

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Chapter 1 Introduction	3
1.1. Introduction	3
1.2. Background and Motivation to the Study	5
Chapter 2 Literature Review	6
Chapter 3 Theoretical Argument	10
3.1. Introduction	10
3.2. Interpersonal Relations and Social Embeddedness	11
3.3. Strong Community	12
3.4. Enhanced Connectedness and the Elevated Level of Trust	14
3.5. Social Influence and Immediate Social Context	15
3.6. Proposed Theoretical Argument and Hypothesis	17
Chapter 4 Research Method	19
4.1. Research Method and Research Strategy	19
4.2. Data Collection and Sources	22
4.3. Participants	22
4.4. Validity and Reliability	23
Chapter 5 Analysis	24
5.1. Interpersonal Relations and Social Embeddedness	24
5.2. Strong Community	29
5.3. Enhanced Connectedness and the Elevated Level of Trust	32
5.4. Social Influence and Immediate Social Context	37
Chapter 6 Policy, Limitations, and Conclusion	40
6.1. Policy Recommendations and Implications	40
6.2. Limitations	41
6.3. Conclusion	42
References	44
Appendix 1	48

Abstract

The present paper is the original insight into the causes and conditions, which triggered and facilitated the development of the Egyptian Uprising of 2011. Taking into account the abundance of inconsistent theoretical literature on social mobilization, the author made sure to incorporate four distinct and reputable approaches into the proposed theoretical framework. The purpose of this dissertation was to check the role of the social media in the process of mobilization that swept a seemingly passive and inert Egyptian society and its impact throughout the riots. The survey method was used to collect relevant information from the primary resources. The validity and credibility of the findings were enhanced through the use of the triangulation approach, which required adding data from the secondary sources to the analytical process. The qualitative analysis proved that though the Internet and social media were first introduced in Egypt as a marginal leisure activity for the elite members of society, it soon became accessible to almost everyone and turned into a powerful transformative tool of communication. Twitter and Facebook served as central mobilization devices connecting leaders, protestors, and their supporters. The analytical conclusions allow asserting that the social media was a primary instrument utilized by a number of online communities and sectors in opposition to gear the Arab Spring in Egypt.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The phenomenon of the Arab Spring encompasses a range of antigovernment demonstrations and riots, which engulfed the Arab world in 2011. The unprecedented level of social mobilization and the upsurge of violence resulted in the revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen, civil wars in Libya and Syria, civil uprising in Bahrain, massive protests in Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Iraq, and Oman, as well as less substantial notice of opposition in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, Sudan, Lebanon, Djibouti, and Western Sahara. The Egyptian version of the Arab Spring is of particular interest due to its unexpectedness and seeming improbability. The local outcry against the established socio-political order reached its pinnacle on February 11 and led to the sequential ousting of two political leaders. Firstly, the rise to power of the head of the Muslim Brotherhood party, Mohamed Morsi, ended the thirty-years-long reign of the legitimate president, Hosni Mubarak. Secondly, a year later, the latter was forced to resign by the Chief General of the Egyptian Armed Forces Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

The Egyptians claimed major social reforms, such as the lifting of the longstanding national emergency rule, salary increase, solutions to the housing problems, unemployment, and shortages of commodity supplies, guarantees of the freedom of speech, as well as the general improvement of the living standards. The rioters used the traditional means of long-term civil disobedience, i.e., strikes, walk-outs, demonstrations, marches, rallies, as well as innovative tools, i.e., the engagement of social media to organize, communicate, and inform the fellow citizens despite government repressions and severe Internet censorship.

The unconventional pattern of the Egyptian revolution lies in the commonly held opinion that the local society was extremely feeble and fragmented due to the historically erratic social ties. These two characteristics were significantly sharpened by the thirty years of Mubarak dictatorship. It seemed incredible that such a demoralized national community proved to be capable of launching an uprising of overwhelming power, timing, scale, and efficiency. Almost immediately, the media attributed the success of the revolutionary campaign to the social networks, which spread their influence and geographic coverage over the recent decade. The following factor seemed to be the only logical explanation to the phenomenon of rapid social mobilization in Egypt. However, later, this explanation was questioned and reconsidered in the reviews of scholars, who studied the Arab Spring on the case-specific basis more thoroughly.

In this dissertation, I seek to provide a thorough assessment of the role of social media platforms on the process of civil mobilization in Egypt in the context of the Arab Spring. I plan to demonstrate that the technological sophistication of the Egyptian society did not initiate the rebellion or modify the traditional social structure and public networks. On the contrary, modern communication technologies and the dynamics of their contextual change caused the unprecedented scale of organized violence, which occurred during the period of the Arab Spring. In this respect, the discussion relies on the mixed argumentation of the reputable socio-political theories.

My analysis and findings are primarily based on survey questions, supplemented with other sources to prove that each of the following consequential stages was passed by the Egyptian society on the road to massive mobilization: 1) interpersonal relations and social embeddedness, 2) strong community, 3) enhanced

connectedness and elevated level of trust, and 4) social influence and immediate social context.

1.2. **Background and Motivation to the Study**

The moment that the Arab Spring only surfaced in the media reports, it instantly became the center of the social and scholarly debate. It became impossible to avoid the topic in casual and friendly conversation, and I was exposed to a multitude of personal opinions and argumentations of different points of view. Once I had one of those ardent discussions with a friend of mine from Egypt, I realized that almost everyone around us became involved. It was clear that, at that moment, the high emotions and the lack of competency in the issue prevented us from finding a logical consensus on the role of social media in fueling the Arab Spring in general and in the context of Egypt in particular. The fact that social media was an extremely influential tool for the diffusion of ideas and interactive communication did not necessarily empower it with the capacity to unfold social mobilization and push it to the limits of violence. This dispute sparked my interest in the topic and motivated me to conduct this study on how individuals and communities mobilize.

The second chapter presents the review of the existing literature regarding the role of social media in the realization of the phenomenon of the findings. The third chapter formulated the theoretical argument and hypothesis of this dissertation. The fourth chapter focuses on the research method and strategy. The discussion of the findings, as well as policy recommendations and implications are further discussed in the final chapters.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature on social mobilization presents it as a thoroughly planned process, in which all of the parties involved cooperate to achieve a pressing common goal. It implies a combination of choice and voluntary participation. People perceive the summoning to mobilization as a call for help, which they are bound to render to their community. They not only feel obliged to respond to the initiation, but are also convinced that such behavior is in their best interests and important for the associates. The key interrelated elements of mobilization are the propaganda of ideas, collaboration, the integration of resources, and the exchange of information. Propaganda is about the manipulation of the public opinion or policy to achieve explicit or implicit objectives. The process requires the formation of obtrusive political and social beliefs. By using such methods as the creation of coalitions, the dissemination of ideas among the ordinary members of the public, and the engagement of mass media, propaganda creates an environment where political will and the legal terms interact to trigger the required transformations (Bernays & Miller 2004).

The efficiency of social mobilization depends on the availability of the relevant political conditions and legal basis. In other words, the leaders at all levels should be aware of their responsibilities, as well as be empowered to make critical decisions and act. In turn, the participants should share the corresponding beliefs and be ready to advocate the perceived interests and ideas. These elements should be secured at the primary stages of mobilization through the methods of propaganda. Obviously, the unambiguous support of the government or the leading opposition group is a prerequisite for a massive social mobilization. Propaganda and

psychological warfare always played an essential role in local and international conflicts (Hardin 1997).

The formation of the information society has enhanced the importance and influence of this particular weapon. Traditional and online newspapers, radio, television broadcasts, and the Internet generated an hourly updated information flow directed at the target population. The incoming messages are instantly analyzed, dissected, commented, and diffused in real time (Boyd 2006). The events widely publicized as the Arab Spring represent a bright example of the role and impact of social media platforms in the process of social mobilization to achieve strategic political and social transformation. All researchers agree that the revolutions have been caused by a complex range of economic, social, political, and ideological factors. However, the modern social media undeniably made a substantial contribution to the delivery and escalation of the events (Aouragh & Alexander 2011).

The exactly degree of such an influence stands in the center of the modern debate on the role of the Internet in strategic mobilizations (Abu-Samra 2011). In particular, the Egyptian revolution has brought this discussion to the forefront of socio-political polemics (Morozov 2011). In general, during the early days and the immediate post-revolution period, political commentators assumed that the Internet and social networks played a paramount role in making people leave their homes and support the movement, appealing to the national self-actualization, and creating the unity capable of achieving the reformist objectives. Hofheinz (2011) insisted that the Arab Spring would not be possible without the procurement of the social communication platforms. Kristof (2009) suggested that the revolutions in the Arab World were the products of the expansion of new information and communication technologies, such as Facebook and Twitter. As a result, an implication of the general

modernization and Westernization of the archaic and backward communities occurred. Hofheinz (2011) and other proponents of the utopian point of view on the role of the Internet in the global democratization process used such terms as “Revolution 2.0,” “Facebook or Twitter Revolution.” The critics of such analytical perspective argued that the Internet could not act as the cause but operated merely as the means for scheduling, coordinating, and channeling the civil protests. Its tools can only be actualized and employed once the society faces real causes for concern. In response to the accusation of the Federal Trade Commission in 2011, Mark Zuckerberg agreed that the social networks and the Internet had expanded the boundaries and enhanced the transparency of the socio-political dialogue significantly (Wintour 2011). However, the Facebook CEO stressed that “Facebook was neither necessary nor sufficient” to instigate and guide the uprisings (as cited in Wintour 2011).

There are clear singularities in the role of social media in the context of mobilization in Egypt. Morozov (2011) turned the public attention to the fact that even when the Egyptian government limited access to the Internet in the attempt to secure its status quo, the move failed to curb the protests or block the internal and external communications of the rebels. Aouragh and Alexander (2011) cited interviews with the Egyptian activists as an argument against the leading role and guidance of communication technology during the overturn of Hosni Mubarak’s government. The speed, with which the Arab Spring followed the global financial crisis, makes it impossible to ignore the correlation between the two phenomena. In particular, the sudden economic breakdown created the inevitable sense of vulnerability, which was eventually exploited by the revolutionaries. They used it to create a negative image for the acting authoritarian governments depicting them as

unjust and corrupt dictatorships rooted in nepotism and fatally incapable of mending the situation and violently suppressing the national urge for democratic reforms and integration with the global community (Lesch & Haas 2012).

It is possible to conclude that the existing scholarly literature exploring the issue of mobilization still contains a significant information gap. There is plenty of discussion on different aspects of the Arab Spring. However, the authors failed to reach a consensus on the exact effect of social networking during the protests in Egypt. This aspect is in the center of research of the present dissertation. Taking into account the findings of the literature review, I presume that the role of the new information technology has been significantly overestimated. Undoubtedly, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and mobile communications played a significant part in facilitating the revolutionary conversion of the Arab World. However, it is wrong to put an equal mark between the exposure to the technological capabilities and the protest movements. Aouragh (2008) explained that the original analytical inaccuracy was based on the attempt to attribute the political transition to the aggregate numbers describing the Internet penetration within the population. It is necessary to understand that access to the Internet is crucial only for the leaders during those stages, which represent the turning points in the evolution of the movement (Aouragh 2011).

The correct assessment of the role of social media platforms on the process of civil mobilization in the Arab world is impossible without the investigation of the socio-economic background of the revolution, access to the Internet, the functional characteristics of its tools, and the application of alternative channels of the information flow. Such an approach allows defining the most meaningful and impactful element in the comprehensive structure that outlines the context of the Arab Spring. Therefore, the research question is that, since the reviewed scholarly literature

failed to generate insights into the issue, this dissertation aims to explore the role of social media during the protests in Egypt.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Argument

3.1. Introduction

To understand the impact of information transmitted by social media during the mobilization process in a specific community, it is essential to incorporate a combined approach of the political theory and sociology. The literature on mobilization suggests that a large number of the Egyptians had access to the Internet, relied on its interpretation of the events preceding the Arab Spring, and, therefore, were drawn into the social movement. Historically, such episodes occurred either as a “political manipulation” or a sincere “outrage” for the socio-political, economic, and religious reason (Hassner 2011, p. 29). The acutely perceived “moral threat” to the existing social order served as a powerful trigger for the rampage of hostile sentiments in the destabilized regions (Hassner 2011, p. 23). Therefore, the question is whether mobilization of the social movement in Egypt and the escalation of violence during riots was an expression of grassroots outrage engulfing the community or resulted from the strategic manipulation of the governing authoritarian regime.

Four distinct mobilization theories from the socio-political science are investigated with the purpose of shedding the light on these issues and defining the drivers of mobilization in Egypt: the interpersonal relations and social embeddedness theory, the strong community theory, the enhanced connectedness and elevated level of trust theory, as well as the social influence and immediate social context theory. Their implications are used to generate an original theoretical argument for the present paper and formulate a hypothesis for further discussion.

3.2. Interpersonal Relations and Social Embeddedness

According to the theory of social embeddedness, which stipulated that “networks of interpersonal relations” are responsible for the creation of trust and the decriminalization of otherwise dishonest and illegal behavior, the larger the scale and the impact of the aggression, the more numerous coalitions are required to actualize violence (Granovetter 1985, p. 483). In the context of rebellion, the members of the society characterized by the strong social ties and structures are more likely to mobilize if they feel that some significant individuals are participating (Granovetter 1985, p.485). Interpersonal relations and social embeddedness constitute the core of the social mentality generating the physical and psychological response to any informational provocation. Wars necessitate the organization of armies, where soldiers are bound by the history of partnership relations.

The motivating dynamics grows even more compelling if the recruits feel they are providing a meaningful contribution to the socially important events and reinforcing original social ties. The contexts, in which the decision-making was performed, conditioned the dynamics of such ties. According to Granovetter (1985, p. 481), the reluctance of the utilitarian and rational theories to see the way “atomized-actors” are connected and governed by social relations. The historically pre-arranged networks of social interrelatedness define and manipulate individual decision-making and behavior. The phenomenon of embeddedness was enhanced and expanded in the modernist societies primarily due to the effect of the Internet and social media, which pushed communities to the limits of over-socialization and, thus, managed to capitalize on their most susceptible and engaged members (Granovetter 1985).

3.3. Strong Community

Whereas the social embeddedness and interpersonal relations theory emphasized the priority of mutual consent to commit violence, a second theoretical approach drew its implications from the doctrine of strong communities. It argued that game theory and the rational choice provided an insufficient explanation for the drivers of the third stage of mobilization during “rebellion against ruthless regimes” as they could not account for the willing acceptance of the tremendous risk associated with such an opposition (Petersen 2001, p. 14). The major component that helped to overcome the fear of death, marginalization, imprisonment, and deportation was a strong community. The strength of a community, as well as the consequent heterogeneity and synchrony of resistance, are based on the cohesion of interpersonal relations, socio-cultural and economic interdependence, the frequency of communication, as well as the commonality of cultural and moral beliefs and values (Petersen 2001, p. 16). In other words, communities are regarded as the sets of individuals connected through a chain of regular direct relations characterized by various levels of reciprocity, equality, and responsibility. In turn, social strength is generated from the sense of unity and commitment to engage and lastingly participate in the activities that the majority deems necessary. One of the greatest powers of such a community is the capacity to maintain communication among its members even when all formal channels are banned or closed by the regime (Petersen 2001, p. 17).

The logic behind participation in resistance depends on the number of participants, status rewards, such as honor, respect, and pride, safety calculations, utility expectations, and social pressure. The combination of such elements creates a snowball effect in the process of mobilization. The threshold of participation and the speed of decision-making are linked to the level of network ties (Petersen 2001, p. 38). The major role of the elites, which lead the rebellion, was to “encourage,

organize, and manipulate the actions and symbols” associated with the highest emotional, psychological, and behavioral response of the public (Petersen 2001, p. 32). By comparing social confrontation with the power structures across time, space, and cultures, it is possible to distinguish the common mechanisms, through which the process of mobilization unfolded in various contexts. According to this theory, the deposition of strong regimes incorporated the three sets of drivers essential for shifting the public from the point of neutrality (stage one), instigating an organized armed rebellion (stage two), and sustaining it for the period required to complete the strategic action (stage three) (Petersen 2001, p. 32).

The transition from the first to the second stage of resistance is achieved through the formation of “resentment for the regime, focal points, and status rewards” (Petersen 2001, p. 33). The first goal is achieved through the denigration of the existing policies. The second goal is accomplished through the emphatic reminder of the historical landmarks of resistance. The attainment of the third goal is secured through the explicit prescription of meaningful gains resulting from collaboration. The transition from the second to the third stage is secured by the rigid social structure, which creates and exacerbates moral pressure that exceeds the threat. Following this scheme, it is possible to explain the way three social groups cross the participation threshold with the help of Venn diagrams (Peterson 2006, pp. 45-46). Group A consists of students, group B is composed of workers, and group C involves farmers. There are subset clusters at the intersections of the given groups that contain mixed representatives. Students operate as the first party as they are lured by the promise of status and honor. Such idealists have minimum concerns with regard to the manner participation that will affect their lives and high ambitions to make something important and celebrated. Workers, party members, families, socio-economic unions,

and religious organizations joined in the struggle as intermediary participants through the sense of moral obligation to the community. The last place was occupied by the apathetic individuals, who affiliated with the rebellion belatedly and only due to the fear of social exclusion in case they do not take part in the events. Beyond the threat of marginalization, the latter did not feel any sense of honor or moral obligation. By defining the size of the community, the bonding strength, the proportion of relevant social groups exposed to different mobilization thresholds, it was possible to predict the speed of emergence, evolution, and sustainability of a particular rebellion case (Peterson 2006, p. 75).

3.4. Enhanced Connectedness and the Elevated Level of Trust

The more intimate the social relations are, the more prone individuals are to trust the reputation of their leaders and associates. “Generalized morality and institutional arrangements” secure participants of the rebellion from individual moral responsibility (Granovetter 1985, p. 488). The speed, with which the actors are expected to join the rebellion and cross the threshold leading to violent action, stands in direct ratio to the level of solidarity and embeddedness present in the society (Petersen 2001). Social relations manifest in the form of specific interpersonal ties and public networks capable of “generating trust and discouraging malfeasance” (Granovetter 1985, p. 488). The greater “force and fraud” are applied, the deeper internal trust is incorporated among the culpable parties (Granovetter 1985, p. 491). In turn, massive disorders and rebellions are “impossible without prior relations” (Granovetter 1985, p. 492). Individuals are more likely to rebel if they feel that some significant individuals are participating with them, and they can provide a meaningful contribution by joining the civil action. Within this framework, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other social networks operated as innovative instruments enhancing

cultural heterogeneity and connectedness among the groups and individual members of the community. They also covered allegedly spontaneous boycotts, protest demonstrations, and the development of events in real-time to advance the evolution of the individual role from an indifferent spectator, through a sympathizer, to a collaborator.

The content prescribing preferred models of collective behavior, values, and attitudes transmitted through such channels makes them dynamic. Cell phone technology, the Internet, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube procure only a variation of this phenomenon and its violent thrust. By enhancing the cohesiveness and connectedness of the community through communication and real-time coverage, such tools not only “improve in group cooperation and coordination,” but also elevate the sense of trust (Pierskalla & Holenbach 2013, p. 207). This collective evolution makes all parties break the second threshold, i.e., resort to violence (Pierskalla & Holenbach 2013). The consent to participate in the ethnic conflict is invoked by an imperfect bargaining within an all-or-nothing paradigm, where the assailant is expected to gain maximum benefits from the moral sacrifices he/she makes (Fearon & Laitin 2000).

3.5. Social Influence and Immediate Social Context

Social influence and the immediate social context would mitigate a rational choice and compel “actors to acquire customs, habits, or norms that were followed mechanically and automatically” (Granovetter 1985, p. 485). In each segment of strong societies, the desire of individuals to conform to their referent groups is expected to be so overwhelming that it would provoke mobilization. The research investigating the dynamics of mobilization by providing evidence of the Rwandan

genocide of 1994 proved that not only the social relations, but also “the immediate social context” accounted for the employed mechanisms and forms that mobilization assumed in different situations and employed to escalate violence (Fujii 2008, p. 573). Nevertheless, regardless of the fact that all parties take part with varying enthusiasm, internal moral and psychological reluctance will not prevent them from contributing to the rebellion and resorting to violence or whatever means appear necessary to achieve socially significant priorities (Tilly 2003).

In the case of Rwanda, militant leaders used family and interpersonal ties to recruit and initiate the members of the killing squadrons. In turn, friendships operated as the mitigating factor compelling the executioners to spare and rescue Tutsi. The operationalization of a particular instrument depended on the level of exposure to the peer-pressure and the need to prove conformity to the members of the relevant community. Mobilization for mass violence represents a unique case as it does not entail a plausible explanation from the point of view of the rational choice theory. Within this framework, individuals base their conscious choices to join a violent militant group (Fearon 1995). It is caused by the fact that such an alliance is instrumental to the attainment of valuable personal goals, such as security for self and family, economic gain, position in the power structure, etc.

The logic of the game theory and the expected utility theory fail under the observation that the preferences of ordinary people always include peace, security, and stability (Fuji 2008). Ethnic cleansing and similar engagements entail inevitable psychological, emotional, and economic traumas for the community, which cannot be overseen by their members. On the contrary, the acknowledgement of the authority of the violent leaders is necessitated by the considerations of personal “security and survival,” while the formation of alliances and the realization of interests surface as a

secondary function (Fuji 2008, p. 570). The experience of the low-level participants in Rwandan ethnic conflict proved that local power structures counteracted some of the ethnic ideologies, which drove mobilization to violence to a greater extent than hatred or power manipulation. In other words, individual choices were conditioned by the hierarchal system of interpersonal relations, the sense of belongingness, and the uniform interpretation of the action regarded as legitimate. On the one hand, the change in the political propaganda outlawed the Tutsi population and justified their genocide as the eradication of the detrimental elements. On the other hand, the face-to-face encounter with the Tutsi friends and neighbors appealed to the deeper personal moral and overcame the need to conform to the social norms that established the notions of honor, fairness, and public duty (Fuji 2008, pp. 572-574).

3.6. Proposed Theoretical Argument and Hypothesis

Drawing on the theories discussed above, I hypothesize that a large number of people involved in the Arab Spring were also exposed to social media. The exposure to social media initially intensified interpersonal relations and communication and secondarily facilitated the formation of a stronger community. Eventually, the levels of connectedness and trust among the members of the local community increased to the point where political manipulation aimed at spreading nationalism and provoking mobilization became possible. The dissertation explores the way the Arab Spring in Egypt evolved as a result of this dynamic process.

Within the framework of the four highlighted theories, the study explores the domino effect, which acts as a mechanism connecting and conditioning the sequence of the selected variables. Thus, the chain reaction is traced in the way a society exposed to social media builds up interpersonal relations through communication,

which, in turn, leads to the formation of a strong community with the enhanced connectedness and the elevated levels of trust among its members. These factors and the immediate social context blend allow the individuals to be socially influenced and engaged in mobilization.

CHAPTER 4

Research Method

4.1. Research Method and Research Strategy

To explore the phenomenon of mobilization, the present dissertation uses the method of case study and narrows down the research to the Arab Spring. Within the selected case study, it completes a single case study of the specified rebellion in Egypt with the application of the process tracing research method. The case study approach has been selected for the analytical purposes of the present paper as a conventional tool of social psychology designed to enable an in-depth investigation of a specific event and/or community (Yin 2013).

The case of Egypt has been selected as the environment for the given research for several factors, which bring the country to the avant-garde of the Arab World. Firstly, it is associated with a long history of socio-political resistance, which cannot be ignored in the discussion of the rebellion and is expected to offset the perception of the Internet influence. Secondly, it boasts the largest population of the broadband Internet and cell-phone users, i.e., 23 and 9 million correspondingly (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology 2011). The current statistics means that more than 30% of the Egyptian households rely on the Internet as the mainstream media for procuring information and perform as subscribers of various social networks. This number is, at least, three times higher than the population of the Internet users in other countries of the Arab World (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology 2011). Finally, the geopolitical importance of Egypt for the U.S. has procured a steady flow of military aid and protracted disregard of the Western community at the violation of human rights in the region (Alexander 2009).

Process tracing is one of the central methods of the case analysis since it works with the historical evidence relevant to a particular case when investigating the causal explanations for the developments and outcomes of socially and politically important events. Process tracing focuses on connecting the dots of the “social and institutional structure and context with individual agency and decision-making,” thus, generating solid causal explanations and references for the tested hypotheses (Bennet & Checkel 2012, p. 1). The process tracing tool emerged in the field of political psychology about fifty years ago and was used to analyze decision-making at the micro-level, i.e., individual incidents. Over the years, it proved instrumental for the examination of cause-and-effect relations between the elements at the macro-level of social relations (George & Bennett 2005, p. 142). The quality criteria of process tracing include strong philosophical foundations, the adequate depth of the investigation provided by the survey questions, and the solution to the problem of equifinality. The latter implies that a researcher should endeavor to ensure the focus and uniqueness of the selected variables and methods of their assessment, which minimize the risk of confusing overlapping outcomes (Waldner 2011, p. 7).

The literature review proves that most researchers used this approach to explore the outbreaks of mobilization in different societies. The four theoretical models discussed in the previous chapter argued different cause-and-effect patterns for mobilization, which makes process tracing an ideal method to complete this task in the present paper. The use of process tracing is essential to ensure validity and reliability of the argumentation and conclusions for the case at issue (Bennett & Checkel 2012).

The independent (causal) variable is the exposure to social media. I argue that exposure to social media intensifies interpersonal relations through communication,

which, in turn, leads to the formation of a strong community. The latter generates connectedness and elevates the level of trust among its members. These factors allow the individuals to be socially influenced and make them susceptible to political manipulation. The domino effect of such exposure is enhanced by the immediate social context and leads to mobilization. Mobilization is the result of the process and the dependent (caused) variable of the present research. Process tracing is applied to prove that these elements are systematically linked and evolve one causing the other in a consistent manner. It is necessary to take into account that each of the steps in the domino sequence represents an intervening variable, i.e., a force caused by the immediately preceding element and conditioning the emergence of the next one. The intervening variables in the case of Egypt are as follows: interpersonal relations, a strong community, connectedness and the level of trust, as well as the social influence and the immediate social context. These variables possess individual character and the capacity to mitigate or intensify the original process launched by the independent variable (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger 2005).

The survey questionnaire was developed to collect primary data for the present study (Appendix A). This strategy is a suitable method for data collection because of a relative simplicity associated with the construction and administration of the inquiry, its cost-efficiency, and ability to collect voluminous information from large populations rather quickly (Fowler 2013). A standardized survey allows mitigating the problem of geographical distances, overcoming the inconsistency of schedules, and maintaining the compatibility of findings. It gives the opportunity to investigate multiple variables, which is necessary in the selected case (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger 2005). The design of the majority of questions was multiple-choice closed-ended to provide a focus and systematic viewpoint to the answers. A few open-ended

questions were used to add depth to the qualitative analysis. The questions were organized in groups to capture the themes of strong community ties, interpersonal relations, connectedness and the level of trust, as well as the social influence and the immediate social context. The questions were constructed in an unambiguous and precise form to ensure maximum objectivity and clearness of responses, as well as the following analysis.

4.2. Data Collection and Sources

The process of data collection incorporated a triangulation approach, which implied the use of multiple sources to increase validity. The primary source of the qualitative data was the original survey inquiry (Appendix A), which was supplemented with the triangulated data from newspaper articles, books, interviews, NGO reports, and other academic surveys. By expanding the enquiry into multiple channels of information, the researcher intended to overcome the problem of equifinality and eliminate bias. The advantage of this method lies in its cost-efficiency, speed of information collection, ease of supervision, and geographical independence. Credibility and focus were ensured through the correlation of the survey questions with the list of the inquiries used in similar case analyses (George & Bennett 2005).

4.3. Participants

Since the topics of mobilization in society and the Arab Spring evoked sincere and ardent participation, it has been decided to employ a snowball sampling method. This non-probability sampling tool implied that the original survey would be initially sent to the small group of respondents accompanied by the request to send it over to their acquaintances. In this manner, the population of respondents was expected to

increase from 5-7 people to the number sufficient for securing the saturation, reliability, and credibility of findings. The inquiry continued for two weeks, during which the respondents sent the completed questionnaires to the researcher. It was impossible to foresee the overall number of respondents, who were going to return the surveys. Eventually, forty respondents returned their surveys, which were included in the analysis.

4.4. Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity testing was carried out to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings and analytical conclusions. The former was ensured through the strategy of deriving the survey questions from the peer-reviewed literature in the field. Thus, the researcher secured that the questions addressed the meaningful variable and variances defining the initial social proneness and actual participation in the Egyptian variant of the Arab Spring. The pilot study was conducted to secure the reliability of the study's focus and completeness of the survey.

CHAPTER 5

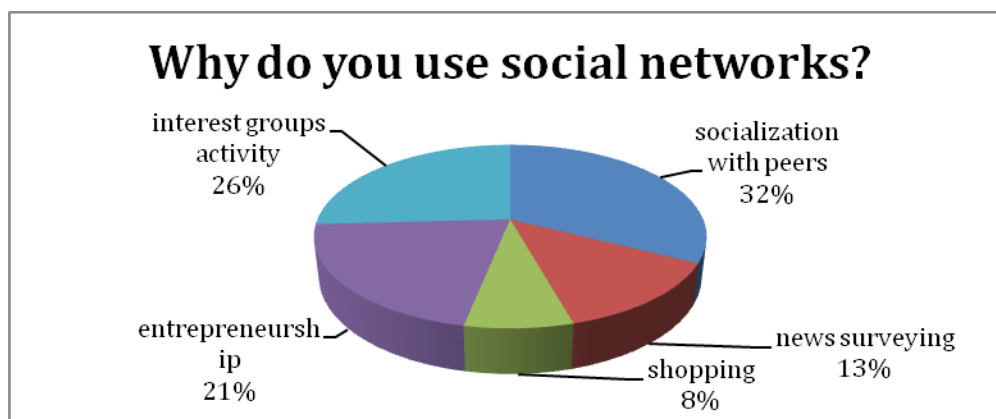
Analysis

5.1. Interpersonal Relations and Social Embeddedness

To discover and measure the level of interpersonal relations and social embeddedness in the Egyptian community during the Arab Spring, the survey inquiry included the following questions: (1) Why do you use social networks? (2) Did your friends engage in the riot? (3) Is it a primary source of your communication with peers? (4) Do you feel you spend too much time in social networking? (5) Do you agree with the statement that social media and the Internet helped with creating ties? (6) Have you participated in the uprising? (7) If yes, then what was your participation? (8) If yes, what motivated you to participate?

The findings were aggregated in small pie charts and presented below showing the answers to the listed questions and discussing their relevance to the evidence in books, articles, and theoretical argumentation.

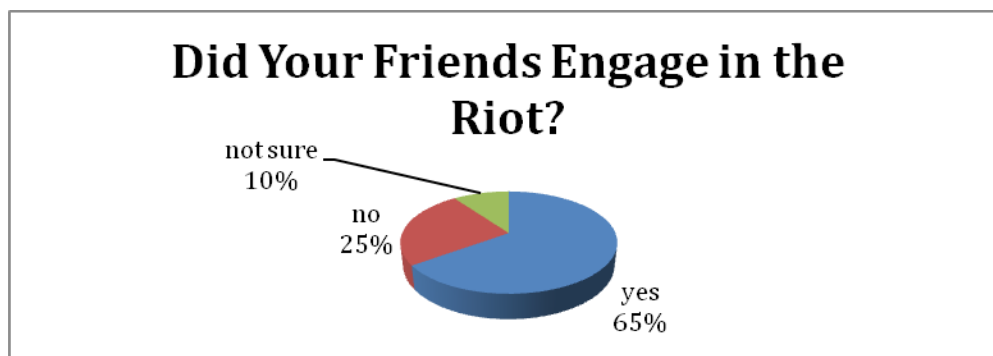
Figure 1:



This pie chart demonstrates that the majority of respondents attributed the greatest functional value of social networks to socialization, interest group activity,

and entrepreneurship while shopping and news surveying were not among the priorities. This pattern confirms that the social networks in Egypt were performing their direct and the most significant role, i.e., enhancing interpersonal relations and social embeddedness.

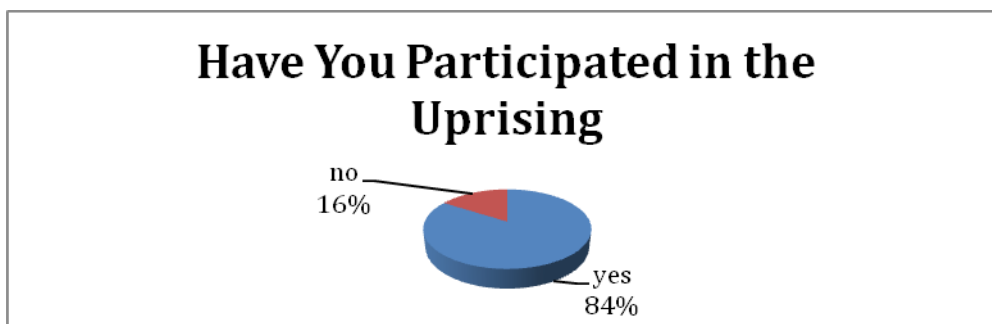
Figure 2:



This pie chart demonstrates that 65% respondents were aware that their friends participated in the riot, 25% people knew that their friends did not mobilize, while 10% were not sure of their friends' status during the rebellion. This pattern shows that the majority of people were informed about their friends' reaction to the mobilization appeal. Notable, this response was predominantly positive and active, indicating massive mobilization in the Egyptian society during the Arab Spring. The general awareness of the society of the ongoing and sweeping unrest is also evident.

It is also important to note that 80% of respondents confirmed social networking to be the primary source of their communication with peers. 65% of respondents acknowledged that they felt they were spending too much time in social networking. 15% of participants denied this presumption while 20% appeared unsure in terms of assessing their engagement in the Internet activity. One of the most important findings is that 100% of participants agreed with the statement that social media helped with creating ties (Appendix B).

Figure 3:



80% of respondents marked their participation in the uprising. In addition to direct involvement in the protests as organizers, leaders, members of street patrols, journalists, commentators, and guards of tent camps, 50% of the mobilized participants were engaged in cyber activism (Appendix B). They deliberately used their cell phones, cameras and social media platforms to create and post video and audio pieces to disseminate first-hand news, transfer information, align communication among the groups of Egyptian, Arab and foreign activists. The use of YouTube and Twitter increased almost twofold during the rebellion as their magnitude and significance as sources of local information review for the world grew exponentially. In other words, they functioned as the streams of the near-real-time visual and textual information about the most current events. Facebook and personal blogs remained the primary social platforms connecting people before, during and after the Arab Spring. These survey findings on direct participation and assistance are in line with journalist analytics presented by Brown, Guskin and Mitchell (2012) and Kassim (2012), who argued that many people assisted with smuggling medicine, financial resources, weapons, and critical intelligence after demonstrations transformed into a civil war.

Multiple motives to participation ranged from personal irreconcilability with the existing socio-political order to the strong intention to support and join friends, family members, and authoritative leaders. The latter was an essential and pressing factor for 92% of the respondents, who mobilized during the Arab Spring (Appendix B). This motive was reinforced by the sense of duty and belongingness to an important landmark crisis destined to change the history of the home country. Participants emphasized the sense of justice and legitimacy, which was invested in the rebellion by the witness reports that they followed in the social media.

These findings proved the theoretical argument, which suggested that, in the context of the rebellion, the members of the society characterized by strong social ties and structures are more likely to mobilize if they feel that some significant individuals are participating. In the case of Egypt, this dynamic took place and was reinforced by the sense of justice and historical significance. The survey findings showed that the vast majority of the respondents had their friends engaged in the protest. In turn, an almost equal percentage of respondents manifested personal participation in the rebellion. This behavioral regularity substantiated the argument that strong social ties and structures played a crucial role as individuals were easily encouraged to mobilize if they felt that a sufficient number of significant individuals has already been participating.

The evidence of friendship being the trigger for the chain-reaction of mobilization and the social media maximizing interpersonal relations and social embeddedness corroborated the conventional wisdom accepted in the academic and political community (Diani 2003). In particular, the Cairo-based political opposition first major effort came in 2003 and coincided with the emergence of the Kefaya movement (Clarke 2011). It evolved into 6 of April Youth movement. Despite its lack

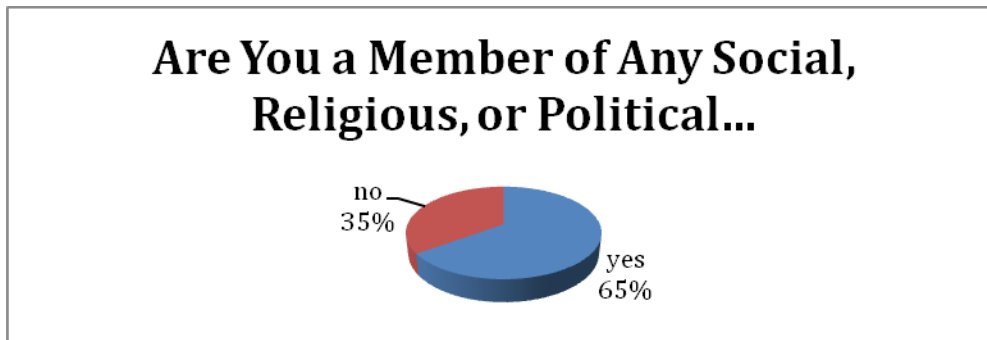
of success, the youth activists forged and maintained strong relationships through social media and the Internet (El-Mahdi 2009). This example illustrates that the phenomenon of embeddedness was enhanced and expanded in the modernist societies primarily due to the young age of participants, their reliance on the Internet and social media in interpersonal communication with peers, and ability to reconfigure and reorganize social relations to maximize the impact of social action (Diani 2003).

The leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood strategically used the “program of social outreach” as an alternative to “political partnerships with other groups” (Clarke 2014, p. 387). Such an approach secured enviable self-sufficiency and magnitude of the socio-political influence (Tammam 2011). At first, the senior leadership attempted to maintain political independence and disapproved joined “political projects and cross-partisan connections of their youth members” with the members of other groups (Clarke 2014, p. 387; Maher 2011). Nevertheless, the ability to tolerate and, eventually, embrace these activities contributed to the creation of greater social interconnectedness and embeddedness (Wickham 2011, p. 33).

5.2. Strong Community

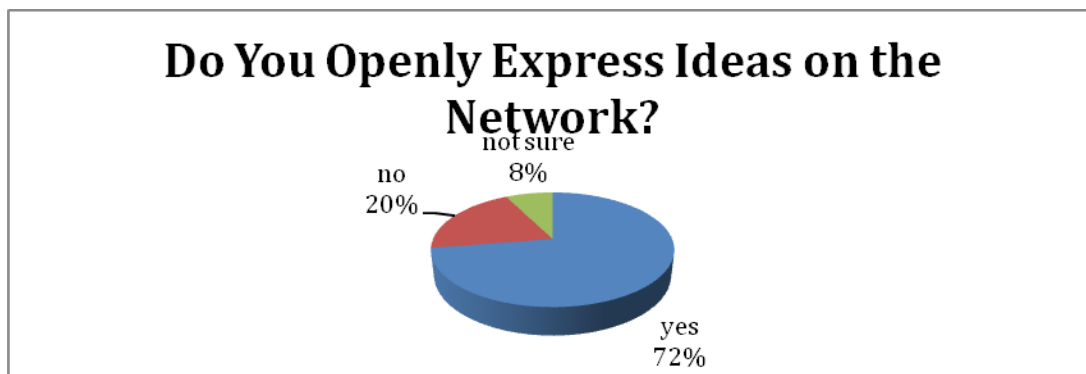
To discover and measure the strength of the Egyptian community during the Arab Spring, the survey inquiry included the following questions: (1) Are you a member of any social, religious, or political organization? (2) Do you openly express ideas on the network? (3) Do you regularly discuss political issues online? The findings were aggregated in small pie charts and presented below showing the answers to the listed questions and discussing their relevancy to the evidence in books, articles, and theoretical argumentation.

Figure 4:



This pie chart demonstrates that 65% of the respondents were formally affiliated with or performed as active members of some social, religious, or political organizations. They manifested interest and concern in the future of their country and sought interaction with collaborators and associates. These respondents earlier manifested intensive tendencies to socialization on the Internet and interest group activity.

Figure 5:



This pie chart demonstrates that 72% of the respondents are often disposed to openly express their ideas on the network while 20% sometimes resort to frankness. Such attitude creates an environment of trust and strong connectedness among the social elements communicating on the Internet.

Figure 6:



Half of the respondents felt empowered and eager to discuss political issues online on a regular basis while 20% seldom resort to such a practice. 30% never engage in political discussion (Appendix B). Taking into account that the strength of a community, as well as the consequent heterogeneity and synchrony of resistance, which is based on the cohesion of interpersonal relations, socio-cultural and economic interdependence, the frequency of communication, as well as the commonality of cultural and moral beliefs and values, it is possible to claim that the intensity and frankness of political discussion in the social networks is indicative of a strong community in Egypt on the verge of the Arab Spring. The survey findings confirmed that the respondents openly expressed their political views, beliefs, values, allowing each other to share thoughts or engage in the debate on the opinions and points of view, which shows the strength of the community (Esam-Al 2013).

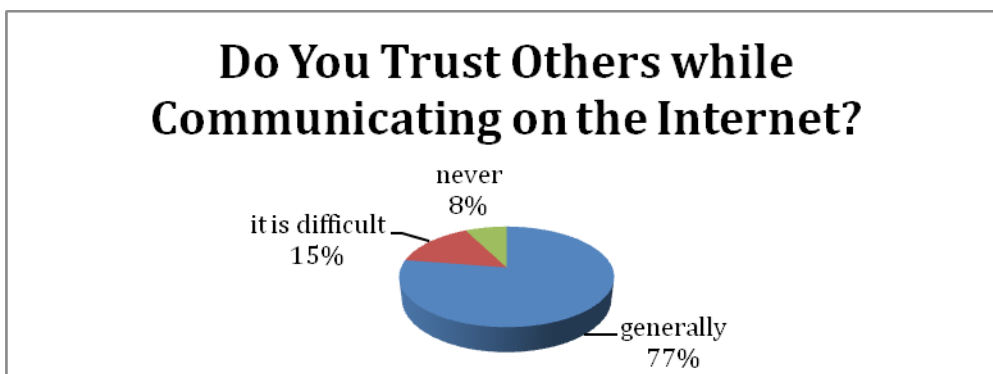
These findings are in line with and supported by evidence from the relevant secondary sources. Clarke (2014, p. 384) demonstrated that there were largely three autonomous sectors, which played a significant role in providing the Egyptian revolution with the needed momentum. These sectors were the Cairo-based political opposition, informal Egyptian labor movement, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Undoubtedly, while some individuals were not affiliated with any socio-political or religious organizations, it is possible to assume that these individuals were not engaged in any of these sectors and, nevertheless, participated in the rebellion. The events were organized and led by the individuals, who were embedded and affiliated with some of these social sectors. Senior and medium leadership had to command belongingness to one of the noted sectors to share common ideological values and beliefs and maintain the coordinated action. Therefore, the theoretical argument, the survey findings, and supporting evidence suggest the presence of a significant strength of the Egyptian community manifested in the form of the solid system of the shared socio-political and religious beliefs and values (Gelvin 2012). Factual evidence of a strong community allows tracing further dynamics of mobilization in Egypt transmitted through and supported by this link.

5.3. Enhanced Connectedness and the Elevated Level of Trust

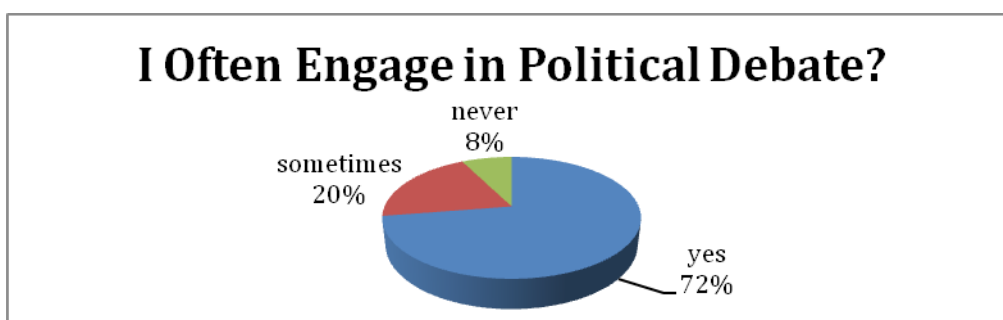
To discover and measure the levels of connectedness and trust present in the Egyptian community during the Arab Spring, the survey inquiry included the following questions: (1) Do you trust others while communicating on the Internet? (2) How often do you engage in political debate? (3) How did you learn about the riot in the first place? (4) Have you participated in the uprising? (5) If yes, then what was your participation? (6) If yes, what motivated you to participate? (7) Please, name the source of information that you relied upon during the rebellion? The findings were aggregated in small pie charts and presented below showing the answers to the listed questions and discussing their relevance to the evidence in books, articles, and theoretical argumentation.

Figure 7:



This pie chart demonstrates that 77% of the respondents generally trusted the expertise of communicators and activists, whom they encountered in the social networks. Such attitude facilitated acceptance and absorption of information from various channels on the Internet investing little critical thinking in the process, when it became automatic. This pattern of cognitive intelligence explains the magnifying speed, with which the actors shifted from interest in the news through the involvement to mobilization.

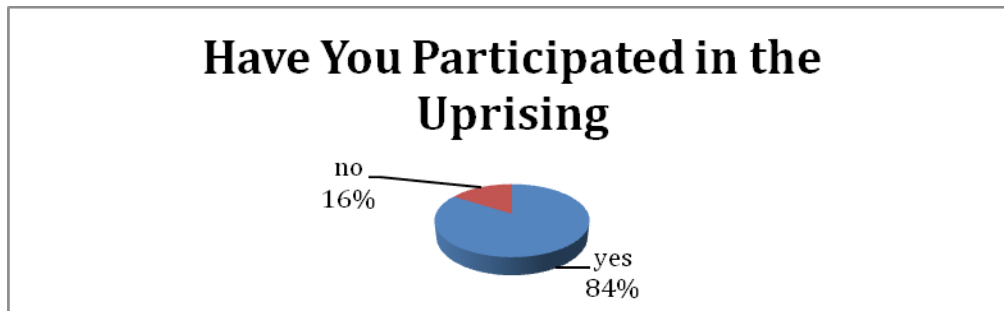
Figure 8:



72% of respondents engage in political debate on the Internet because they trust it is safe. The ordinary members of the community react to the powerful encouragement to do so by other active actors, who launch the communication

process in this field (Mansour 2011). Notably, 100% of respondents learned about the riot from various social media (Appendix B).

Figure 9:



As discussed in the previous sub-section of this chapter, 80% of the respondents participated in the uprising (Appendix B). They adopted various roles, ranging from direct rebellion to supportive actions. Half of the respondents provided assistance in the field of cyber activism. People were lured to participation through the charged sense of personal irreconcilability with the existing socio-political order and willingness to support and join friends, family members, and authoritative leaders. The latter was an essential and pressing factor for 92% of the respondents, who mobilized during the Arab Spring (Appendix B). Massive participation and the acute sense of reestablishing social justice prove the enhanced connectedness and the elevated level of trust existing shared by the members of the Egyptian community at that time (Habib 2011).

Social networks in general and Twitter in particular were the main sources of information that the respondents relied upon during the rebellion. They trusted each other and were confident about receiving accurate information from the social media. In turn, such attitude enhanced the overall sense of implicit credibility and validity of the informative channels on the Internet (Adel 2011). This dissemination of trust was

responsible for pushing actors to share ideas and actions. The build-up of solidarity and connectedness conditioned the speed, with which the actors were expected to join the rebellion and cross the threshold leading to violent action. These two interrelated elements were manipulated by the expertise of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other social networks. Evidently, social media created connectedness since the survey responses corroborate the conviction that the vast majority got accurate and timely information from these sources, and individuals capitalized on community ties to elevate the level of trust (Gawish 2011).

These findings are in line with the general consensus that came out of the NGO community as demonstrated in the interview with Hisham Mubarak Law Center's founder Ahmed Seif Al Islam (2011), who argued:

“.....in all the other cities around Egypt Tunisia gave people an example, All we tried to do was create harmony between our contacts in these various places. We didn't really have to convince them. It wasn't difficult - we knew these people because we had visited many times and all we had to do was to tell them what was going to happen and they agreed with us and agreed to join.” (Ahmed Seif Al Islam 2011)

This statement demonstrated how the NGOs merely tried to create harmony and capitalize on their contacts and relations while the fact that they had previous experience of cooperation with them made it easier. He further explained that with the Tunisian situation that took place, it was not a difficult task for him and his colleagues to ensure broad support for the planned protests and mobilization (Seif 2011). The strategy involved informing loyal “lawyers, activists, and labor leaders in towns throughout Egypt” about the details and schedule of the imminent action to secure the support of the most conscious citizens (Clarke 2014, p. 389). One of the strongest elements of the NGO strategy was recruiting allegiance of labor activists in the

industrial regions characterized by the long-term grievances against the acting government. “The Hisham Mubarak Law Center was mostly responsible for collecting all the workers together before the uprising because they had worked with us all before” (Habib 2011).

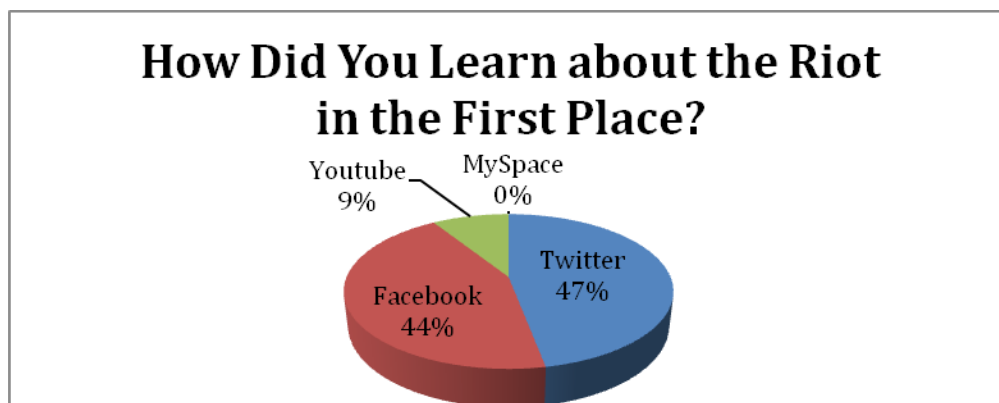
This operational program gave the individuals a sense of trust, which generated a strong push towards enhanced connectedness and the elevated level of trust amongst individuals proving that these mechanisms were at play in Egypt. Therefore, the majority of the Egyptians were embedded and affiliated with one of the dominant social sectors. With the individuals linked together through a shared ideological belief, the strength of the community grew. In turn, in the context of a strong community present, it was easier for the individuals to trust each other and generate unprecedented levels of trust and connectedness amongst the loyal contacts and associates (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 2001).

The most prominent of NGOs, i.e., the Center for the Trade Union and Workers' Services (CTUWS), the Hisham Mubarak Law Center (HMLC), and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR), maintained strong relationships with political parties and social movements based in Cairo. Nadim Mansour (2011), the executive director of ECESR, noted: “*We had a very broad mandate and we had a lot of connections. But, in the end, our role, and the role of the NGOs in general, was supportive.*” This demonstrates that the NGO mostly played a supporting and coordinating role. Notable that none of the existing opposition groups in Egypt was powerful enough to overthrow the Mubarak government. The merger of their networks during the mobilization process was a prerequisite of the Arab Spring success. This union manifested and fuelled a sense of trust and connectedness amongst the activists and their supporters (Kitts 2000)

5.4 Social Influence and Immediate Social Context

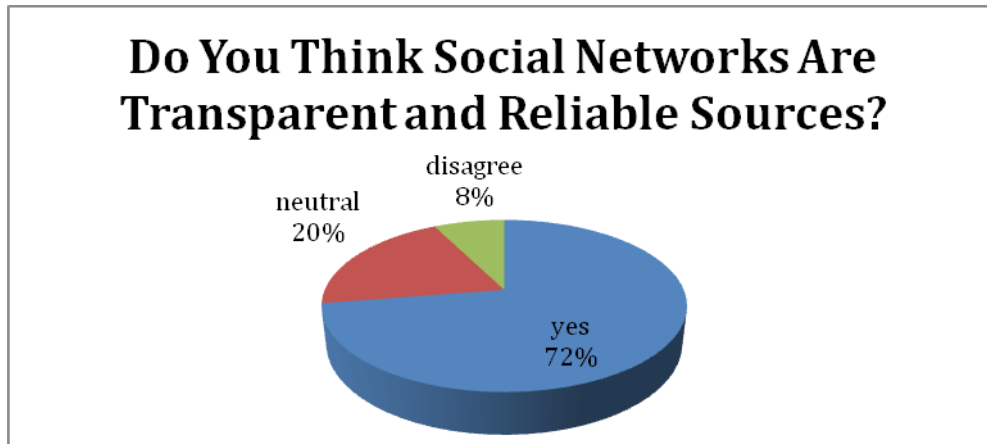
To discover and measure the impact of the community and the immediate social context in the Egyptian community during the Arab Spring, the survey inquiry included the following questions: (1) How did you learn about the riot in the first place? (2) Do you think social networks are transparent and reliable sources? and (3) Did you agree with the existing social order? The findings were aggregated in small pie charts and presented below showing the answers to the listed questions and discussing their relevance to the evidence in books, articles, and theoretical argumentation.

Figure 10:



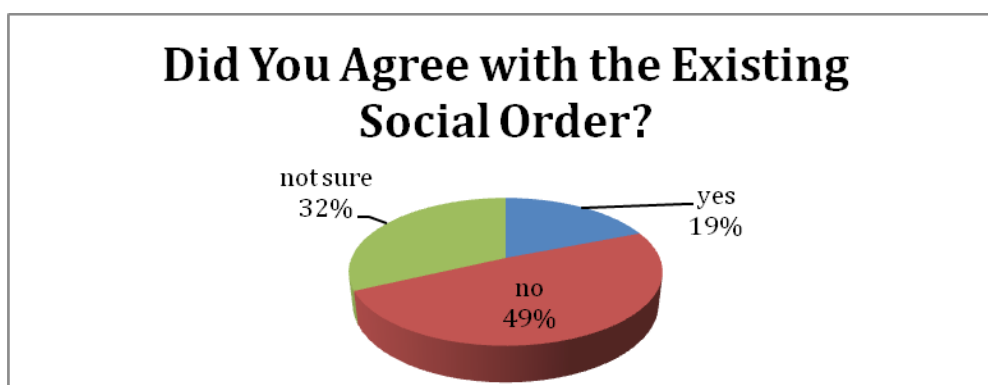
All of the respondents learned about the riot from the Internet. The leader in the list of the most frequented social platforms was Twitter (47%), closely followed by Facebook (44%). Some of the information reached the community from YouTube (9%). These findings are corroborated by reliable journalist research acknowledging the critical role of Twitter and Facebook in the mobilization process during the Arab Spring in Egypt (Kassim 2012; Wiest & Eltantawy 2015).

Figure 11:



72% of the respondents believe that social networks are transparent and reliable sources of information. This layout coincides with the findings of the engagement in the political debate, willingness to mobilize, and participation in the rebellion. This pattern substantiates the theoretical argument that the individuals are susceptible to social influence, and that social influence would mitigate rational choice and compel “actors to acquire customs, habits, or norms that were followed mechanically and automatically” (Granovetter 1985, p. 485).

Figure 12:



Notably, at the dawn of the Arab Spring, people were unsure of their political concerns and preferences. Almost half of the society (45%) aspired to change the

existing social order while the other half appeared either unsure of or opposing to the changes (Eltantawy & Wiest 2011). This fact manifests the power of social media to manipulate public opinion even with the availability of strong criticism of the revolution before it eventually started (O'Donnell 2011). Therefore, not only the social influence but also the immediate social context, and in the case of Egypt the high level of corruption, unemployment, and economic hardships, played a major role in impacting the individuals and convincing them to mobilize. Half of the respondents were unhappy with the existing social order, while the other half responded to the rush of indignation instigated by the former (Korany & el-Mahdi 2012). According to the Social Mood Watch report conducted by Folsom (2013) and in line with our findings, it was clear that the vast majority of the Egyptian population was unhappy with the existing social order, high levels of corruption, unemployment, and economic hardships. These factors played a major role convincing the individuals to mobilization, thus corroborating the fact that the mechanism of the immediate social context was at play in Egypt.

CHAPTER 6

Policy, Recommendations, and Conclusion

6.1. Policy Recommendations and Implications

There is a distinct range of policy recommendations for any government that follows from the analysis of the research findings. Clearly, the shock and turmoil sweeping Egypt during the Arab Spring were a manifestation of the long-term economic and political crisis amid the expansion and consolidation of opposition in the strong and united society. The rebellion was conceived by the reputable opposition figures and performed by the intelligent, socially active, and Internet-savvy youth. The growing population was particularly unhappy with the lack of resources, which could ensure a desirable standard of living. The dictatorship government, the lack of turnover in socio-political hierarchy, corruption, and nepotism eradicated confidence in the justice of the existing regime. Despite the fact that Egypt was gearing one of the most modern and diversified economic reform and political liberalization, these efforts proved slow and ineffective to appease the society. Moreover, the legitimate opposition, which emerged as a result of these transformations, gained the power to manipulate the middle class into perceiving mobilization as a necessary and progressive change through a thorough and strategic propaganda campaign deployed in the social media. The stabilizing policies should be focused on the interception of the spread of the new ideology through the Internet. This goal should be achieved by managing exposure to social media, which initially intensified interpersonal relations and communication and secondarily facilitated the formation of a stronger community. Censorship of information circulating in the network is essential for ensuring that connectedness and trust among the members of the local community increase with respect to stability and social order. In other words,

the legitimate government should ensure the satiation of the Internet with constructive communication capitalizing on and maintaining control of the same factors that the opposition exploited for mobilization during the Arab Spring.

The exposure to social media should be used as a channel for keeping the people informed about the government success on the roadmap of progressive reform. Histories of individual satisfaction, career and financial growth, transparency and benefit of the liberalization process, and support of strategic interests of the government should become part of the regular discussion and the core of attitudes shared in the interpersonal relations. A stronger community should line up with the policies upheld by the existing regime. In this way, the levels of connectedness and trust among the members of the local community would work for the favor of the government. Loyal populations with networks built over decades would be able to resist the third-party manipulations and provocations. The specially organized and trained teams of cyber-experts should monitor the dynamics of the information flow in the social networks and be ready to intervene with mitigating tactics and put down all attempts of social incitement.

6.2. Limitations

It is important to acknowledge that the age of participants represents a limitation problem for this research. Even though this issue is not a result of a selection bias, it could not be overcome. The fact remains that the main users of the Internet in general and the social networks in particular are the young people. Therefore, by mailing the survey questionnaire to active the Internet users, the researcher inadvertently targeted the youth. Indeed, Egypt is known to have one of the largest and youngest Twitter communities in the region at the dawn of the Arab

Spring (Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, Pearce, & Boyd 2011). The vast majority of Twitter and Facebook being youngsters conditioned the concentration of the activists amongst specific age groups. However, despite the relative objectivity of this phenomenon, it still remains the major limitation of the present study. The researcher could do nothing to mitigate it because, otherwise, the participants would have been able to go through the survey questionnaire in the absence of the required mobilization experience.

6.3. Conclusion

The present study argued the domino effect of the connected social factors, which conditioned and fueled the dynamics of the Arab Spring in Egypt. The riots of 2011 destabilized the situation in this country for a long time to come and rendered a perceived impact at the concurrent events in the region and worldwide. At the moment, it is difficult to estimate the political future of the Arab World in general and Egypt in particular. However, it is possible to define the specific tendencies and causes, which triggered and nurtured the conflict, with sufficient accuracy.

Theorists and socio-political analysts argued that the structural and demographic factors conditioned the phenomenon of unique synchrony characteristic of the Arab Spring. The mechanism of the immediate social context was at the surface. Ubiquitous corruption, unjust distribution of the material wealth, the widening gap in the income of the rich and the poor, the problem of unemployment plaguing the young and educated citizens, and the deficiency of social security instruments were aggravated by the abusive exercise of political power. All of this was interpreted as a failure of the existing regime and the dead-end policies.

The demographic aspect of the revolution took its roots in the baby boom of the 80s, which produced the generation of modern activists, and the expansion of high education in the Arab World. The growth of the share of the educated and unemployed youth in the society made the exacerbation of radicalism foreseeable. The individuals with exorbitant ambitions, academic qualifications, and years of unemployment rejected the traditional ideology and embraced the propaganda appealing to the poignant social sensitivity. They discharged this socio-economic tension in the media, which offered the greatest connectedness among the significant others. The Internet in general and the social platforms in particular were directly accountable for the synchronization of the Arab Spring.

The findings collected through the survey questionnaire corroborated the basic theories of mobilization. They proved that a large proportion of people involved in the Arab Spring were also exposed to social media. The exposure to social media initially intensified interpersonal relations and communication and secondarily facilitated the formation of a stronger community. Eventually, the levels of connectedness and trust among the members of the local community increased to the point where political manipulation aimed at spreading nationalism and provoking mobilization became possible. This dynamic process evolved as a substrate material for mobilization in Egypt. It is highly recommended that the governments should monitor and censor transactions in the social media to prevent the malicious disruption of social order in the time of liberal reforms.