination of information regarding government corruption. The state is controlling media by being the only and most essential advertiser, so losing the state means losing your only source of advertisement. Also, the state can indirectly control the private media through restricting the licenses given to private companies (Gumede, 2011).

The same goes for the radio as the government controls most radio stations and licenses are given only to the stations that do not cover any political issues. Thus, most Africans are deprived from any source of information about their government corruption. Yet, the rise of the Internet, social media and mobile phones give these people another medium to communicate and share information without the state control (Gumede, 2011).

Although, the Internet is not widely spread among African people as it is among Egyptian and Tunisian, mobile phones are more widely spread especially among poor people in African countries. For example, in Zimbabwe’s last elections, mobile phones were used to “text witnessed attempts at vote rigging by Zanu PF strongman at voting stations in remote areas.” Thus, expected revolutions in the African countries primarily south of the Sahara will be through mobile phones and not through the Internet (Gumede, 2011).
4.16 Social networking websites are not the cause of the revolutions

The use of social networking websites in making protest movements were used first by the Iranians in 2009. They used Twitter and Facebook to arrange protest movements and disseminate information about their demonstrations inside the state and outside worldwide, therefore it was called the “Twitter Revolution” (York, 2011).

Then, the youth in both Tunisia and Egypt were encouraged to start using Facebook and Twitter for “political and social organizing” events and sharing videos on YouTube that act as a motivator for people to go to the streets. The demonstrations in both Tunisia and Egypt “were seen as a pre-planning online strategy” (York, 2011).

According to Jillian York, a Boston-based writer, researcher and activist, the rise of the Internet and social media were essential tools in helping people to communicate freely with each other, yet they were not the reason behind the revolutions. For example, in Iran the revolution was due to the deceit election that kept Ahmadinejad in power for the second time. Also, in both Egypt and Tunisia the revolutions were due to poverty, corruption and high unemployment rates.

Thus, he believed that it will be completely unfair to credit these revolutions to be the electronic revolutions or Twitter and Facebook revolutions and ignore the “blood, sweat and tear gas” of the young people which made the revolutions.

Also, Andrew Marshall (2011) added that social media did had a crucial role in mobilizing people, but the actual revolution and its consequences such as the resignation
of Ben Ali and Mubarak is due to the direct demonstrations and enthusiasm of the protesters and not because of being “Twitter revolution.”

4.17 Arguments for and against social media tools in politics

There are two arguments that Shirky (2011) addressed against the concept of social media and their political effect. The first is that some argue that social media tools are by themselves ineffective. The second is that social media tools produce as much harm to democratization as it does good.

For instance, there are many protest movements that were arranged through the use of social media, especially the most popular social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Some of these movements are:

- Movement against fundamentalist vigilantes in India in 2009
- Beef protest in South Korea in 2008
- Protests against education laws in Chile in 2006

Yet, this does not mean that any protest movement that is arranged through social media will succeed, since governments do not lose their power to react.

On the other hand, according to Shirky (2011) the reason that these social media tools lead to political changes is the belief that the governments and protesters have, that the social media is extremely powerful and will bring dramatic changes. Thus, most governments especially in the Arab countries are willing to kill, arrest and use violence against protesters out of this fear.
Moreover, one cannot say that the West initiates these protest movements through social media. This is because the West was willing to control these emerging movements for its own benefits as countries were having strong ties with the old regimes. Thus, these movements were originated from the oppression that Arabs are facing under the dictators regimes (Marshall, 2011).

This is exactly the global warning that the IMF announced in 2008 after the global economic crisis that ‘violent protest could break out in countries worldwide if the financial system was not restructured to benefit everyone rather than a small elite’ and this economic instability could lead to ‘violent unrest on the streets’ (Marshall, 2011).

4.18 The case of the Egyptian Revolution:

The Egyptian revolution is a consequences of long-term dictator regimes that deprive the majority of the Egyptians from their basic human rights. This dictator regime under the former-president Hosni Mubarak began in 1981 and ended in 2011. Mubarak ruled for almost 30-years whereby many people kept suffering by being deprived from their basic needs to live a moderate and secure life (Hartman, 2011).

4.18.1 Reasons for the uprising

Because of this oppression, the Egyptian revolution was initiated for the following reasons (Betz, 2011):

- Economic hardship
- High unemployment rate especially among the youth
- High food prices
Therefore, according to a CNN correspondent in Cairo after all the above reasons and by what is taking place in Egypt it is “safe to say Egypt is in revolt.” The demonstrations in Egypt were a result of continuing anger that people have been suffering from for a long time. Thus, protestors went to the streets asking for changes to take place. Cairo’s downtown Tahrir Square witnessed thousands of people fighting police with rocks, while the police responded by using tear gas (Masr, 2011).

4.18.2 Description of the protesters

The most remarkable point is about the demographics of those who have initiated the demonstrations since most of the protesters are young, well educated and relatively moderate to high social standards. They do not have a specific leader as people get used to see in most revolutions worldwide. The charismatic leader who controls the whole demonstration, the protesters, gives advice and coordinate between the protesters is not present. In other words, it is a “socially driven revolution” that did “erupt out of nowhere” and is at the same time “subject to a variety of viewpoints” (Greg, 2011).
4.18.3 Description of the revolution

The most important characteristic of the revolution is that it was arranged and implemented through the use of social media specifically social networking websites mainly the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Following will be a detailed description of the revolution with the dates and what took place in each day (Postill, 2011). The revolution could be divided into two stages before January 25th and the 18 days of the revolution from Jan. 25th and till the president resignation to pass power to the Egyptian army on the 11th of February 2011.

4.18.3.1 Before the revolution:

Before January 2011, protesters through social media websites such as Facebook especially “we are all Khaled Said” page arranged that on January 25th the annual celebration for the Egyptian police a protest movement should arise opposing the cruelty and torture that the Egyptian police is using against citizens. Yet, the protesters do not know that it will be a revolution. Adding to this, the Muslim Brotherhood on January 23rd announced that they will not participate in the protest movements on Jan. 25th and actually they only started to participate on Jan. 28th after it turned to be a complete revolution (Sarhan, TV program).

4.18.3.2 During the revolution

Then, during the 18 days of the revolution starting on January 28th 2011 → Day of Rage as after being inspired by the Tunisian demonstrations, huge protest movements erupted across Egypt, whereby protesters in Cairo congregating on Tahrir Square.
Protesters arranged their gatherings and communications through Facebook. Twitter also played a crucial role as a tool used by protesters to post news of the day in Egypt and abroad through using “hash tag #jan25.” Social networking websites occupied a major role in the preparation of this day. Moreover, there were anonymous leaflets that were distributed among the protesters to advise them on how to react against the police, organize mass demonstrations, control governmental offices, email and photocopy the leaflets to distribute them but not through the social media for security reasons as the Egyptian government was monitoring most social networking websites. It is not surprising that during the 18 days of the revolution, Al Jazeera TV had the highest viewership both in Egypt and abroad. Then on the January 27 Mohamed El Baradei returned to Egypt to participate in the demonstrations against the 30 years dictator regime and he spoke to thousands of Egyptian protesters. Yet, on this day, the number of protesters was small as they were preparing for a massive demonstration the following day. The police spread across Egypt as a whole in an attempt to control the streets. Beside, the Egyptian government started disrupting the mobile blackberry and all Internet services. The most significant day which it turned from a peaceful demonstration to a revolution is January 28th 2011 → Friday of Anger. Demonstrations continued in spite of the cut down of the Internet and mobile services as people started using “offline networking tools: the mosques” to communicate and organize the demonstration. Also, El Baradei was forced to stay under “house arrest” and then released later after the US threatened the Egyptian government that it will “review its $1.5 billion package to Egypt.” Vicious conflict between the Egyptian police officers and the protesters took place where the foremen used rubber bullets and allegedly real ammunition to disperse
the protestors. By the end of the day, Mubarak came out after a long silence gave his first speech when he asked Nazif’s government to resign. Then, on Jan. 29 both Twitter and Google coordinated to establish a special system mainly for Egypt, which is the “speak–to-tweet” system whereby people can send voice messages through using the landlines to overcome the need for an Internet access. On Jan. 31 Pro-Mubarak protesters appeared for the first time to meet at Mustafa Mahmud mosque to demonstrate for the sake of Mubarak. It was the first time for Al Jazeera TV to face the worst problem in its signal to broadcast across the Arab region. On February 1st 2011, “March of the Millions” was launched, Mubarak gave his speech for the second time which was quite emotional and a big percentage of the audience sympathized with him. He announced that he will not rule for another term, but will remain for a safe and peaceful transition for the sake of the Egyptians. Mubarak’s speech led to more violent clashes between anti and pro Mubarak protesters. On February 2nd 2011, Internet access was partially restored. The government allegedly sent gangster to Tahrir Square riding on camels and horses carrying “swords, whips, clubs, stones, rocks and pocket knives” to fight against the anti-government protesters, which is known as the Camel Battle or Maaraket Al Gammal in Arabic. Moving on to February 3rd, 2011 the situation was further deteriorated as Mubarak in an interview with ABC announced that he is tired and wishes to leave but he is afraid from the chaos that will erupt in case he leaves. Egyptian authorities forced Vodafone to send pro-Mubarak messages to its subscribers at a time when the public was still deprived from sending messages to each other. On February 4th 2011, known as the Friday of Departure, hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Tahrir Square asking for Mubarak’s resignation. February 10, 2011 Mubarak gave another speech stating that he will not step
down for the safety of Egypt as a whole and its citizens. Yet, on February 11th 2011, Mubarak finally stepped down and celebrations were everywhere in Egypt and all over the world as it was the end of the 30 years dictators’ regime. The Egyptian took over for a transitional period which is supposed to end by the presidential election in May, 2012.

4.18.4 Major attributes of Social media

The first attribute that helped in the success of the Egyptian revolution is accessibility. Accessibility means the ability of social media to disseminate information to ordinary people, who can easily access any of the social media tools and gather all the information they need. Thus, social media helps in spreading information among people (Greg, 2011).

The other two major attributes of social media that enabled the success of the revolution are connectivity and universality, “both of which lend themselves to organic political movements.” Thus, everyone even ordinary people can be-connected and this connection is available to people worldwide, not limited to a certain country, district, religion, nation or educational level. This universal connection and the spread of information, helped protesters in coordinating their actions forming “collective action”(Greg, 2011).

Also, using social media does not require any “license, financial contribution, or special affiliation” taking into consideration that it is the most accessible media tool, so it is expected to have the most extreme consequences. “Political movements are clearly social phenomena and therefore governed by the laws of social networks and accelerated
by social media” (Greg, 2011). Besides, most of the traditional media in Egypt are state controlled, so people depend on social media for credible information from trustworthy people whom they know (Crovitz, 2011).

According to Brian Solis, “social media, by facilitating connections, undeniably contributes to network density. By reducing social distance, it enables action.” In other words, social media through the spread of information among most Egyptians helped those who oppose the regime to find that their views are supported by the majority of people around them; so they are more encouraged to take collective action, go to the street and speak out (Morrison, 2011).

Therefore, social media due to all of the above attributes, turned to be the essence for any social and political organization. As through the use of Twitter and Facebook, political activists in Egypt have increased the transparency of the government by showing people the truth and also mobilize them (Mac, 2011). Thus, one can say that social media and even the traditional media to a certain extent have become an extraordinary weapon in shaping the future of Egypt and the Arab region (Buisier, 2011).

As many people believe, Wael Ghonim in spite of being one of the main motivators for the Egyptian revolution, is not the symbol of people who are really suffering from the regime. He studied computer engineering at Cairo University and earned an M.B.A. in marketing and finance from the American University in Cairo. He works as a product and marketing manager at Google for the Middle East and North Africa. He created Google AdWords vouchers for small businesses during the ArabNet Conference. Also, he
launched an Arabic language website in order to teach people how to search, email and chat (Crovitz, 2011).

Ghonim decided to be a political activist from his work base in Dubai to motivate and encourage people in Egypt to move and take actions. The chance came to him when a young Egyptian blogger named ‘Khaled Said’ was beaten to death by Egyptian police after “copying video they had made of themselves dividing up confiscated marijuana.” This video was uploaded later on YouTube (Crovitz, 2011).

Ghonim created a Facebook page called “We Are All Khaled Said” that attracted more than two million members. The page features all the shocking photos of Said after being tortured by police. After the success of the page and the huge number of people who joined, Ghonim and other Facebook users decided to use Facebook as the only mean to show people worldwide the “wrongful arrests, torture in detention” and the corruption of the Egyptian police. From this point, Facebook usage in Egypt witnessed a change from being a social means for people to chat, share photos and know other people to a channel for political expression among users and political activists such as Ghonim to plan, arrange and implement protest movements against the autocratic and corrupted Egyptian government (Crovitz, 2011).

According to Rafat Ali, the founder of paidcontent.org, the difference in the use of both Twitter and Facebook in the Egyptian revolution is huge. Facebook was used to help people organize protests by specifying exactly the way they will meet, when and where. While, Twitter was used actually during the revolution by the protesters to keep each other and other people worldwide updated with what is going on by sharing news,
comments and videos. Besides, videos are also uploaded and shared on YouTube (Crovitz, 2011).

### 4.18.5 Advantages of social media in the Egyptian revolution

Social media are considered a new and powerful political weapon which provided tremendous advantages to the success of the Egyptian revolution. It gave people a platform whereby they can express their viewpoints, objections and comments freely in a more democratic atmosphere without the fear of the government. Also, it gave people the chance to discuss taboos that they are not allowed to discuss before, so it broke down most of the previous barriers that people used to fear (Buisier, 2011).

In addition, social media gave equal chances for people to express their opinions without being biased to any side and let people around the world to know exactly what is happening in Egypt through watching the videos on YouTube and reading the latest news and updates on Twitter and Facebook. This in return helped people in Egypt in having more unified and organized movements as they are being continuously updated with all the news and what is going on inside Tahrir Square and all the demonstrations (Buisier, 2011). The following Figure shows the usage of Facebook in both Egypt and Tunisia.

Moreover, according to the Arab Social Media report (2010) the primary language that is used by most Facebook users during the Egyptian revolution is Arabic, which constitutes around 75.4 percent while only 26.4 percent used the Facebook in English.
The Main Usage of Facebook during the Civil Movements and Events in Early 2011 was for:

Social media allows people who share a common political belief to find others who share the same beliefs and thus find supporters to their viewpoints. Thus, they are more encouraged to take “collective actions” and organize the protest movements (Mac, 2011).
4.18.6 Internet blackout on Jan. 28th

The Internet blackout Egypt witnessed during the Egyptian revolution represents the corruption that was in the country. This is how the authority figures, the government and the autocratic president tried to isolate Egypt from the whole world, which is considered an extreme violation of human rights (Callari, 2011).

Protesters were using social networking websites especially Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for two reasons internal and external. They used mainly Facebook to plan, arrange and organize the protest movements as an internal reason. While the external reason was to upload all the videos through Twitter and YouTube and write all the comments and government responses to be available and seen by people worldwide. After launching videos for the Egyptian police killing and torturing Egyptian activists and
protesters on January 25, the government decided to block down the Internet to keep Egypt isolated from the whole world (Mac, 2011).

Moreover, Vodafone Egypt had released a statement explaining how the Egyptian government had forced all the mobile companies in Egypt to “suspend services” of the mobile phones on January 28, 2011. Therefore, it is quite obvious that the time and technology for the authoritarian leaders are more harmful to them than beneficial. This is because for these leaders who used to control all the media and events stood powerless in front of the unprecedented and unpredicted social media.

Egypt: Internet Traffic Between January 28 and February 2, 2011 – Sample of all Google Products
4.18.7 Reasons for using a Case Study:

A case study is one of the researchers’ qualitative methods that is used when the researcher wants to gather huge information about a research topic. Case study can be defined as “an empirical inquiry that uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, in which the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident” (qtd in Wimmer & Dominick p.137). Thus, to be able to gather enough information about the role of social networking websites in the Egyptian revolution, multiple sources have been used and combined together such as secondary data analysis, surveys and personal interviews with political activists and media experts were conducted. The case study research has four main characteristics that differentiate it from the other research methods. The first characteristic of a Case Study is particularistic whereby it focuses on a particular event to make it a perfect method to study a real life phenomenon. Second, the case study gives a detailed description of the topic under study. Third, heuristic in which the case study method through new interpretations helps people in understanding what is being studied. Finally, case studies are inductive as the majority of them depend on “inductive reasoning” since through the data examination principles emerge (Wimmer and Joseph, p.137).

Due to the above stated characteristics of the Case Study method, it was chosen by the researcher of this thesis as the revolutions that are taking place in the Arab region is a new phenomenon that needs a wealth of information to be gathered. Also, the case study technique can recommend the reasons behind the occurrence of something. In this
case the Egyptian revolution and at the same time “affords the researcher the ability to
deal with a wide spectrum of evidence” (Wimmer and Joseph, p.137).
Chapter 5: Research Design and Methodology

5.1 Research Methodology: (Survey):

The method chosen for this research paper is the survey method because it allows the respondents to give their answers in a fairly naturalistic setting and produces quantifiable information on audiences. The questionnaire is designed to address the role of social media tools on the Egyptian revolution and whether or not social media especially social networking websites mobilized for the revolution, build democracy, allow self-expression and self-actualization. Beside, the questions also investigate the uses and gratifications of social media during political crises and whether or not people depend on it as their main source of information and whether or not social media motivates the protesters resort street during the Egyptian revolution. Survey method is appropriate for this research study because the questionnaire needs to be distributed among a large number of respondents to tackle the role of the social media in the Egyptian revolution.

The survey contains different types of questions, including closed-ended, open-ended and scale questions. There are 27 closed ended and scale questions to be able to analyze, get useful data and generalize the results to the whole population and only one open-ended question asking the respondents to name any other protest movements that they might have joined. This question was formulated to determine if the respondents are already politically active or it is their first time to participate in a revolution after using social networking websites. In order to make the questions clear, they are designed to be short, straightforward without any embarrassing or leading words. Adding to this, participants get bored and refuse to answer the questionnaire if they found many open-
ended questions. The most commonly used scale in this paper was the likert scale, which is the most commonly used scale in the mass media research (Wimmer and Joseph, 2006). There is only one filtering question at the beginning of the survey to exclude participants who did not have accounts in any of the social networking websites.

Two ways of the survey method were used in distributing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was posted on the Internet and personal emails were sent to selected sample with a link whereby they can click on it to go to the survey. This method was chosen as there is no interviewer bias who might affect the respondents’ answers and also because of its low cost. The other method for distributing the questionnaire is the self-administered method in which the questionnaire was distributed to the sample to fill it on the spot. This method was used because it usually has a high response rate of over 90 percent with its low cost and no interviewer bias.

5.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses:

There are six research questions and four Hypotheses in this study.

5.2.1 Research Questions:

The first five research questions were answered by both the qualitative part of the research and the quantitative part, except for RQ 3 and RQ 4 are answered only from the qualitative part of the research.

RQ 1: Does social media allow its users to have freedom of expression?

RQ 2: Does social media allow its users to achieve self-actualization?
RQ 3: Does social media allow building democracy in Egypt?

RQ 4: Were the social networking websites the main motivator for the Egyptian Revolution?

RQ 5: Did Egyptians depend on the social networking websites as their main source of information during the Egyptian revolution?

RQ 6: Did Egyptians use the social networking websites to engage in political activities during the Egyptian revolution?

5.2.2 Research hypotheses:

The research hypotheses are answered by the quantitative part of the study through the survey that measured the role of the social networking websites in the Egyptian revolution.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the use of the social networking websites and freedom of expression.

H2: There is a positive relationship between the use of social networking websites and self-actualization.

H3: There was a positive relationship between the use of social networking websites and political participation during the Egyptian revolution.

H4: There is a positive relationship between the use of the social networking websites and political participation after the Egyptian revolution.
5.3 Research Variables, Operational definitions and level of measurements:

The research questions examine one independent variable and three dependent variables.

5.3.1 Independent variable, operational definitions and level of measurements:

The independent variable in this study is the exposure to social networking websites, whereby respondents were asked at the beginning of the survey a filtering question if they are using social networking websites or not. Those who responded by no were excluded from the sample. This question is at the nominal level. The social networking websites were defined as any of the social media websites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn or others if the respondent can specify. Then respondents were asked about the number of hours they spend using the social networking websites to choose from four categories, so a correlation between their usage and their political activism could be developed. The level of measurement is ordinal.

5.3.2 Dependent variables, operational definitions and level of measurements:

The dependent variables are freedom of expression, self-actualization and political activities, to measure the degree by which respondents engage in these activities in regards to their usage practices. They are measured on a likert scale to mark from strongly agree to strongly disagree.
The first dependent variable is Freedom of expression. According to article 19, the right of Freedom of expression has been defined as “freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice” (Asian Legal Resource Centre).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freedom of expression</th>
<th>o  Debating political issues freely.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o  Negotiating taboos freely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o  Expressing your opinion publicly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o  Criticize members of the first family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o  Criticize authority figures in general.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, freedom of expression is measured in the survey in question number (9) on a five-point likert scale. The level of measurement is interval; the statements are listed in question (9) in the questionnaire as follows:

- o I usually express my opinions freely on social networking websites.
- o I engage in political debates on social networking websites.
- o I openly discuss taboos on social networking websites.
- o I criticize the government freely on social networking websites.
The second dependent variable is self-actualization. Its definition is extracted from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, self-actualization is defined as the following (1968 p.142):

1. Clearer, more efficient perception of reality
2. More openness to experience
3. Increased integration, wholeness, and unity of the person
4. Increased spontaneity, expressiveness; full functioning; aliveness
5. A real self; a firm identity; autonomy, uniqueness
6. Increased objectivity, detachment, transcendence of self
7. Recovery of creativeness
8. Ability to fuse concreteness and abstractness
9. Democratic character structure
10. Ability to love.

11. Autonomy, inner-directedness, and self-evaluation are also characteristics.

Thus, self-actualization was operationally defined to fit this research study as the following:
Self actualization

- More willing to participate in political activities.
- Witness the truth more vividly.
- No deception in receiving information.
- More attached to your country.
- No fear practicing politics.
- Become an independent person.

Self-actualization is measured in the survey in question number (10) on a five-point likert scale. The level of measurement is interval. The statements are listed in question (10) in the questionnaire.

As for political activities that the respondents engage in, it is defined in the survey in questions number (5) on a five-point likert scale. The level of measurement is interval. The statements are listed in question number (5) in the questionnaire as follows:

Political activities

- Seek out political information.
- Engage in political discussion.
- Express political opinions.
- Campaign for candidates.
- Propagate for certain political ideology or party.
5.4 The sample:

The population that the researcher is interested in for this study can be defined as all the social networking websites users have an account or log on any social networking websites especially the three main social networking websites (Facebook, YouTube and Twitter) before, during or after the Egyptian revolution. They are also Egyptian males and females from all age ranges. The age was not limited to certain age category because almost most Egyptians from different ages participated in the revolution. Thus, it was difficult to specify certain age category.

As it is always very difficult to ask the whole population since it is quite large, a subset of the population was chosen to be asked. The researcher decided to use a non-probability random sampling because using probability random sample requires getting a list of the whole population, which is quite hard to obtain in Egypt (Wimmer and Joseph, p.89). Moreover, the researcher decided to use purposive non-random sample whereby the population is selected based on certain characteristics and those who do not have these qualities are eliminated (Wimmer and Joseph, p.89). For this research, the characteristics that the respondents should have, is to have an account in any of social networking websites.

5.5 Qualitative in-depth interviews:

A qualitative method was also used whereby in-depth interviews and a number of nine interviews were conducted with media experts and political activists about their opinions regarding the social networking websites and the extent to which they affect the Egyptian revolution. A list of five open-ended questions was prepared and given
to interviewee to answer freely. Also, there were two scale questions and each contained six statements whereby the interviewee was asked to mark on a scale of five from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Each interview lasted for approximately an hour and the interviewees were quite informative and interested in the topic area.

5.6 Pre-testing (Piloting):

Before distributing the survey research among the chosen sample, a face validity test was conducted where the survey was distributed to media experts to check whether any of the questions needed to be refined to get the required correct measurements. Also, a pilot research was conducted in order to make sure that the questions were well-structured and clear to answer. The survey was distributed to six media and researcher experts in the communication field at the American University in Cairo and their comments and modifications were taken into consideration. Also, the survey was distributed among six undergraduate students from different universities, four graduate students and six alumni at different working fields to make sure that the questionnaire is clear, easy and understandable.

Reliability and validity are essential to be ensured before analyzing the data in order to get reliable and valid data.

5.7 Validity:

Before the questionnaire was distributed, mass communication experts had evaluated the content validity of the survey, and evaluated the items tested in the survey and the clarity and accuracy of the questions. The same question was asked within the questionnaire while being differently phrased in order to ensure cross validating by which
the respondents give the same answer each time they are asked the same question. Items of the survey were repeated in different ways in order to ensure the validity of the respondents’ answers. Thus, the Face validity was established whereby the measurement device i.e. the questionnaire measures what it appears to measure. As long as the validity is established, the scale will always be reliable. By recognizing both the cross validity and face validity, the internal validity is established.

5.8 Reliability:

Reliability means that the instruments used in the survey measure what they intend to measure and that repeated measurements of the same material will result in the same conclusions. It means that respondents should be giving the same answer when asked the same or similar question. A Test-retest was applied to measure each respondent’s consistency in his/her answers overtime.
Chapter 6: Research Findings and Analysis

6 Research Findings and analysis

The survey results have been analyzed using data analysis software known as SPSS and Microsoft excel sheet for the tables and Figures. As mentioned earlier the sample chosen should all be social networking websites users, according to the respondents of the questionnaire 353 out of the 400 respondents are users of the social networking websites. The respondents are having the following demoFigureics which is illustrated in the below tables and Figures:

*Some people did not answer questions, so total number of some questions is not equal to the whole sample and respondents were asked to skip some questions if they did not fit into a specific section (The survey is composed of three sections).

6.1 Age:

Respondents were asked to specify their age range by choosing from four age categories.

Table 6.1 Age range, frequencies and percentages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.42 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to less than 28</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>53.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 to less than 38</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>42.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 and above</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.98 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in (Table 6.1) most respondents fall in the second and third category whereby 53.82 percent of the respondents are aged of 18 to less than 28, and 42.78 percent lies in the age of 28 to less than 38. This age represent the Egyptian youth who participated and initiated the Egyptian revolution. Only five respondents are less than 18, which constitutes 1.42 percent, and seven are 38 and above, which constitutes 1.98 percent.

Figure 6.1 Ages and Percentages

Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of the age range in years where the majority of the respondents fall between 18 and 38 years old.
6.2 Monthly Income:

Respondents were asked to choose from four income categories as shown in (Table 6.2)

Table 6.2 Income level per month, frequencies and percentages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income level EGP per month</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1000</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 to less than 3000</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 to less than 5000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>28.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000 and above</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>46.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>284</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The total number of respondents is less than 353 because people are reluctant to write their income.

Table 6.2 shows that most respondents 46.48 percent earn 5,000 and more Egyptian pounds per month, followed by 28.17 percent those who earn EGP 3,000 and less than 5,000 EGP per month. On the other hand, only 15.14 percent earn EGP 1,000 to less than 3,000 EGP per month and 10.21 percent earn less than 1,000 EGP per month.
Figure 6.2 shows that the majority of the respondents’ income falls between EGP 3,000 and above EGP 5,000.
6.3 Level of Education

Since the qualitative part of this study shows that most participants in the Egyptian revolution are highly educated, respondents of the questionnaire are asked to specify their educational level from five educational categories as shown in (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 educational level, frequencies and percentages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School student</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate student</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>21.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate student</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>56.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree holder</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD holder</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>353</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3 shows that the majority of respondents 56.09 percent are graduate students and 17.28 percent are holders of a masters’ degree, while 21.81 percent are undergraduate students, 3.68 percent are holders of PHD and only 1.13 percent which represent four out of 353 respondents are school students.
Figure 6.3 shows that the majority of the respondents are graduate students and undergraduate students.
6.4 Languages

Participants were asked to choose from four different languages in order to specify the language or languages that they on the Internet.

Table 6.4 languages, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.85 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>44.19 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic + English</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>47.02 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic+ English+ French</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic+ English+ German</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.42 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic+ English+ Italian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.85 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English+ French</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.85 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English+ German</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>353</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 shows that most respondent 99.15 percent use more than one language. As only 0.85 percent of the respondents know only Arabic, the rest are practicing more than one language.
Figure 6.4.1 Languages, and percentages (cumulative)

Figure 6.4.1. Shows that English and Arabic are the most commonly used languages by the respondents 99 percent and 55 percent cumulative percentages respectively.

Figure 6.4.2 Languages and percentages

Figure 6.4.2 shows that the most commonly used languages are Arabic and English spoken.
6.5 Gender

Respondents were asked to specify their gender type whereby as shown in (Table 7.5) the majority of the respondents are females.

Table 6.5 Gender type, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>25.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>74.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5 shows that the majority of the social networking websites’ user are female 74.29% and males represent only 25.71 percent of the sample.

Figure 6.5 Gender type and percentages
6.6 How long been using social networks

Respondents were asked to specify the number of years they have been using the social networking websites by choosing from four categories as shown in (Table 6.6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long been using social networking</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.36 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year to less than two years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.49 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years to less than three years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.98 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years and more</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>85.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.6 shows that the majority of the respondents 85.17 percent have been using social networking websites for a long period of time three years and more. Then 6.98 percent have been using it for from two to less than three years. From the 344 respondents who answered this question only 3.49 percent have been using it from one year to less than two years and 4.36 percent have been using it for a less than a year. This is explicitly clear in Figure 6.6.
Figure 6.6 Number of years respondents have been using social networking websites, and percentages

Figure 6.6 shows that 85 percent of the respondents have been using the social networking websites for three years and more.
6.7 Level of importance of social networks

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance of social networking websites to their daily life by choosing from three categories to indicate how important we perceive the social networking websites in Table 6.7

Table 6.7 Level of importance, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of importance</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>47.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>47.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.7 shows that almost half 47.15 percent of the respondents perceive social networking websites as very important to themselves in their daily life, the other 47.15 percent said that the social networking websites are important to them in their daily life. Only 5.7 percent mentioned that the social networking are not important to them.
Figure 6.7 Level of importance and percentages

Figure 6.7 shows that social networking websites are important to the respondents’ daily life since 47 percent said it is very important to them in their daily life and 47 percent say it is important and only 6 percent say that it is not important.
6.8 Number of hours /day

To know the usage capacity, respondents were asked to specify the number of hours they spend per day using social networking websites by choosing from four categories as stated in Table 9.8

Table 6.8.1  Number of hours, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours per day</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15.25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour to less than 3 hours</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>46.92 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 hours to less than 5 hours</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18.18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 hours and more</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>19.65 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.8.1, shows that the majority of the respondents 46.92 percent spend from one hour to less than three hours per day on social networking websites followed by 19.65 percent who spend five hours and more; 18.18 percent spend from three hours to less than five hours per day and 15.25 percent spend less than one hour per day. This as a result matches with the level of importance of social networking websites in the previous question whereby most respondents choose either very important or important.
Figure 6.8.1 Usage per day and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours per day</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 hour</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour to &lt; 3 hours</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 hours to &lt; 5 hours</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 hours and more</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.8.1 Relationship between the daily usage of social networking websites and gender

The number of hours that the respondents spend using social networking websites is compared to their gender to determine whether the males or the females spend more time using social networking websites.

Table 6.8.2 Gender, number of hours use per day and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number &amp; percent in hours use per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percent</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percent</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percent</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi square $\chi^2 = 16.269$  **p = 0.001

Table 6.8.2 shows that the significant chi square indicates differences between males and females in using social networking websites.

More than a quarter (28 percent) of the males visit these websites less than one hour daily while only 11 percent of the females do so. Almost half of the females (48 percent) and 42 percent of males use social networking websites for one to less than three hours
daily. About 20 percent of males and of females spend more than five hours daily using social networking websites.

Generally, females spend more hours than males using social networking websites.

Figure 6.8.2 Gender and percentages of hours of use per day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours per day</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 hour</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-&lt;3 hours</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-&lt;5 hours</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+ hours</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.8.2 **Relationship between the daily usage of social networking websites and age**

The number of hours respondents spend using the social networking websites is compared to their different age categories to determine the different usage capacity for each age range.

**Table 6.8.3 daily usage of social networking websites in hours, age range and percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Number &amp; % in hours use per day</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
<td>1-&lt;3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;18 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-&lt;28 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-&lt;38 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 years and more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square $\chi^2 = 62.318**$  \( p = 0.000 \) (large value of $\chi^2$ due to 4 zeros)
Table 6.8.3 shows that significant chi square indicates differences between age categories in using social networking websites.

Young respondents (<18 years) and older age (38+) do not use the social networking websites as much as the mature respondents (28-<38 years) are using them. The highest users spend 1-<3 hours on social networking websites per day.

Figure 6.8.3 Age percentages and number of hours
6.8.3 **Relationship between the daily usage of social networking websites and educational level**

The respondents educational level is compared to the number of hours per day they spend using social networking websites to determine at which educational level people are more likely to stay on social networking websites longer.

Table 6.8.4 daily usage of social networking websites in hours, educational level and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>&lt;1 hr</th>
<th>1-&lt;3 hrs</th>
<th>3-&lt;5 hrs</th>
<th>5+ hrs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School student</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate student</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate student</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master degree holder</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PhD holder</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square $\chi^2 = 41.98^{**}$  \hspace{1cm} $p = 0.000$ (large value of $\chi^2$ due to 6 zeros)
Table 6.8.4 shows a significant difference between the educational levels and the usage of social networking websites. Graduate students use websites the most at one to less than three hours per day.

The highest frequency of use is from one to less than three hours, especially among Master degree holders.

\[
\text{Chi square } \chi^2 = 41.98** \quad p = 0.000 \quad \text{(large value of } \chi^2 \text{ due to 6 zeros)}
\]
6.8.4 Relationship between the daily usage of social networking websites and income per month in EGP

Moreover, the income level in EGP that respondents earn per month is compared to the number of hours they spend using social networking websites per day and the results are as follows in table 6.8.5.

Table 6.8.5 Daily usage in hours, income range and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income EGP per month</th>
<th>Number &amp; % in hours use per day</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
<td>1-&lt;3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1000 EGP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 - &lt; 3000 EGP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 - &lt; 5000 EGP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000 EGP and above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chi square $\chi^2 = 74.21$     **$p = 0.000$
Table 6.8.5 shows a significant difference between income levels and the usage of the social networking websites. The highest frequency of use is from one to less than three hours, especially those with income 1-<3000 and 3-<5000 EGP per month. Most of the low income respondents spend more time (5+hours) on social networking websites.

Figure 6.8.5 Income range, frequency of usage
6.8.5 Relationship between the daily usage of social networking websites and language

The number of hours that respondents spend on social networking websites per day is compared to the languages that respondents use while they are using social networking websites.

Table 6.8.6 Daily usage in hours, languages percentages and frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number &amp; % in hours use per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 Hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic only</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic + English</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English + French</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic + English + French</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic + English + German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic + English + Italian</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.8.6 shows a significant difference between the different languages used by respondents and the usage of the social networking websites. Almost all respondents speak either English alone or Arabic + English, and about half of them spend 1-<3 hours using social networking websites.
6.9 Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is one of the dependent variables that was measured in question number (9) in the questionnaire on a five-point likert scale.

RQ 1: Does social media allow its users to have freedom of expression?

H 1: There is a positive relationship between the use of the social networking websites and freedom of expression.

Independent Variable → Exposure to social networking websites

Dependent Variable → Freedom of expression
Table 6.9.1 Cross table of daily usage of social networking websites and degree of agreement (average rating) of freedom of expression after the Egyptian revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freedom of expression</th>
<th>Rating Average in Hours per day</th>
<th>Chi square</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I usually express my opinions freely on social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.41**</td>
<td>0.185** 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-&lt;3 hrs</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-&lt;5 hrs</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5+ Hrs</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I engage in political debates on social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.7**</td>
<td>0.154** 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-&lt;3 hrs</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-&lt;5 hrs</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5+ Hrs</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I openly discuss taboos on social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.91**</td>
<td>0.100 0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-&lt;3 hrs</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-&lt;5 hrs</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5+ Hrs</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I criticize the government freely on social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td>78.26**</td>
<td>0.274** 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-&lt;3 hrs</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-&lt;5 hrs</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5+ Hrs</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p<0.05                      ** significant at p<0.01

Table 6.9.1 shows significant chi square values which indicate different rating averages between number of hours spent using social networking websites and freedom of expression. For all statements, the agreements (rating average) are different for the duration of times spent using the social networking websites.
Table 6.9.2 Level of agreement for freedom of expression, mean average and frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Degree of agreement</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD  D  N  A  SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually express my opinions freely on social networking websites.</td>
<td>13  23  71  142 123</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I engage in political debates on social networking websites.</td>
<td>16  51  129  108 50</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I openly discuss taboos on social networking websites.</td>
<td>36  86  132  71 36</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I criticize the government freely on social networking websites.</td>
<td>14  39  80  126 101</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average count</td>
<td>20  50  103 112 78</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 372
skipped question 28
chi square = 49.58  p = 0.00

Table 6.9.2 shows that respondents were asked to specify the number of hours they spend daily using social networking websites to compare it with the degree of agreement with the freedom of expression they attain. If the level of agreement of the respondents regarding the freedom of expression increases as their daily usage (number of hours per day) of the social networking websites increases, then we accept H1. If respondents
answers showed that there is no relationship between the level of agreement regarding the freedom of expression and the numbers of hours they spend daily using the social networking websites then we reject hypothesis one. Figure 9.9.1, shows the level of agreement of the respondents regarding the freedom of expression and the mean average.

**Figure 6.9.1 Average rating of respondents and mean**

![Bar chart showing the level of agreement for different statements.](image)

Figure 6.9.1 shows that more than half of the respondents either strongly agree or agree 21.5 percent and 30.9 percent respectively that the use of the social networking websites gives them more freedom of expression which is measured by the statements in (Table 6.9). Significant chi square indicates different distribution of agreement levels in each statement.
Figure 6.9.2 Level of agreement and percentages

Figure 6.9.2 shows clearly that the number of respondents who strongly agree and agree with the statement of freedom of expression because of the use of social networking websites outweighs those who disagree and strongly disagree 14 percent and 5 percent respectively. This in turn supports H1 whereby the use of the social networking websites is positively correlated with freedom of expression.

Also, respondents were asked a direct question if the social networking websites give them more freedom to discuss the different political issues. Table 6.9.3 shows their responses.
Table 6.9.3 Use of the social networking websites, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of social networking websites</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>77.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.9.3 Freedom to discuss political issues and percentages

Figure 6.9.3 shows that 77% of the respondents agree that social networking websites give them more freedom to discuss political issues.
The relationship between political participation statements and use of social networking websites is positive for all statements. The significant r-values indicate that the agreement (rating average) increases as the number of hours increases.

Thus, H1 is accepted whereby it is proven that there is a positive relationship between the use of the social networking websites and freedom of expression.
6.10 Self actualization

Freedom of expression is one of the dependent variables that measured in question number (10) in the questionnaire on a five-point likert scale.

**RQ 2:** Does social media allow its users to achieve self-actualization?

**H 2:** There is a positive relationship between the use of social networking websites and self-actualization.

Independent variable → Exposure to Social Networking websites

Dependent variable → Self-actualization
Table 6.10.1 Cross table of daily usage of social networking websites and degree of agreement (average rating) of self-actualization after the Egyptian revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-actualization</th>
<th>Rating Average in Hours per day</th>
<th>Chi square</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
<td>1-&lt;3 hrs</td>
<td>3-&lt;5 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more willing to participate in political activities.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I start witnessing the circumstances in my country more vividly.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more attached to my country.</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not fear practicing politics.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I became more independent</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2.96</th>
<th>3.30</th>
<th>3.52</th>
<th>3.10</th>
<th>27.2**</th>
<th>0.01</th>
<th>0.022</th>
<th>0.692</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I receive more accurate information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**significant at p<0.05

** significant at p<0.01

Table 6.10.1 shows significant chi square values indicating different rating averages between the number of hours spent using social networking websites and self-actualization statements. For all statements, the agreements (rating average) are different for the duration of times spent using social networking websites.
Table 6.10.2 Level of agreement for self-actualization, average mean and frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Degree of agreement</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more willing to participate in political activities.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I start witnessing the circumstances in my country more vividly.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more attached to my country.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not fear practicing politics.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I became more independent person.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive more accurate information.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average count</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p<0.05  ** significant at p<0.01

Table 6.10.2 shows that a significant chi square indicates different distribution of agreement levels in each statement.

The values in Table 6.10.2 shows that 22 percent and 35.4 percent strongly agree and agree respectively that they are practicing more self-actualization with the use of the social networking websites. Also, 27.5 percent of the respondents feel neutral regarding the use of the social networking websites and self-actualization and only 11 percent and
3.8 percent disagree and strongly disagree respectively that the use of the social networking websites helps in being more self-actualized.

**Figure 6.10.1 Level of agreement for self-actualization and mean average**

![Chart showing level of agreement for self-actualization statements](chart.png)

Figure 6.10.1 shows that the second statement, I start witnessing the circumstances in my country more vividly, has the highest rating average 3.95, followed by the fourth statement, I do not fear practicing politics 3.78. The least rating is for the sixth statement which states that social networking websites allow its users to receive information that is more accurate.
Figure 6.10.2 shows that more than half of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that the use of social networking websites gives them a greater sense of self-actualization, which indicates that there is a positive relation between the usage of social networking websites that is measured by number of hours per day and self-actualization.

The relationship between self-actualization statements and use of social networking websites is positive for all statements. The significant r-values indicate that the agreement (rating average) increases as the number of hours increases.

Thus, H2 is accepted whereby there is a positive relationship between the use of social networking websites and self-actualization.
6.11 Political participation during the Egyptian revolution:

Political participation during the Egyptian revolution is one of the dependent variables, that is measured in question number 14 in the questionnaire on four statements on a five-point likert scale.

**RQ 3:** Did Egyptians use the social networking websites to engage in political activities during the Egyptian revolution?

**H 3:** There is a positive relationship between the use of the social networking websites and political participation during the Egyptian revolution.

Independent variable→ Exposure to social networking websites

Dependent variable→ Political participation during the Egyptian revolution
Table 6.11.1 Cross table of daily usage of social networking websites and degree of agreement (average rating) of the reason of joining the political participation during the Egyptian revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason of Political participation</th>
<th>Rating Average in Hours per day</th>
<th>Chi square</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1 hr 1-&lt;3 hrs 3-&lt;5 hrs 5+ hrs</td>
<td>χ^2</td>
<td>p  r  p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every one was joining.</td>
<td>2.64 2.5 2.36 2.8</td>
<td>14.66</td>
<td>0.26 0.055 0.479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a new experience.</td>
<td>3.07 3 3.03 3.6</td>
<td>21.38*</td>
<td>0.05 0.168* 0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve my country.</td>
<td>4.76 4.7 4.72 4.8</td>
<td>22.74**</td>
<td>0.00 0.066 0.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To end the tyranny.</td>
<td>4.41 4.6 4.58 4.8</td>
<td>12.96*</td>
<td>0.04 0.174* 0.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p<0.05

** significant at p<0.01

Table 6.11.1 shows that significant chi square values indicate different agreement levels (rating averages) of the number of hours spent using social networking websites and the reason for political participation.
Respondents were asked if they participated in the Egyptian revolution or not and their answers comes as in Table 6.11.2

Table 6.11.2 Participated in revolution, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participated in the Revolution</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>%ages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>54.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>45.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.11.2, shows that the difference between those who participated in the revolution and those who did not is not significant as 54.85 percent actually participated in the Egyptian revolution and 45.15 percent did not participate.

Figure 6.11.1 Participation in revolution and percentages
Moreover, respondents who answered that they participated in the Egyptian revolution were asked if this was their first time to participate in a protest movement and their answers are as follows.

**Table 6.11.3 First time to participate, frequencies and percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First time to participate</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>75.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, but joined other protest movements</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>186</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.11.3, shows that the majority of the respondents 75.81 percent of those who participated in the revolution is, participated in a protest movement for the first time.

**Figure 6.11.2 First time to participate and percentages**
Then, the number of hours that the respondents spend per day on social networking websites is compared to the level of agreement regarding the reason for participating in the Egyptian revolution as illustrated in Table 7.11.5

Table 6.11.4 Mode of participation, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of participation</th>
<th>Frequencies (cumulative)</th>
<th>%ages (cumulative)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging people to go to the street through the social networking web sites.</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>53.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically participate in the demonstrations.</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>61.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just writing your opinion on the social networking web sites.</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>60.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarding places and neighborhoods.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other *</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 6.11.4, shows that 61.71 percent and 60.57 percent of the respondents either physically participated in the demonstrations or wrote their opinions on social networking websites respectively, and 53.71 percent of the respondents encourage people to go to the street through social networking websites. Only 28.57 percent guard places and their neighborhoods.
Figure 6.11.3 Mode of participation and percentages

Figure 6.11.3 shows that concerning the mode of participation, the highest percentage of 62 percent is for those who physically participate in the demonstration followed by 61 percent for those who write their opinions on social networking websites and 54 percent encourage people to go to the street through social networking websites.

The relationship between the mode of participation and use of social networking websites is positive for all statements. The significant ‘r’ values indicate that the agreement (rating average) increases as the number of hours increases.

H3 is accepted as there is a positive relationship between the usage of the social networking websites and political participation during the Egyptian revolution.
6.12 **Political participation after the Egyptian revolution:**

Political participation after the Egyptian revolution is one of the dependent variable that was measured in questions number 5 and 8 in the questionnaire on five-point likert scale.

**H4:** There is a positive relationship between the use of the social networking websites and political participation after the Egyptian revolution.

Independent variable → Exposure to social networking websites

Dependent variable → Political participation after the Egyptian revolution

Respondents who started to use the social networking websites after the Jan 25th, are asked to indicate their level of agreement with the reasons for their usage.
Table 6.12.1 Level of agreement for reasons, rating average and frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Level of agreement</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unexpected success of social networking websites in the success of the revolution</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain information</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in the revolution</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To upload videos</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average count</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>238</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi square = 51.45       \[ p = 0.000 \]

Table 6.12.1 shows that the significant chi square indicates different distribution of agreement levels in each statement. The majority of respondents used social networking websites to gain information as it got the highest average rating 4.17. Most respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statements 38.4percent and 38.8percent respectively. Also, 19.7percent of the respondents are neutral and only 7.4percent and 5.7percent disagree and strongly disagree respectively with the reasons for using social networking websites after the Egyptian revolution.
Figure 6.12.1 shows that most respondents are using social networking websites after the Egyptian revolution to gain information, when received the highest rating average of 4.17 due to its unexpected success in the Egyptian revolution, many people join it to be part of this success. The least average rating is that the respondents use social networking websites to upload videos and to participate in the revolution 3.37 and 3.64 respectively.
Figure 6.12.2 shows that the majority of respondents either agree or strongly agree 38 percent and 29 percent respectively that they are using the social networking websites to gain information, participate in the revolution, upload videos and due to the unexpected success in the revolution, so many people want to be part of this success.
Table 6.12.2 Cross table of daily usage of social networking websites and degree of agreement (average rating) of political participation after the Egyptian revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political participation</th>
<th>Rating Average in Hours per day</th>
<th>Chi square $\chi^2$</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient $r$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The unexpected success of social networking websites in the success of the revolution</td>
<td>&lt;1 hr 1-&lt;3 hrs 3-&lt;5 hrs 5+ hrs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.61 3.90 4.34 4.00</td>
<td>24.77*</td>
<td>0.145*</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain information</td>
<td>4.26 4.20 4.54 3.90</td>
<td>26.17**</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>0.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in the revolution</td>
<td>3.24 3.70 3.87 3.70</td>
<td>50.77**</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To upload videos</td>
<td>3.74 3.50 3.10 3.50</td>
<td>25.78**</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>0.250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p<0.05  ** significant at p<0.01

Table 6.12.2 shows that significant chi square values indicate different rating averages between the number of hours spent using social networking websites and political participation. For all political participation statements, the agreements (rating average) are different for the duration of times spent using the social networking websites.

The relationship between political participation statements and use of social networking websites is positive in two statements and negative in two. These relationships are not significant generally except in the first statement, which showed a significant positive relationship between political participation statements and use of social networking websites, as the number of hours increase as the agreement (rating average) also increases.
Thus, H4 is accepted as there is a positive relationship between the use of social networking websites and political participation after Egyptian revolution.

Moreover, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with ways in which they politically participate using social networking websites.

**Table 6.12.3, Level of agreement for political participation, rating average and frequencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Degree of agreement</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek out political information</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in political discussions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express political opinions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for candidates</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propagate for a certain political ideology or party</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average count (%)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.12.3 shows that the majority of respondents use social networking websites to politically participate by expressing their political opinions, seeking out political
information and engaging in political discussions. The lowest rating average goes to propagating for a certain political ideology or party and campaigning for the candidates.

**Figure 6.12.3 Level of agreement and rating average**

**Statements**
- Seek out political information: 3.85
- Engage in political discussions: 3.66
- Express political opinions: 3.94
- Campaign for candidates: 3.13
- Propagate for a certain political ideology or party: 3.25

**Figure 6.12.4 Average level of agreement for political participation and percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>% Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek out political information</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in political discussions</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express political opinions</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for candidates</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propagate for a certain political ideology or party</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.12.4 shows that the majority of respondents strongly agree and agree 19 percent and 42 percent that they use the social networking websites to express political opinions, seek out political information, engage in political discussions, propagate for a certain
political ideology or party and campaign for candidates. Only 24 percent of the respondents are neutral regarding their use of social networking websites for political participation and 9 percent and 7 percent disagree and strongly disagree respectively.

Table 6.12.4: Cross table of daily usage of social networking websites and degree of agreement (average rating) of political participation after the Egyptian revolution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political activities</th>
<th>Rating Average in Hours per day</th>
<th>Chi square</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek out political information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 hr</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>15.51</td>
<td>0.220 0.034 0.618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;3 hrs</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;5 hrs</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+ hrs</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.12.4 shows a significant difference between the usage of the social networking websites and expression of political opinions. Generally, the agreements (rating average) of the political activities are similar for all usage times. All relationships are positive, except the second statement, it has no significance.

Thus, H4 is accepted whereby there is a positive relationship between the use of social networking websites and political participation after Egyptian revolution.
In Figure 6.12.2 the majority of the respondents 38 percent and 29 percent agree and strongly agree respectively that they use the social networking websites to gain information with an average rating of 4.17 which accounts for 238 respondents. Thus, respondents are asked to indicate from where did they learn about the Egyptian revolution for the first time as shown in table 6.12.5.

**Table 6.12.5 Learning sources, frequencies and percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>44.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>29.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>362</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.12.5 shows that Facebook has the highest percentages of 44.48 percent from which most respondents learned about the Egyptian revolution and then television which is 29.01 percent followed by friends and family 9.67 percent and 5.80 percent respectively which is more known as a word of mouth. The lowest percentages goes to the Newspapers 0.55 percent.
Figure 6.12.5 Learning sources and percentages

Then respondents were asked to rate the coverage of the social networking websites on a five point scale ranging from very good to very bad and their answers come as follows.

Table 6.12.6 Coverage rate, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>%ages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>35.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Bad</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.12.6 shows that more than half of respondents believe that the coverage of social networking websites is either very good or good 44.44% and 35.9% respectively and 13.11% believe its neutral, while only 3.13% and 3.42% rate it as bad and very bad respectively.

In addition, respondents were asked to rate if social networking websites are credible sources or not and their answers are as follows in table 6.12.7

Table 6.12.7 Credible news sources, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credible news sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>%ages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>135.00</td>
<td>39.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>142.00</td>
<td>41.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>18.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>341.00</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.12.7 shows that only 18.77 percent of the respondents believe that the social networking websites are not credible news sources, 39.59 percent believe that they are credible and 41.64 percent are neutral towards the news coverage on social networking websites.

Figure 6.12.7 Credible news sources and percentages
6.13 Social networking websites and information

RQ 5: Did Egyptians depend on social networking websites as their main source of information during the Egyptian revolution?

Respondents were asked to specify the news source they relied on most for information during the Egyptian revolution and their answers are as follows:

Table 6.13 News source, average mean and frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News source</th>
<th>Rank Average (out of 8)</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public TV channels (i.e. channel 1, channel 2, Nile News)</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private TV channels (i.e. Dream, Mehwer, ONTV, Al Hayat)</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International media (i.e. BBC, CNN)</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational media (i.e. BBC Arabic, Al Jazeera)</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed newspapers</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking websites</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online newspapers</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average count</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This is a check all that apply question, thus the percentages is all high percentages.

Table 6.13.1 shows that the most usable source that all respondents depend on for news during the Egyptian revolution is the transnational media such as BBC Arabic and Al Jazeera. Then, the international media such as BBC and CNN which 99 percent of the respondents depend on, then the private TV channels such as Dream, Mehwer, ON TV and Al Hayat 97 percent of the respondents depend on, followed by the social
networking websites where 96 percent of the respondents rely on during the revolution. The least news source that people rely on for information is Radio with only 88 percent of respondents depended on this medium as a source of news during political crises.

Thus, it can be generalized that Egyptians depended mainly on both the transnational and international media during political crises as their main source of news. They depend least on radio and online newspapers to get information during the Egyptian revolution.
6.14 Reasons for using the social networking websites

Respondents were asked about the reasons for using social networking websites.

Table 6.14 Reasons for using social networking websites, frequencies and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main reason</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>%ages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socializing with people</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>59.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting News</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>33.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political participation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing business online</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>379</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.14.1 shows that the majority of respondents 59.89% use social networking websites for socializing and 33.25% use it for getting news. Only 5.01% use social networking websites for political participation, 1.85% for doing business online and zero percent use it for shopping.

Figure 6.14 Reasons for using social networking websites and percentages
6.15 **Highly used websites and demographics**

From the respondents answers regarding the most highly used social networking websites, a comparison was conducted regarding the different ages, gender, income levels, languages spoken and educational level.

6.15.1 Websites and age range

The four categories of age range were compared to the different websites used by the respondents.

**Table 6.15.1 Relationship between the highest use of websites (most rank + high rank) and Age range**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range in years</th>
<th>Cumulative Number ( %) of respondents in Websites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 18</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-&lt;28</td>
<td>168 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-&lt;38</td>
<td>129 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38+</td>
<td>7 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>307 (47%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 67.91 \( p = 0.000 \) (high \( \chi^2 \) due to 4 zeros)
Table 6.15.1 shows that significant chi square indicates different use of different ages. Facebook got the highest use by all ages, followed by YouTube. The age range from 18 to less than 28 got the highest usage as mentioned above that the age range from 15 to 29 constitutes 75 percent of Facebook users.

Figure 6.15.1 Social networking websites and usage

Figure 6.15.1 shows that Facebook is the most commonly used social networking website among all age groups followed by YouTube then Twitter. On the other hand, MySpace has the lowest usage among all age ranges followed by LinkedIn.
6.15.2 Websites and gender

Respondents’ gender is compared to the different websites used to determine the most favorites websites by each gender.

Table 6.15.2 Relationship between the highest use of websites (most rank + high rank) and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>MySpace</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cumulative Number (%) of respondents in Websites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>165 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>(46%)</td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td>(11%)</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>476 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>(48%)</td>
<td>(36%)</td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>641 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>(47%)</td>
<td>(36%)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 2.04  p = 0.728

Table 6.15.2 shows a non-Significant chi square indicating that males and females are similar in their use of social networking websites. Almost half males and half females visit Facebook, followed by YouTube. Yet, Females are slightly higher than males in the use of social networking websites.
Figure 6.15.2 Websites and gender

Figure 6.15.2 shows that the number of females using Facebook, YouTube and Twitter outweighs the number of males as the females account for approximately 75 percent while males account for 25 percent. On the other hand, the number of males using MySpace and LinkedIn outweighs the number of females.
6.15.3 Websites and income level

The respondents four income categories were compared to their most highly used social networking websites.

Table 6.15.3. Relationship between the highest use of websites (most rank + high rank) and income level per month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income level EGP per month</th>
<th>Cumulative Number ( %) of respondents in Websites</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1000</td>
<td>25 (42%)</td>
<td>21 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 to &lt;3000</td>
<td>38 (52%)</td>
<td>18 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 to &lt;5000</td>
<td>77 (47%)</td>
<td>71 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000 and above</td>
<td>114 (49%)</td>
<td>83 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>254 (48%)</td>
<td>193 (37%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 28.18   \[ p = 0.005 \] (high $\chi^2$ due to 5 zeros)

Table 6.15.3 shows that the significant chi square indicates different use for different income levels. Facebook got the highest use by all income levels followed by YouTube 48percent and 37percent respectively, while Twitter accounts only for 13percent followed by LinkedIn 2percent and MySpace 1percent.
Figure 6.15.3 Social networking websites and income level

Figure 6.15.3 shows that Facebook is the most commonly used social networking website among all income levels followed by YouTube then Twitter. On the other hand, LinkedIn has the lowest usage among all age ranges followed by MySpace.
6.15.4 Websites and languages used

Also, the languages that the respondents use while using social networking websites is compared to the different social networking websites.

Table 6.15.4 Relationship between the highest use of websites (most rank + high rank) and Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Cumulative Number (%) of respondents in Websites</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>MySpace</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic only</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td></td>
<td>133 (48%)</td>
<td>98 (35%)</td>
<td>41 (15%)</td>
<td>4 (1%)</td>
<td>4 (1%)</td>
<td>280 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic + English</td>
<td></td>
<td>149 (48%)</td>
<td>111 (36%)</td>
<td>39 (13%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>10 (3%)</td>
<td>311 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combinations</td>
<td></td>
<td>22 (44%)</td>
<td>21 (42%)</td>
<td>4 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>50 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>307 (47%)</td>
<td>233 (36%)</td>
<td>84 (13%)</td>
<td>6 (1%)</td>
<td>17 (3%)</td>
<td>647 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 28.53  p = 0.005 (high $\chi^2$ due to 4 zeros)

Table 6.15.4 shows that significant chi square indicates different uses of the different languages spoken. Facebook got the highest use by all languages spoken followed by YouTube.
Figure 6.15.4 Websites percentages and languages used

Figure 6.15.4 shows that for the respondents who use the social networking websites in Arabic, only use Facebook and YouTube with equal percentages 50 percent each. While respondents who use social networking websites in English only, Arabic and English or other combinations, their greatest usage is for Facebook followed by YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and then MySpace.
6.15.5 Websites and educational level

Respondents educational levels were compared to the most highly used social networking websites.

Table 6.15.5 Relationship between the highest use of websites (most rank + high rank) and education level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Cumulative Number ( %) of respondents in Websites</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate student</td>
<td>60 (42%)</td>
<td>43 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate student</td>
<td>179 (50%)</td>
<td>139 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree holder</td>
<td>56 (50%)</td>
<td>44 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD holder</td>
<td>10 (38%)</td>
<td>5 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>307 (47%)</td>
<td>233 (36%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square = 76.62  p = 0.000  (high χ² due to 4 zeros)

Table 6.15.5 shows that a significant chi square indicates different use of different educational levels. Facebook got the highest use by all educational levels followed by YouTube. Through out all the educational levels Facebook is the most highly used social
networking website with a cumulative frequency of 307 accounts for 47 percent of the total number of respondents, who are users of the social networking websites.

Figure 6.15.5 Educational level and percentages

Figure 6.15.5 shows that Facebook is the most highly used social networking website among all educational level followed by YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and then MySpace.
6.16 **Facebook and political participation**

The answers of the respondents who are highly using the Facebook are compared to their political activities and political participation

### 6.16.1 Facebook users and political activities

Respondents political activities are tested by five statements rated on a five-point likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political activities</th>
<th>Level of agreement of high users (ranks 5&amp;4) of Facebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek out political information</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in political discussions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express political opinions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for candidates</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propagate for a certain political ideology or party</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chi square \( \chi^2 = 92.6 \quad p = 0.000 \)**

Table 6.16.1 shows that significant chi square indicates that political activities differ in the levels of agreement among high Facebook users (rank most and high). As for
example, about 50 percent or more of the respondents agree for the first three political activities, but only about one fifth (21.6 percent) to one-third (33.7 percent) agree to the high use of Facebook for the last two political activities.

**Figure 6.16.1 Facebook and political activities**

Figure 6.16.1 shows that more than half of Facebook users agree and strongly agree that Facebook has allowed them to practice most of their political activities such as to seek out political information, engage in political discussions, express political opinions, campaign for candidates and propagate for a political ideology.
6.16.2 Facebook and political participation

Respondents’ political participation is tested by four statements rated on a five-point likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Table 6.16.2 Relationship between Level of agreement of high users (ranks 5&4) of Facebook and political participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political participation</th>
<th>Level of agreement of high users (ranks 5&amp;4) of Facebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unexpected success of social networking websites in the</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>success of the revolution (5.3%)</td>
<td>(5.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain information</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4.2%)</td>
<td>(1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in the revolution</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6.3%)</td>
<td>(6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To upload videos</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7.7%)</td>
<td>(16.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square $\chi^2 = 56.8$  \hspace{1cm} $p = 0.000$

Table 6.16.2 shows that significant chi square indicates that political participation statements differ in the levels of agreement among high Facebook users (rank most and high). The highest percentages of the first and second statements are ‘Strongly Agree’. For the third statement, the highest is ‘Agree’, but for the last statement, the highest is ‘Neutral’.
Figure 6.16.2 Facebook and political participation

Figure 6.16.2 shows that the majority of Facebook users’ engage in political participation through Facebook due to its contribution to the success of the revolution such participation involves gaining information, participating in the revolution and uploading videos.
6.16.3 Facebook and reasons of political participation

Respondents’ reasons for political participation are tested on four statements rated on a five-point likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Table 6.16.3 Relationship between Level of agreement of high users (ranks 5&4) of Facebook and reason for participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason of political participation</th>
<th>Level of agreement of high users (ranks 5&amp;4) of Facebook</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every one was joining</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(30.0%)</td>
<td>(19.3%)</td>
<td>(18.7%)</td>
<td>(27.3%)</td>
<td>(4.7%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a new experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14.2%)</td>
<td>(12.8%)</td>
<td>(24.3%)</td>
<td>(37.2%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve my country</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>(2.6%)</td>
<td>(20.8%)</td>
<td>(76.6%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To end the tyranny</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>(4.0%)</td>
<td>(25.8%)</td>
<td>(70.2%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square $\chi^2 = 229.1$  $p = 0.000$

Table 6.16.3 shows that significant chi square indicates that political activities differ in the levels of agreement of high Facebook users (rank most and high). The very high value of chi square resulted from the existence of four zeroes on the disagree and strongly disagree ratings in two statements. Also, the majority of the respondents (70-76 percent) strongly agree with the third and fourth statements, while only 4-11 percent strongly agreed to the first and second statements.
Figure 6.16.3 Reasons for political participation and percentages

Figure 6.16.3 shows that most Facebook users engage in political participation mainly to improve their country and end tyranny.
6.17 Analysis of Experts in-depth interviews:

Experts were asked questions revolving around the five main variables which the hypotheses tend to measure in order to compare between the respondents’ answers and the experts’ opinions.

6.17.1 Social media and freedom of expression in Egypt

RQ1: Does social media allow its users to have freedom of expression?

All experts either agree or strongly agree that social networking websites allow them to tell their opinions publicly, debate the political issues freely, criticize members of the first family, discuss taboos freely and criticize any authority figure.

Except for Mr. Mostafa Radwan, a political activist, who works as a researcher and scriptwriter, he disagrees that social networking websites help in giving him information on how to choose the eligible president.

Thus, overall most experts agree that social networking websites allow them to have more freedom of expression

6.17.2 Social media and self-actualization

RQ2: Does social media allow its user to achieve self-actualization?

Most experts either agree or strongly agree with all the statements that measures self-actualization. Since, they all agree that through social networking websites they are more willing to participate in political activities, start witnessing the circumstances in
their country more vividly, become more attached to their country and at the same time become more independent.

Yet, Mr. Radwan disagrees with the statement that social networking websites aid the users in receiving more accurate information.

Experts almost agree with all the statements that self-actualization is achieved through the use of social networking websites.

6.17.3 Social media and democracy

RQ3: Does social media allow building democracy in Egypt?

All experts agree that social networking websites contribute to more democracy in Egypt because people can interact and exchange their ideas, opinions, thoughts and ideologies regarding political issues freely and without any barriers. There are no constrains on the information that people exchange on social networking websites. Moreover, social media according to Sara El Khalili, a professor at the American University in Cairo, “liberalized the Egyptian mainstream media” as it gave journalists and media players the opportunity to publish all the corruption in the last few years. Through using all the documents and evidence to prove this corruption, they are able to convey the truth to the mainstream and at the same time forces the public media to overcome their “silence barrier” and disseminate accurate information to the public. The result is a more liberalized which is an essential component for moving towards democracy in Egypt. Kareem Atif, a political activist, agrees that social media allow for building democracy in Egypt, but still true democracy will be achieved when the
Egyptian government starts practicing democracy because the majority of Egyptians especially the lower class citizens do not afford using social networking websites so they are deprived from their rights. Hala Mostafa, a political activist, also added that expressing opinions on social networking websites is part of democracy, but without using these opinions, it cannot be considered a democracy.

6.17.4 Social media and motivation for revolution

RQ 4: Were social networking websites the main motivator for the Egyptian revolution?

Osama Abd El Aziz, head of News department at El Ahram National Newspaper, and other experts said that social networking websites had a main and essential role in the Egyptian revolution. It acted as the initiator of the revolution, social media users, journalists, bloggers and political activists exchange their political opinions through these social networking websites especially Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to show the corrosion that was happening in Mubarak’s regime. They even asked other people to participate in the revolution through sending invitation messages on Facebook with the sequences of the demonstrations such as the place where the protesters will meet and the streets they will pass through. Also, many health precautions are posted on social networking websites to help the protesters. Before the 25th revolution there were some movements such April 6 that depends more on word of mouth rather than social networking websites, so it did not reach the mass people as in the case of Facebook. Thus, Facebook created the political climate that helped in reaching the masses and encouraged them to get out streets and demonstrate.
As for YouTube it acted as a documentary of the events that were taking place in the Egyptian revolution and the awakening for the revolutionary spirit. Twitter was mostly a mean to keep people worldwide updated with what was taking place in the street especially the Tahrir square. Even when the Egyptian authority shut down the Internet, Twitter launched “speak to tweet” for the first time to overcome the censorship barriers that the Egyptian authority implemented.

Yet, Ahmed Fouad, a political activist, added essential role that social networking websites played was not the only reason behind the success of the revolution, it had only acted as a tool in facilitating the quick and more organized transmission and spreading of the news and messages about the revolution. The Egyptian revolution would have tookplace anyway due to the suppression, poverty, inequality and anger that most Egyptians have been living in for the past 30 years. Thus, it cannot be named as the “Facebook Revolution” because people’s anger has reached its maximum from the deteriorating political, social and economic conditions. Social networking websites just prompted the Egyptian revolution to take place earlier than predicted to overthrow against the autocratic regime.

6.17.5 Social networking websites and information

RQ 5: Did Egyptians depend on the social networking websites as their main source of information during the Egyptian revolution?

Experts’ opinions vary in this research question, as Dr. Hwaida Mostafa, professor at Cairo university and Radwan, Khalili, and Fouad believe that social
networking websites are quite informative and that many news organizations refer to social media to take news to broadcast. While Sergany, Zaher, Mostafa and Atif, believe that social media in spite of being a good tool in transmitting the news, some people misuse this tool by spreading rumors. Thus, they say that social networking websites are not credible enough. However, Khalili believes that a moderate social media user can differentiate between the fake and real news through checking the link and the source of the information.

Thus, due to the controversy about the credibility of the news on social networking websites, most Egyptians depended on the transnational media such as BBC Arabic and Al Jazeera during the Egyptian revolution. Then, the international media such as BBC and CNN where 99 percent of the respondents depended on, then the private TV channels such as Dream, Mehwer, ON TV and Al Hayat 97 percent of the respondents depend on, followed by the social networking websites where 96 percent of the respondents relied on during the revolution.

6.17.6 Social networking websites and political activities

RQ6: Did Egyptians use the social networking websites to engage in political activities during the Egyptian revolution?

All experts stated that social media users especially protesters use the social networking websites to organize protest movements and spread all the news regarding the demonstration. They also used the social media to comment on the ongoing events. The social networking websites gave the political activists a chance to spread all the thoughts
and ideas about the revolution and at the same time, created a channel of communication with ordinary citizens to express and negotiate political ideologies. Also, ordinary people were interested in using social media because of its role in mobilizing people during the 25 January revolution. Thus, social media changed the priorities of ordinary Egyptian citizens regarding their use of social networks as they are more interested in political issues and are now forming a principal part in the formation of public opinion.

Moreover, Mostafa and Atif added that social media is a double weapon for the government. The government recognizes the importance of social networking websites and started using them in order to communicate with the Egyptian youth especially the protesters by disseminating information to them and propagating their agendas, for example SCAF has launched their page on Facebook after the revolution as a tool to communicate with the youth. Yet, at the same time, social networking websites were used to publicize the governments’ scandals for ordinary citizens with documents to prove it.
Chapter 8: Discussion

Although different studies found that social networking websites are mainly used as a forum of socializing, this pioneer study found that political participation counts for a large percent as well. Seeking out political information, getting engaged in political discussions and expressing political opinions where among the highest rated reasons behind the respondents usage of social networking websites. Also, having a powerful role in the revolution was a main reason behind the increase in the number of people using social networking websites, besides others reasons such as gaining information and expressing political opinions.

The main reason for using social networking websites to stay connected with people they already know or to form new relationships. This is the same reason found from the respondents answers when they were asked about the reasons for using social networking websites.

Facebook has the highest penetration rate in the Arab world with an annual growth rate of 78 percent from 2010 to 2011 and the number of Facebook users increased by 30 percent in the first quarter of 2011. Internet freedom does not affect Facebook penetration in the Arab region as countries with low scores i.e. high censorships and filtering have high Facebook penetration. This accounts to the creative youth between the age of 15 and 29 who constitute 75 percent of Facebook users in the Arab region and implements ways to overcome filters and censors (Mourtada and Salem, 2011).
From the conducted questionnaire, the respondents’ answers showed that Facebook is also the most highly used among all ages. Facebook got the highest usage by all ages, followed by YouTube. The age range from 18 to less than 28 got the highest usage which goes with what was just mentioned above that the age range from 15 to 29 constitutes 75 percent of the Facebook.

Moreover, the questionnaire results showed that Facebook is the most highly used among all income levels followed by YouTube 48 percent and 37 percent respectively, while Twitter accounts only for 13 percent followed by LinkedIn 2 percent and MySpace 1 percent. In addition, Facebook is also the most highly used social networking website among the different educational levels followed by YouTube. Throughout the educational levels, Facebook is the most highly used social networking website with a cumulative frequency of 307 which accounts for 47 percent of the total number of respondents, who are users of the social networking websites.

This correlates with the last research conducted by Nielsen Company in 2009 regarding the different social networking websites, Facebook for example witnessed a massive increase by 566 percent accounts from 3.1 billion minutes to 20.5 billion minutes. Facebook was able to add “almost twice as many 50-64 year olds visitors (+13.6 million) than it has added under 18 year old visitors (+73 million). Thus, by now one third of Facebook global audience is aged between 35 and 49 and one quarter is over 50 years old (Nielsen, 2009).

It is obvious that “Twitter, Facebook and YouTube have been an integral part of the political upheaval and change in the Middle East, in countries ranging from Iran to
Tunisia to Egypt and beyond” (Lloyd, 2011). Social networking websites especially Facebook turned from just being a central point to form political groups and organizations and “emerge as political actors in their own right” (Lloyd, 2011). In other words, social networking websites are imbedding themselves into the ongoing political debates, trying by themselves to form attainable outcomes.

According to experts Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have complemented each other during the revolution. This goes along with Rafat Ali, the founder of paidcontent.org, who emphasized that the difference in the use of both Twitter and Facebook in the Egyptian revolution is huge. Facebook was used to help people in organizing the protest movements by specifying exactly on how they would meet, when and where. Twitter was used mostly during the revolution by the protesters to keep each other and other ordinary people updated with what is going on by sharing news, comments and videos. Besides, videos are also uploaded and shared on YouTube (Crovitz, 2011).

Chrystia Freeland, a journalist at The New York Times, described the “Groupon effect” as when people are having a certain opinion and find that the majority are supporting their opinion, they are more encouraged to speak out since their views are widely shared. This is known as the “collective action.” Such kind of mobilization assures the role of social networking websites in the formation of “collective action” or “Groupon effect”.

She believes that social networking websites help opponents of the dictatorship regimes to know that there is an adequate number of citizens supporting them, so they are
more encouraged to speak out. Opponents feel through Facebook groups that their views are widely shared and that every one who did not want this dictatorship regime will go to the street, which is known as the “Groupon effect”. This is also the spiral of silence effect were protestors knew that they held the majority views, so they were encouraged to express their opinions and demonstrate.

Results showed that social networking websites helped also in providing a marketplace in which conflicting ideas are shared. Social media encourages protesters to go to the streets through overcoming the fear of collective action. This is because through social networking websites political activists felt that they held the majority view so they were encouraged to go out and speak as they felt that their opinions are supported by others as a sufficient number of people are supporting them, not only in Cairo but also all over Egypt.

According to Freeland, television, Facebook and Twitter “have been more powerful in helping to solve the problem of collective action, by giving people unhappy with their governments the confidence that their views are widely shared.” In other words, the new technological progress has eased the way for provoked societies to come out and express their “collective anger.” As long as people get over this collective action problem, going to the streets and protesting could be as powerful as it has been in Egypt and Tunisia.

Since the evolution of social media specifically social networking websites, almost all people for the first time in human history became “politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive” (Marshall, 2011). This global political
awakening leads to global political activism. Taking into consideration that human
dignity is behind this global political awakening especially when the Internet creates a
community of shared beliefs and values that motivate Internet users worldwide to end the
“long alien colonial or imperial domination” and have better economic conditions with
respectable cultures and personal dignity.

Another point worth mentioning is that after applying the Uses and gratification
theory it is proven that people’s usage of social networking websites during political
crises, differ than their usual usage of these websites. From the questionnaire results, the
majority of the respondents use Facebook to participate politically through improving
their country and ending tyranny, very low percentage respond that they use Facebook
because everyone was joining or to have a new experience. This is how the uses of social
networking websites differ after the Egyptian revolution than it was mainly before for
socializing.

As for the autocratic regimes, they are faced by a real challenge as in the earlier
periods it was much easier to control one million people than to actually kill them, while
nowadays after the introduction of the Internet and the social media it is fairly easier to
physically kill one million people than to control them(Marshall, 2011). Thus, according
to Professor Sara El Khalili, the Egyptian government recognized the importance of
social networking websites and started using them in order to communicate with the
Egyptian youth especially the protesters by disseminating information to them and
propagating their agendas.
When Egyptian respondents were asked about their main source of information during the Egyptian revolution, the most usable source that all the respondents depend on to get news during the Egyptian revolution is the Transnational media such as BBC Arabic and Al Jazeera. Then, the international media such as BBC and CNN where 99 percent of the respondents depend on, then the private TV channels such as Dream, Mehwer, ON TV and Al Hayat 97 percent of the respondents depend on, followed by the social networking websites where 96 percent of the respondents rely on during the revolution.

According to Jillian York, a Boston-based writer, researcher and activist, the rise of the Internet and social media were essential tools in helping people to communicate freely with each other, yet they were not the reason behind the revolutions. For example, in Iran the revolution was due to the deceit election that kept Ahmadinejad in power for the second time. Also, in both Egypt and Tunisia the revolutions were due to poverty, corruption and high unemployment rates.

Thus, York believed that it will be completely unfair to credit these revolutions to be the electronic revolutions or Twitter and Facebook revolutions and ignore the “blood, sweat and tear gas” of the young people which made the revolutions.

Also, Andrew Marshall added that social media did have a crucial role in mobilizing people, but the actual revolution and its consequences such as the resignation of Ben Ali and Mubarak were due to the direct demonstrations and enthusiasm of the protesters and not because of being a “Twitter revolution.”
Media experts and political activists added that social networking websites have a main and essential role in the Egyptian revolution. They act as the initiator of the revolution whereby social media users, journalists, bloggers and political activists exchange their political opinions on these social networking websites especially Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to show the corrosion that is happening in the old regime. Thus, Facebook created the initial political climate that helped in reaching masses and encouraged them to go to the street and demonstrate.

Yet, this essential role of social networking websites is not the only reason behind the success of the revolution, it only acts as a tool in facilitating the quick and more organized transmission and spreading of news and messages about the revolution. The Egyptian revolution would have taken place anyway due to the suppression, poverty, inequality and anger that most Egyptians suffer from. Thus, it cannot be called the “Facebook Revolution.” Social networking websites just prompted the Egyptian revolution to take place earlier than was predicted and demonstrate against the autocratic regime.

One other remarkable point is about the demographics of those who have initiated the demonstrations since most of the protesters are young, well-educated and relatively moderate to high social standards (Greg, 2011).

This is fairly true since 54 percent of the sample chosen who have social networking websites and joined the Egyptian revolution fall in the age range from 18 to less than 28. Also, 56 percent of the sample chosen are graduate students, 22 percent are undergraduate students, 17 percent have a masters degree, 4 percent have a PHD and only
1 percent are school students. This in return shows that most Egyptian citizens who joined the revolution are well educated. Finally, 46 percent of the respondents earn more than EGP 5,000 per month, and 28 percent earn from EGP 3,000 to less than EGP 5,000 per month. Thus, more than half of the respondents are relatively from high social standards.

The first attribute that helped in the success of the Egyptian revolution is accessibility. Accessibility means the ability of social media to disseminate information to ordinary people, who can easily access any of the social media tools and gather all the information they need. Thus, social media helps in spreading information among people (Greg, 2011).

This is the same reason derived from the questionnaire as when respondents were asked about the main reason for using social networking websites, the highest rating average is for the statement saying “to gain information” with a rating average of 4.17.

Social media are considered the new and powerful political weapon which had tremendous role in the success of the Egyptian revolution. It gives people for the first time a platform whereby they can express their viewpoints, objection and comments freely in a more democratic atmosphere without the fear from the government. Also, it gives people the chance to discuss taboos that they were not allowed to discuss before, so it breaks down most of the previous barriers that people used to face (Buisier, 2011).

More than half of the respondents either strongly agree or agree 21.5 percent and 30.9 percent respectively that the use of the social networking websites gives them more freedom of expression whereby they express their opinions freely on the social
networking websites, engage in political debates, discuss taboos and criticize the governments.

In summation, social media networks have played an integral role in the Egyptian revolution in terms of citizens’ mobilization. Not only the respondents but also the experts have stated the role of social media networks in being rich platform where ideas are exchanged freely.
Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusion

The rise of social networking websites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, have changed the few political activists into millions of people opposing Mubarak regime and his followers. Therefore, social networking websites helped political activists to be connected with the ordinary people to form collective action and demonstrate in streets not only in Cairo, but also throughout Egypt as a whole.

From the primary survey conducted to measure the role of social networking websites during political crisis in Egypt, and from the in-depth interviews conducted with media experts and social media activists, the study showed the following results;

First, 97 percent of the respondents fall in the age range from 18 to 38, and 75 percent of the respondents has monthly income ranging from EGP 3,000 to more than EGP 5,000, which fall with the middle and upper class. Respondents are either graduate or undergraduate students 56 percent and 22 percent respectively.

Second, the number of females using social networking websites constitutes 75 percent, which exceeds the number of males who represent 25 percent. Also, the total number of hours that all females spent using social networking websites is 248 hours per day compared to all males who spent only 90 hours per day.

Third, English is the most commonly used language by the respondents while using social networking websites as 44 percent use only English language and 47 percent of the respondents use both English and Arabic languages.
Fourth, the majority of respondents’ 85 percent has been using social networking websites for more than three years and 47 percent of them spend an average from one to less than three hours per day using social networking websites. Social networking websites are either very important or important to 94 percent of the social networking websites’ users; only 5.7 percent said that it is not important.

Fifth, the most usable source that 99 percent of the respondents depended on to get news during the Egyptian revolution is transnational media such as BBC Arabic and Al Jazeera. This is followed by international media such as BBC and CNN where 99 percent of the respondents depended on, then private TV channels such as Dream, Mehwer, ON TV and Al Hayat 97 percent of the respondents depended on, followed by the social networking websites where 96 percent of the respondents relied on during the revolution. The least news source that people rely on for information is Radio with only 88 percent of the respondents relied on.

Sixth, almost 81 percent of respondents rate the coverage of social networking websites as good and very good. Besides, 40 percent of the respondents believe that social networking websites are a credible news source during and after political crises.

Seventh, the number females using the social networking websites were much higher than the number of males. Females account for 75 percent of the whole sample chosen, while males only account for 25 percent. This difference is the same in all social networking websites except for MySpace males are higher than females 66.7 percent and 33.3 percent respectively.
Eighth, Facebook got the highest use by all ages and among all income levels followed by YouTube 48 percent and 37 percent respectively, while Twitter accounts only for 13 percent. Also, it got the highest use by all languages and among the different educational level followed by YouTube 47 percent and 36 percent respectively.

Ninth, Facebook got the highest percentage where 45 percent of the respondents learned about the Egyptian revolution for the first time from it and then comes transnational television such as BBC and Al Jazeera 29 percent.

Tenth, most Facebook users 70-76 percent agree that they are using it to improve their country and end tyranny and more than 50 percent of Facebook users use it to seek out political information, engage in political discussion and express political opinions. Also, 90 percent use Facebook to gain information and 62 percent use it to participate in the revolution.

Eleventh, more than half of respondents believe that they are enjoying more freedom of expression through their use of social networking websites. They find a medium, whereby they can express their opinions freely, discuss political issues, taboos and criticize the government. Also, social networking websites give its users a greater sense for self-actualization.

Twelfth, as for political participation during the Egyptian revolution, it was shown that the more the number of hours respondents spend using social networking websites, the greater their percentage in participating in the revolution. Sixty-two percent
physically participated in the revolution, 61 percent express their opinions on the social networking websites and 54 percent encourage people to go to the street and demonstrate.

Thirteenth, regarding political participation after the Egyptian revolution 23 percent and 42 percent respectively strongly agree and agree that they use social networking websites to seek out political information, engage in political discussion, express political opinions and campaign for candidates.

Fourteenth, social networking websites were considered one of the essential elements that mobilized the Arab youth to start the Arab uprising. Still many other factors motivated the protesters throughout the Arab world to demonstrate, such as poverty, oppression, autocratic regimes and suppression over everything. These were the main reasons behind revolutions taking place in the Arab world starting from Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Jordan and Syria.

Finally, social networking websites have paved the way through which minorities who oppose Mubarak autocratic regime find that most Egyptians are supporting them, so they were more encouraged to speak out and go to the street. However, without the blood, the willingness and persistence of the protesters in democratizing and liberalizing their country, the Egyptian revolution would have never succeeded.

At the same time, the success of the Egyptian revolution and other Arab revolutions in the world forced social networking websites to change their initial purpose from being a medium to socialize with other people worldwide into wider scope. Social networking
websites are now an essential medium for people to express political opinions, seek out political information, propagate for candidates and give political advice.

Most social media users’ are now using it to help improving their country and have a political role by a way or another to end the tyranny and have better political and economic conditions through enjoying more freedom and democracy.

9.2 Recommendations for the Egyptian government

- Moving towards democracy, the government should give the low-income people the opportunity to have access to computers and Internet to be able to connect with other people through social networking websites so that they can be included in the sample.

- News coverage in social networking websites should be more comprehensive and reliable for people to depend on.

- The new government should use social networking websites and conduct online forum of discussion with different groups in the society as a channel of communication, getting closer and knowing their demands.

- National media should be independent from the government in order to gain people’s credibility instead of depending heavily on social networking websites, which sometimes provide inaccurate information, especially that many categories still depend on the traditional media.
**Recommendations for further studies:**

- A quantitative analysis for MySpace is required as the number of males that are using it outweighs the number of females, since a deep analysis of the Facebook has been conducted where the number of females using the Facebook is much greater than the number of males. To analyze if the usage of social networking websites during political crisis in Egypt differ if males are using it more than females.

- The study should be replicated after five years to analyze if social networking websites are still used for political participation or other reasons.

- The study should be replicated while applying the Agenda setting theory and the public sphere theory.

- Further research needs to study the mobile application and the usage of the social networking websites.

- Further research on political advertising on social networking websites: The case of the Egyptian presidential elections.

- Further research on political mobilization on social networking websites in Egypt transitional post revolution period.
9. Limitation of the study:

Any research paper is faced with certain limitations that might affect the significance of the study.

4.1 Scarcity of Academic Articles

The main limitation that faces this study is the scarcity of the academic, scholarly articles and books that are discussing and analyzing the uprising in the Arab world due to the novelty of the topic and the incidents that are taking place.

4.2 High Illiteracy Rate

Another limitation that hindered the research is the high illiteracy rate in Egypt whether those who cannot read and write or those who are computer illiterate. This acts as a barrier in generalizing the results because many Egyptian citizens who participated in the Egyptian revolution, knew about it through word of mouth and not through social networking websites. Thus, the huge numbers of protesters is not only because of social networking websites, but also because of other sources such as the word of mouth that act as a motivator for protesters.

4.3 The Sample

The sample taken should include respondents from different social strata especially from the low class with a monthly income less than 500 EGP per month. Unfortunately, this sample was not taken due to the difficulty of reaching this stratum of the population.
The sample should also include more recent Facebook users i.e. those who formed accounts on Facebook or any of the social networking websites for less than one year and especially after the Egyptian revolution.
10. References:


Retrieved on August 7, 2011.


Postill, John. “Egypt’s Uprising: Different Media Ensembles at Different Stages.”


“Will Social Media Replace War as a Foreign Policy Tool?” Feb. 17, 2011. 

11. Appendices

Appendix A

This survey is part of a study conducted to obtain a Master of Arts degree in journalism and mass communication at the American University in Cairo. This research examines the role of social media in the Egyptian revolution.

Your input is quite valuable for the completion of the survey. Your responses will be totally anonymous.

It will not take more than 10 minutes of your time. Thank you for your time.

1. Do use social networking websites?
   - Yes
   - No

If your answer is no please go to section C

Section A

2. Please mark if you use any of the following social networking web sites.

Rank your choices from 1 to 5, where (1) is the most used and (5) is the least used.

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Twitter
- MySpace
- LinkedIn
- Other, please specify…………………………………………………………………………………

3. The main reason for using these social networking websites: ………

Choose One answer only:

- Socializing with people
- Getting News
- Political participation
- Shopping
- Doing business online
- Others,please
  specify…………………………………………………………………………………
4. Does the use of the social networking websites give you more freedom to discuss different political issues?
   o Yes
   o No
   o I do not know

5. If you are using the social networking websites for political participation, please indicate with (✓) your degree of agreement with the following statements: If no please proceed to the next question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Seek out political information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Engage in political discussions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Express political opinions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Campaign for candidates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Propagate for a certain political ideology or party.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Which websites have you use before the Jan. 25th Egyptian revolution. Mark all that apply.
   o Facebook
   o YouTube
   o Twitter
   o MySpace
   o LinkedIn
   o Others, please specify…………………………………………………………………………
   o None

7. Which websites have you started to use during the 18 days of the Jan. 25th Egyptian revolution. Mark all that apply.
   o Facebook
   o YouTube
   o Twitter
   o MySpace
   o LinkedIn
   o Others, please specify…………………………………………………………………………
   o None
If your answer is none go to question 9

8. If you start using these websites after Jan 25th, rank each reason from SD to SA for using the social networking websites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o The unexpected success of social networking websites in the success of the revolution.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o To gain information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o To participate in the revolution.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o To upload videos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Please indicate with (√) your degree of agreement with the following statements about your personal usage of the social networking websites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o I usually express my opinions freely on social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o I engage in political debates on social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o I openly discuss taboos on social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o I criticize the government freely on social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Please indicate with (✓) your degree of agreement with the following statements after using the social networking websites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am more willing to participate in political activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I start witnessing the circumstances in my country more vividly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more attached to my country.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not fear practicing politics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I became more independent person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive more accurate information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. From where did you learn about the 25th Egyptian revolution for the first time?
   - Facebook
   - Twitter
   - YouTube
   - Family
   - Friends
   - Work
   - TV
   - Newspapers
   - Others, please specify………………………………………………………………………………………………………

12. Have you participated in the Egyptian Revolution?
   - Yes
   - No

   **If no go to question 17, if yes please continue.**

13. How did you participate in the revolution? Mark all that apply
   - Encouraging people to go to the street through the social networking web sites
   - Physically participate in the demonstrations
   - Just writing your opinion on the social networking web sites
   - Guarding places and neighborhoods
   - Others, Please specify………………………………………………………………………………………………………
14. Why did you choose to participate in the revolution? Mark with (√) your level of agreement on each reason.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Every one was joining.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o To have a new experience.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o To improve my country.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o To end the tyranny.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

15. Is it your first time to participate in a protest movement?

o Yes

o No

16. If your answer is NO, what other protest movements did you join?

………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………..

17. Which news source did you mostly rely on for information during the Egyptian revolution? Rank your choice where (1) is the most used and (8) is the least used.

o Public TV channels (i.e. channel 1, channel 2, Nile News)
o Private TV channels (i.e. Dream, Mehwer, ONTV, Al Hayat)
o International media (i.e. BBC, CNN)
o Transnational media (i.e. BBC Arabic, Al Jazeera)
o Printed newspapers
o Social networking websites
o Radio
o Online newspapers
o Other, please specify………………………………………………………..

18. How would you rate the coverage of the Egyptian revolution on social networking websites?

o Very Good

o Good

o Average

o Bad

o Very Bad
19. Do you think that the social networking websites are credible news sources?
   o Yes
   o Neutral
   o No

20. Please indicate with (√) your degree of agreement with the following statements about the social networking websites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o I believe the social networking websites were the best medium covering the revolution.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o After the revolution, I start using the social networking websites.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o I think that the Facebook plays a major role in the success of the Egyptian Revolution.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>o I watch most of the videos covering the revolution on YouTube.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>o I agree with calling the revolution the “Facebook Revolution.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>o I usually depend on Facebook as a main source of information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The social networking websites did not play any major role in the revolution.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o I started using social networking websites for political participation after the Jan. 25th Egyptian revolution.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section B

1. How long have you been using the social networking websites?
   - Less than a year
   - One year to less than two years
   - Two years to less than three years
   - Three years and more

2. How important are the social networking websites to your daily life?
   - Very important
   - Important
   - Not important

3. How many hours a day do you spend using social networking websites?
   - Less than 1 hour per day
   - 1 hour to less than 3 hours per day
   - 3 hours to less than 5 hours per day
   - 5 hours and more per day

Section C

1. Please indicate your gender
   - Male
   - Female

2. Please indicate your age range
   - Less than 18
   - 18 to less than 28
   - 28 to less than 38
   - 38 and above

3. Please indicate your educational level
   - School student
4. Please indicate your income level in EGP per month
   - Less than 1000
   - 1000 to less than 3000
   - 3000 to less than 5000
   - 5000 and above

5. Can you specify the language you use while using computers? Mark all that apply.
   - Arabic
   - English
   - German
   - French
   - Others, please specify………………………………………………………………………………...
Appendix B

Appendix II – List of experts who conducted the audience survey face validity check

Below is the list experts’ list for the conducted pilot research. A pilot research was conducted to test face validity from top experts in the field.

**Expert 1**

Dr. Nayla Hamdy

Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication Department,

The American University in Cairo.

**Expert 2**

Dr. Amany Ismail

Professor and Associate chair

Journalism and Mass Communication.

The American University in Cairo

**Expert 3**

Dr. Rasha Allam

Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication Department

The American University in Cairo.

**Expert 4**

Radwa Mubarak

Lecturer, Journalism and Mass Communication Department

The American University in Cairo.

News anchor at Nile TV.

**Expert 5**

Sara El Khalili

Lecturer, Journalism and Mass Communication Department
The American University in Cairo.

Expert 6

Sahar Sedky

Lecturer, Journalism and Mass Communication Department

The American University in Cairo.
Appendix III – List of experts who conducted the in depth interviews

**Expert 1**
Dr. Hwaida Mostafa  
Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication Department  
Cairo University.

**Expert 2**
Sara El Sergany  
Dubit editor and chief.

**Expert 3**
Sara El Khalili  
Lecturer, Journalism and Mass Communication Department  
The American University in Cairo.

**Expert 4**
Dr. Taher Abd El Zaher  
Professor Cairo University

**Expert 5**
Mostafa Radwan  
Researcher and Script writer

**Expert 6**
Ahmed Fouad  
Political Activist
Expert 7

Kareem Atif

Political activist

Expert 8

Hala Mostafa

Political activist

Expert 9

Osama Abd El Aziz

Head of News department at El Ahram National Newspaper