The role of communications globalization in revolutions of the Middle East

Nader Mohammadmisa
MA in Political Science, Iran
Nader.mohammadmisa@gmail.com

Hamed Mohagegh Nia
Assistant Professor and Faculty Member of Azad University of Ahvaz, Iran
mohagheghnia7877@gmail.com

Abstract

Protests in the Middle East and North Africa against dictatorial and hereditary regimes, started in Tunisia in late 2010 and spread to other countries, brought a major change in this area. This uprising began to protest against the lack of free elections and freedom of expression, widespread discrimination in political and economic levels, the accumulation of power and wealth in the hands of the ruling class and its relatives, repression of the opponents and the lack of development and finally resulted in overthrow of the rulers in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Yemen. As yet it continues in some countries. Undoubtedly, the speed of these developments in the first few months followed by observers’ wonder and there also were those who explored the reasons for the success of popular uprisings in the region and the Islamic world in order to identify hidden aspects of it.

The present research is going to explain the role of media and social networks with the aim of trying to explain the role of this factor in the Islamic world developments. Thus, after describing the background of Arab Spring formation and precipitating factors, the position of the media and its importance in the contemporary world and function of the three networks of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube was interpreted.

Passing these debates, political, economic and social conditions of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia before the revolution was described in detail. Then, the reasons for the protests onset process were investigated in the three countries and the Middle East. In the following, the media and social networks position in these developments were studied. To understand the issue more concrete, statistics and charts for the people’s social networks use were provided so that the audience to have a more concrete understanding of the impact they had.

Different views and explanations about the impact of protests in the region revealed that the media played the role of catalyst in the Arab Spring and ignoring or exaggerating the importance of its role in uprisings should be avoided. The experience of the region and the Islamic world uprising showed that to utilize the new tools in the field of media may help participating in and increasing the scope of the protests and succeeding as well as collapsing fences built by dictatorial regimes.

Keywords: globalization, media, social networks, revolution, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Middle East.
1. Introduction
Objections began since December 17, 2010 in Tunisian, soon engulfed other Arab countries and overthrew the Mubarak’s regime in Egypt, Gaddafi in Libya, Ali Abdollah Saleh in Yemen and shook foundations of the rule in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Bahrain and other Arabic countries and caused panic among the Arab dictators. But what was the main reason for the Arab revolt? Was this movement largely influenced by internal factors or external factors? Why did people in the Middle East and North Africa rise suddenly after many years of silence? Among domestic factors, what was the position of media and social networks in shaping the process and accelerating the developments in the region? To answer these questions initially we describe the process of forming protests in Tunisia as the origin of the Arab Spring, then explain factors affecting the movements and in the second discourse using charts and statistics we interpret the accessibility of the Middle East people to the internet and social networks as well as their role in Arab Spring.

2. Arab Spring: backgrounds
Tunisia was the origin and source of the Arabic and Islamic revolutions and uprisings. The country with 610/163 and a population of 11 million people and ruled by authoritarian regimes for years was bowled with a spark and the people’s flames of anger and hatred spread across the Arab world.
Tunisian uprising happened on 17 December 2010 with the suicide of a young Tunisian street vendor named "Mohammed Bouzizei" in protest against the behavior of public officials and their oppression. Bouazizeh tried to complain to higher authorities of the municipality and governorship, but they were not willing to meet with him. He was frustrated and angry at the oppression of the ruling system and seeing no solution to solve the problems, decided on suicide. He poured fuel on himself and burned himself in front of the government building Sidi Bouzid. Bouazizi died 18 days later due to the wounds from self-immolation, but the fire that he had on his life, after him fell to lives of the region dictatorships and flames of the fire is still continuing.
Following Bouazizi’s self-immolation, at first his close friends and relatives and then people began to protest and object. Street protests peaked gradually and spread to other towns. Demonstrations leading to the Ben Ali’s ousting from the power began since December 17, 2010 and ended on 14 January 2011.

2.1 Arab Spring backgrounds
About the causes of Arab Spring, analysts emphasized on components of the people’s difficult economic conditions, the lack of political and religious freedom, to bring up the demands such as free elections, accountable government and cancellation of lifelong presidency. Corruption of government officials and the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the ruling family relatives were other factors in these revolutions.
Continuation of decades of ruling by wrong government is one of the main reasons for dissatisfaction with the Arab League. The wrong government means a government that is identified with the combination of rooted authority lack and rent policy. In the Arab world, sovereignty of the authoritarianism culture has ever been stable. In light of this culture, Arab leaders and elites regard their status as their acquired right and an exclusive property (Adami, Yazdanpanah & Jahankhah, 2011: 63).

It should be noted that there are two types of authority:

1. An authority based on a formal and legal structure. Consent of the people is not the origin and source of this authority. 2. Rooted authority, which means that leaders and elites set up a social order and citizens legitimizes it with their approval and in fact is based on popular consent (Lake, 2007: 54). Arab countries benefiting from the support of great powers have ever acted on the basis of their formal and legal structure and lacked a rooted authority so that the created order is not based on popular contest and makes a kind of false stability in these countries. Hilal Khashan, a Lebanese expert, believes that uninhibited authoritarianism in many Arab countries, paves the way to bring a deep crisis in the fabric of the country (Crystal, 1375: 66-65).

In addition, in economic terms the Middle East governments are known as "rentier states". The governments’ main function is to produce wealth rather than capital. To produce capital, production and work play the main role and this makes a massive interaction among different social groups. The government also due to the need for these Funds has to engage with society and to play the role of a facilitator social services and welfare organization and at the same time benefits from this situation. In contrast, the rentier state because of access to rent extractor resources starts to extract these resources and exclusively use the revenues. For this reason, in comparison with a non-rentier state it has a less interaction with the society. Moreover, the rent situation enriches a minority of society and impoverishes the majority which makes immense dissatisfaction. In these circumstances, rather than welfare service-seeking strategies the rentier state is to increase the power by means of repression in order to maintain stability and ensure its own survival (Joukar, 2011). Therefore, existence of rentier states and the consequences in the Arab world had caused public discontent with unequal income distribution. Meanwhile, the rentier state, does not consider itself accountable to the community and distributes rents on the basis of the political will rather than the activities of human resources; thus, desires to totalitarianism (Adami, Yazdanpanah & Jahankhah, 2011: 64).

Concentration of power and wealth in the hands of the ruling family, institutions and special parties and at the same time, neglecting the needs of people in these countries are of important factors in Arab people's frustration. In this regard, the ruling political structure and economic elites in Arab countries have not been able to provide political and economic development to the society even at low indices. Political power is entirely in the hands of the authoritarian political leaders and elites affiliated to the power and people have endured the heaviest political pressures. The pyramid of power and privileges are divided almost identical in all Arab countries. The pyramid from top to bottom is as follows: 1. The governor (king, sultan, Amir, Sheikh); 2. Key members of the ruling family (ministers, commanders), 3. Other senior
officials, 4. Citizens and nationals (merchants and second degree government occupations), 5. Migrants (Arab and non-Arab) (Emami, 2006: 21-80). In these countries, Amir (Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar), Sheikh (heptathlon heads of United Arab Emirates), King (Saudi Arabia and Jordan) and Sultan (Oman) have all affairs into their hands (Lacey, 1995: 16). Furthermore, some ministries have also been established in Arab countries. Ministry of oil, interior and foreign affairs are the most important established ministries. These ministries and the important posts are in the hands of the ruling family and for posts with low sensitivity, those trusted by the ruling family are employed (Terzi, 1988: 317).

Intellectual-cultural development of the Arab nation is another important internal factor in awakening the society. Since the 1950s and 1960s when the process of gaining political independence began in Arab countries, the period of renewal started. The process of modernization changed the economic and social system of these countries; though, the political system stayed without changing. Due to the interpretations and according to Samuel Huntington's thesis that identified political, economic and social uneven development as the revolutionary factor we can also consider this item as another factor of change in Arab governments. According to Huntington's theory, when the government does not concern political modernization along with economic modernization, it will face emerging vast bulk of the middle class as the result of economic modernization, the growing awareness of people and the rising expectations for participation and influence in the running of the country in one hand, and maintaining the traditional political system without any reforms and modernization, on the other hand. In this case, the government is not capable to respond to people's widespread expectations that rise due to their political development and growth. As a result, imbalances and ultimately objections against the political system will be happened.

In addition to the renovation, two other factors have played a role in intellectual-cultural development of Arab community: First the mass media which have had a great impact on the thought and culture of the region people in the age of communication and second migration and tourism factors which due to traveling between Arab societies and the rest of the world have had a deep change in Arab thought and culture especially the middle class in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and even Syria (Adami, Yazdanpanah & Jahankhah, 2011: 55-54). To deal with the backwardness of the community is the fundamental challenge of Arabic communities. Most of these communities, in terms of human, economic and political developments indices are not in a good condition. According to the UN Development Programme, the development indices are very different among the Arabic countries. During the past four decades, some countries have pursed development path successfully and some others despite the relative improvement are considered as underdeveloped countries (UNDP, 2011: Arab States).

Leaders as well as thought and political flows of these countries have failed to outline the way for escaping from underdevelopment and in designing an economic system have fluctuated between the free-market system and the development of high and centralized economic systems. Each of the free and state economies has supporters in the Arab world. However, there are
crucial differences between the Arabic governments with the largest oil reserves located mainly in the Persian Gulf and Arabic non-oil governments. Huge oil revenues of some countries of the region as well as and the work of rentier states have increased complexity of the Arab world economy. In the past decades, the economy of the area has included a range of systems oriented towards state-centric modernization to oil rantierism and reliance on foreign aid and following any political flow economic systems have experienced a fundamental change. The success of each of the discourses in the economy can lead to the strengthening of the position in the political arena and the defeat provides a way to improve the position of competing discourses (Yazdanfam, 2011: 52).

In addition to the intellectual and cultural developments of the Arab nation, the lack of democracy in Arab governments and the lack of concerning political freedoms, political participation, institution building and in a word the absence of civil society in the Arab states are important internal factors of Arab people’s awaking and dissatisfaction (Aboutalebi, 2011). Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen are outstanding examples of modern and authoritarian Arabic governments in the past decades that through the ideology of socialism, Baathist, nationalism, Arabism and revolutionary tried to respond these communities’ problems in the field of foreign forces intervention, backwardness of the society, safeguarding the rights of the Palestinians and revival of the Arabic identity. Shaping a modern state and largely a secular one is common among all these countries. Authoritarian tradition, political-social backwardness, the lack of strong civil society and the role of the military in shaping power over the last decades led to the formation of authoritarian governments in these communities. Formed governments ideologically were essentially nationalist and during a period leaned to Arabism and socialism. According to their belief, a powerful and modern state based on Arabic ethical values is a way for overcoming the backwardness (Sheehi, 2004).

Arab authoritarian governments, because of making a closed, inefficient and corrupt state have made the biggest blow to the dominant discourse and people’s public culture in these countries and have provided the greatest opportunity for the growth of competing discourses. In the slogan stage, rejection of authoritarian and corrupt government is a connection factor among all opponents in the Arab world. All protest flows in all Arabic countries are in agreement to reject authoritarian and closed governments. Except Bahrain which has its own characteristics, in other countries dissatisfaction with the government, corruption, poverty and widespread political and economic corruption is considered the key factor of Arabic spring emergence (Ketrian, 2011).

3. Media and social networks in Arab Spring

We use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to speak to the world (Wael Ghanim blog, Egyptian revolution activist).

In first months of 2011, the world witnessed a series of uprisings in North Africa and Middle East which was soon known as the Arab Spring. Mass protests, first in Tunisia, then in Egypt and Libya and as a chain in other Arab countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Yemen, Oman, Bahrain, Syria and Lebanon as well as temporarily in Saudi Arabia challenged the nature of all these anti-
democratic and suppressor regimes (International Crisis Group, 2011). People in these countries wanted to establish a true democracy, to respect for human rights, freedom of speech, press, freedom of selection, removal of appointment order and the oligarchy. They were tired of the status quo and were seeking a new space to give them the possibility to criticize rulers without fear and to protest against the long-term domination of a minority group. For many years, tongues were sunken in the palate and the silence was carved on the mouths of people. State control system was stifling any dissent voice through outreach of repression and was perpetuating the domination.

When Mohammed Bouazizi, a street vendor Moroccan citizen, was fined by the police and was stopped working, he fired himself due to the severity of desperation. Soon, images of the self-immolation were broadcast on YouTube network followed by a widespread anger among the Arab world. Immediately, the images broadcast put Tunisia in the spotlight and became the beginning of demonstrations in the country and subsequently in other Arab countries. The first signs of the media and social networks impact on the Middle East uprisings can be seen through the importance of YouTube network. It is clear that to broadcast Mohamed Bouazizi’s self-immolation images through YouTube aroused feelings of the masses and transferred the hatred of the ruling system as a chain from Tunisia to other Arab countries. Rapid and universal access to YouTube allowed people to see harrowing images of Bouazizi's self-immolation for times and to express their suppressed anger as a volcano.

Analyzing every aspect of Egyptian uprising regardless of historical backgrounds will definitely lead to a malicious and one-sided conclusion and when the role of a new phenomenon called as social media is emphasized this will lead to technological determinism. How and why to use technology are more important than technology reality.

January 25, called as Egyptian national holiday and the Police Day due to the death of police officers in 1952, was the first day of major protests and the protesters called it "Day of Rage". Suppression and arrests of protesters by Egyptian police left no respect for Mubarak. According to Al-Jazeera news of the 18-day uprising, protests were basically organized via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. (Iksander, 2011, 1230). Movement on January 26 due to security forces' use of tear gas to disperse protesters and promised that Egypt joined evolve (Al-Jazeera, 2011). On January 28 internet access was blocked throughout Egypt and the regime cost millions of dollars to deprive people of using media tools such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (Strock, 2011: 23). Since the protesters had anticipated the government reaction, they could still continue to organize protests. During the days when internet access was limited, Google sent messages to social groups in Facebook (Chebib, Sohaila, 2011, 145). On the night of January 28, Mubarak appeared on the television screen noting that all the cabinet members will be fired, but he will remain in power. Then he declared martial law. Though, his action had little impact. On January 31, 250,000 people gathered in Egypt Tahrir Square and Mubarak again said that he remains in power. In the first of February, it was estimated that almost a million protesters gathered in Egypt Tahrir Square and were ready to start another protest the next day. On February 3, security forces opened fire on protesters in Tahrir Square and killed at least five
people. On 7 February, Wael Ghanim was released from state custody and brought more people to Tahrir Square so that protesters' number on February 8 reached the maximum. Finally, on February 11, Mubarak step down and gave it to the army (Time Line taken from- AL- jazeera).

To understand the role of social media in the dissemination of information we survey the use of Twitter by Egyptian activists between January 25 and February 11. This case study is one of the hallmarks of the media role in the Egyptian revolution.

Protesters' tweets analysis suggests effectiveness of the social network Twitter. Twitter has been used as a platform for discussion among users and for writing narratives of events. Users could refresh tweets containing photos and videos every minute: for example, on January 26, a user repeated the tweet “Now I can see the right, they beat protesters and arrested some of them” (Idle & Nunns, 2011: 49). On 29 January, Ibrahim tweeted the following words "state media don’t show the happening realities and try to minimize disaster-related news." (Idle & Nunns, 2011: 68) Such examples showed that users of Twitter as an alternative media spread stories of the movement spontaneously and exposed them to domestic and foreign audiences watching even when the Egyptian government shut down the Internet. By the use of technology, those who were outside the country bridge between geographical restrictions and continued coverage of events. John Scott Raylton was an American student who covered observations of Egyptian friends protests by phone and translated tweets for his four thousand users (2011, website, www.tim.com).

Perhaps the Facebook group of We are all Khaled, created by Wael Ghanim, was the best example of solidarity between people and collecting common aspirations. This page changed to a virtual poll for the police anti-violence protests and violations of human rights. It allowed users to send a lot of pictures, videos and even a list of the corrupt police officers. Members of the group went beyond 500 thousand people and become the largest Egyptian human rights group on Facebook.

Here a political joke in Foreign Policy Bulletin is pointed out: Judgment Day has come and Anwar Sadat, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Mubarak are next to each other pursuing the world issues that what happened to us in the world. Nasser says I was poisoned and killed. Anwar Sadat says the revolutionary youth assassinated me and Mubarak says Facebook ousted me (Mottaghi, 2010: 89).

Studies on public opinion in Egypt and Tunisia show that since the beginning of developments in the region, about 31 percent of Egyptians and Tunisians used Facebook to spread awareness about political developments within the country; 33 percent of Tunisians and 24 percent of Egyptians used Facebook to broadcast information on developments in the world and 22 percent of Tunisians and 30 percent of Egyptians used Facebook to organize the revolutionary actions and only 15 percent of the two countries' people used Facebook simply for entertainment and social issues. Thus, social media and its growth in the region in the first quarter of 2011 had an important role in mobilization, empowerment, shaping the public opinion and the regional developments. (Arab Social Media Report, 2011: 9). Increased growth rate of internet users in North Africa and the Middle East provided an opportunity to inform and increase public political
insights so that North Africa with an unprecedented growth rate of 4.77% internet users in 2011 shows the top rank of users increase. The Middle East with growth rate of 29.8 percent has been ranked fourth in the world. Looking at users' statistic in a country like Egypt with 20,136,000 users and 7,259,240 Facebook users out of 82 million population of the country reveals the high capacity of this tool in Egypt. In this regard, the use of Twitter during the fall of Hosni Mubarak has increased by 151 percent. In such circumstances, the videos shared on virtual networks per day had 5.5 million visitors. The figures for Tunisia at the rate of 9.33 percent shows a remarkable growth of the internet use since 2011 so that Facebook has 2,602,000 members in Tunisia indicating a growth of 5.24 percent (Borazjani, 2011: 450).

3.1 Data on Social network capacity in the Arab spring
This section examines the quantity of information and tweets divided into several species in support of the protesters. The most popular tweeted options includes name of the country (Egypt), June 25, places where demonstrations were planned (Cairo, Tahrir) and the political personality Mubarak. Table 2 shows a comprehensive list of selected days as the turning point in the Revolution. Looking at the days in charts shows that the proliferation of tweets has greatly decreased. It should be noted that after the government's efforts to cut off internet on June 26, the plurality of tweets in all fields did decreased. However, in the next days this trend evolved by decisive increasing and support of the Egyptian protests.

Table 1. Important days of the Egyptian revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 25, 2011</td>
<td>Revolution Day- Protests beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26, 2011</td>
<td>Internet disconnection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 2011</td>
<td>Fury Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1, 2011</td>
<td>Million demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2, 2011</td>
<td>Battle of the Camel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11, 2011</td>
<td>Date of change, Mubarak's resignation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1. Frequency of tweets for Egypt
Chart2. Frequency of tweets for Tahrir
Chart 3. Frequency of tweets for Mobarak

Chart 4. Frequency of tweets for June 25
Chart 5. Frequency of tweets for Libya

http://www.ijhcs.com/index.php/ijhcs/index
Chart 6. Frequency of tweets for Libya

![Chart showing frequency of tweets for Libya]

Table 7. The number and percentage of subscribers, Facebook, Twitter, internet and mobile phone in the Arab world in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>The number of users estimated after January to March 30, 2011</th>
<th>Tweeter use percentage</th>
<th>the number of Facebook users (2011/5/4)</th>
<th>Facebook use percentage</th>
<th>???</th>
<th>???</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>13.235</td>
<td>0/04</td>
<td>1,947,900</td>
<td>5/42</td>
<td>13/47</td>
<td>93/79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>61.896</td>
<td>7/53</td>
<td>302,940</td>
<td>36/83</td>
<td>53/00</td>
<td>177/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>0/12</td>
<td>9,080</td>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>3/59</td>
<td>18/49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>4,046</td>
<td>0/45</td>
<td>52,660</td>
<td>5/89</td>
<td>3/00</td>
<td>14/90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>131,204</td>
<td>0/15</td>
<td>6,586,260</td>
<td>7/66</td>
<td>24/26</td>
<td>66/69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>21,625</td>
<td>0/07</td>
<td>723,740</td>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>1/06</td>
<td>64/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>55,859</td>
<td>0/85</td>
<td>1,402,440</td>
<td>21/25</td>
<td>26/00</td>
<td>95/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>113,428</td>
<td>3/63</td>
<td>795,100</td>
<td>25/51</td>
<td>36/85</td>
<td>129/85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>79,163</td>
<td>1/85</td>
<td>1,093,420</td>
<td>25/50</td>
<td>23/68</td>
<td>56/59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.ijhcs.com/index.php/ijhcs/index
### Table 8. The ratio of Facebook users and countries’ population in the Arab world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>The number of Facebook users (2011/5/4)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Facebook percentage use</th>
<th>The number of Facebook new users since (2011/5/1)</th>
<th>Growth of Facebook users' number (%) since 2011/5/1</th>
<th>Facebook new users percentage since 2011/5/1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>63.919</td>
<td>0/96</td>
<td>71.840</td>
<td>1/08</td>
<td>5/51</td>
<td>77/94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>1.407</td>
<td>0/04</td>
<td>61.140</td>
<td>1/78</td>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>66/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>17.384</td>
<td>0/05</td>
<td>3.203.440</td>
<td>9/78</td>
<td>41/30</td>
<td>79/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>6.679</td>
<td>0/23</td>
<td>277.840</td>
<td>9/37</td>
<td>51/50</td>
<td>139/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>11.369</td>
<td>0/25</td>
<td>595.120</td>
<td>13/10</td>
<td>32/23</td>
<td>28/62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>133.209</td>
<td>0/46</td>
<td>481.280</td>
<td>30/63</td>
<td>40/00</td>
<td>175/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>115.084</td>
<td>0/43</td>
<td>4.092.600</td>
<td>15/28</td>
<td>38/00</td>
<td>174/43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>4.244</td>
<td>0/04</td>
<td>21.580</td>
<td>0/22</td>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>7/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>9.459</td>
<td>0/02</td>
<td>443.623</td>
<td>1/01</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>36/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>40.020</td>
<td>0/17</td>
<td>356.247</td>
<td>1/55</td>
<td>20/40</td>
<td>45/57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>35.746</td>
<td>0/34</td>
<td>2.356.520</td>
<td>22/49</td>
<td>34/07</td>
<td>95/38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>201.060</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>2.406.120</td>
<td>50/01</td>
<td>75/00</td>
<td>232/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>29.422</td>
<td>0/12</td>
<td>340.800</td>
<td>1/37</td>
<td>9/96</td>
<td>35/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://laborsta.ilo.org

#### 3.2 Data on the number of Facebook and Twitter users in the Arab region

Table 8. The ratio of Facebook users and countries’ population in the Arab world.
The following graph shows that 71% of Facebook users in Egypt preferred to vote for the candidate who uses the social media to communicate with citizens while only 47% of Facebook users in Tunisia have the similar idea. To use social media by politicians in the campaign and political ambushes affects your intended candidate selection.

4. To review the impact of social media and networks in Arab Spring

As globalization affects different actors by different ways, the internet stimulates different users by different ways. The main mistake of cyber visionary is to assume that internet is a unilateral and definitive cyber force for global freedom or oppression, world urbanization or xenophobia while in fact the internet has made it possible to develop online all the forces. When internet is used as a pro-democracy tool in sovereign states, then to remember the point is important that governments couldn't be expected to reflect a similar reaction to the internet. Whereas all societies with the lack of freedom are similar; the lack of freedom in each of these communities has its own manner. During the Arab Spring, it was realized that although Tunisian and Egyptian activists apparently managed to benefit from social networking in order to gain more success, in other Arab states such as Bahrain and Saudi Arabia protestors who tried to repeat employed strategies in Egypt were quickly crushed by government security forces.

Events of 2011 in the Middle East by proving that the information and communication networks can act as a powerful catalyst for social change challenged skeptics such as Malcolm Gladwell, the journalist and writer, and Evgeny Morozov, the author and blogger. No region or state and any form of government can't be protected of new information and communication technologies influence on social and political movements. While political spaces related to mass riots in large parts of the Middle East involve important national and regional features, the effect of network technologies and social tools goes beyond the region and perpetuates the effective process in developed and developing countries in the same way. Meanwhile, their effects are not universal and unconditional since some enthusiasts are to estimate the Middle East latest advances in the future and in other regional areas where the ruling regimes face economic and political pressures for modernization. As a result, forecasts and balances must be done with great caution (Stepanova, 2011: 3).
The effect of information and social media networks as mediators for the socio-political protests on mobilizing the people is changed considerably from one region to another and from one political space to another political area. Simply several underlying reasons for socio-political protests is not enough to consider new information and communication networks as a main mediator because a wide range of the population should have access to the internet. In the near future, this requirement will exclude a number of developing countries with the less access to the internet. For example, many countries in the Near East, except Iran, due to the backwardness and lack of access to the internet can be influenced by social media activism (for example, internet users in these countries in 2010 only includes 1.1 percent of Iraqi and 3.4 percent Afghan people that are comparable with more than 21 percent Egyptian users, 34 percent Tunisian users and 88 percent Bahrainis users). Out of the vast region of the Middle East, it also applies in many countries from Myanmar to Somalia (Stepanova, 2011: 4).

However, developments in the Middle East in 2011 provoked uncertainty about the definitive relationship between mass social protests and proliferation of internet networks and social media whether in current time or in the short or longer periods. All over the region and beyond it, it is impossible to realize a regional direct relationship, in one hand between internet influence levels and other IT indices (i.e. development of social media networks) and on the other hand between tendency to social objections and severity of the protests. Both the states with the highest levels of internet use (such as Bahrain with 88 percent of the online population, namely higher than United States) and the states with the lowest levels of internet use (such as Yemen and Libya) experienced mass protests. Moreover, none of the ICT types and associated social and information networks didn't make identical impact and none of them was exceeded other methods of communication and information, from satellite TVs to mobile phones in playing the role of mobilization or public information. While the media utilized the so-called "Twitter revolutions" for progress in the Middle East, identifiable Twitter users in Egypt and Tunisia were only a few thousand people and compared to other information and communication technologies such as mobile phones, messaging, video clips (i.e. YouTube) and satellite TVs, the role of micro-mobilization and blogging as a motive for the protests is too emphasized. As well as, serious obstacles for the effect of network mobilization tools mediation aren't probably related to governments' ability in managing social media or limiting and denying access to the internet; however, they are associated with the countries specific government system particularly representationalism and their relationship with masses (that can be meant populist if doesn't involve a democratic concept) (Stepanova, 2011:4-5).

Romi Khoury, an American - Jordan journalist of NewYork Times, pointed out the lack of importance and role of digital media in the Arab world changes. He said: the youth and thousands of bloggers haven't made these revolutions, but they have used these media for entertainment and spending time (Khoury, 2011: 3). "Malcolm Gladwell", another author and journalist of New York Times, also believes that the role of the media in Arabic revolutions was ineffective claiming that the media leads to a lazy, immobile and passive movement (Joseph, 2011). In addition, according to Gladwell, the real movement requires individuals' strong
physical and personal communication and poor and inadequate communications in cyberspace of the new media has no impact on them. He emphasizes that the events of the early 1960s happened without Twitter, Facebook and etc. "We have forgotten that what the movement and political activity is originally" (Gladwell, 2010). Another dissenting opinion on the role and impact of new media has been presented by the analysts and expert of Stanford University, "Evgeny Morozov". He believes that:
Firstly to use these media compared to other mass media like phone and satellite TV networks, employed by people for broadcasting, receiving and spreading awareness, was very low. For example in Libya in 2008, 100% of the people had mobile phones while in the same year only 7 percent of the population had internet access. In addition, at the time of the protests in Egypt Tahrir Square people communicated with each other using their mobile phones. Moreover, during Arab revolutions due to the existence and access to the satellite equipment in every home and its easy use even for the elderly and the illiterate people, satellite news networks particularly Algeria and Al-Arabiya were the number one source of news and information source for people of the region.
Morozov adds: another problem of the media was that in some cases, by the use of photos and images in the media which were readily available, Arab countries states identified and arrested protesters (Morozov:111, 2011). It did not stop there; most users like other people were using the media especially in Western countries not for political activities but rather for entertainment, watching movies and spending leisure time. He also believes that "too much attention to the media affects people's prominent role in the movements" (Morozov:111, 2011).
According to another criticism, although the new media is one of the revolution agents in the Arab world, its role has been exaggerated. In support of this claim we should say that for example when internet was interrupted by Arab states in the countries (it was interrupted from January 28 to February 2 in Egypt or on February 18 in Libya) demonstrations flow didn’t stopped and people gathered in mosques to plan, organize and disseminate information and knowledge to others through meeting (Levy & Cohen, 2011).
Furthermore, the ratio of media users to the entire population and their quality were criticized. The number of internet users in the Arabic countries compared to the total population is very insignificant. Average users were 30 percent of the total population. For example, in Egypt, only 20 percent of people used the internet for any purpose. Although during the revolutions 7 million new users were added to this number, this number seems little compared to the Egypt's population of 89 million. Also, according to the World Bureau of Statistics only 300 thousand Egyptians have used the internet in January 2011 (United Nations ILO Department of Statistics, 2011).
In addition, most of the contents and images of this network was in English, so just a few of the Egyptians were able to understand and use it. In fact, these users were only a drop of streets protesters flood (Brady.A, 2011). In general, protests participants were mostly from the poorer classes of society and those who were illiterate, unemployed, poor and from low levels of the
community and sometimes from religious movements without internet access and even unable to use it (Farell, 2006).

New information and communications technology networks may be so effective in countries where the ruling regime benefits from a weak social base or lacks such a base (This was true for Tunisia and Egypt, but can’t be completely used in the case of Syria, Bahrain or Libya). If the ruling regime isn't alien to the masses and to some extent has a people's base, there will be significant restrictions about what even the advanced social objection/media networks of information and communication technology-based can achieve. Ultimately, information and communication networks in order to succeed, the younger and relatively educated generation who represent the most active internet users should not only form the bulk of the activists, but a significant percentage of the total population as well. For example, the issue isn’t applied in East Europe and Asian-European regions where the countries are facing a significant reduction of population. In Tunisia the traditional media as well as the internet were censored much before the uprising began and all controls over the internet was organized by the government with no doubt in filtering and blocking Web sites arbitrarily.

Among the various aspects of the impact of globalization, media and social networks form the backbone of this research. Through a detailed examination of the media concept, its variants and introducing three major social networks of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in the second chapter, the required theoretical basis was provided for their application. The second discourse of chapters 4 and 5 was dedicated to this topic.

There are different points of view about the role of social networks in the revolution that is sweeping the Middle East. Some groups and experts consider social networks as the main driver of the revolution and others consider the networks just as a hollow and stagnant tool. However, it can be said that many of the calls and communications to protest in the region were initially began through Facebook and other social networks. Of course, Facebook and its pages were not the only agent of the movements formation; nevertheless, its role in mobilization and organization of the movement can’t be denied (Arab social medias report, 2011: 4).

Meanwhile, some believe that protests and riots in Tunisia and Egypt and other MENA countries weren't caused via information and communication technology. Protests of the North happened due to the combination of non-technologic factors such as repression decades, political and economic marginalization, structural stagnation, the loss of legitimacy and inefficiency of state institutions and the rise in food prices (Cómonion, 2011: 5). There is no doubt that the revolution in the beginning and mostly happened due to the demands of the people and internet tools and digital and social media only enhanced the continuity and progress of the movement. Although the Egyptian January 25 Revolution was published and spread on a Facebook page, it should be considered that local people came to streets for their right to determine their destiny and to cope with authoritarian regime. A revolution is began and managed by the people not tools and media (Hussain, 2011: 1). Social networks and in particular Facebook played an effective role in organizing people and the youth who have been the driving engine of revolution. Basically, to organize a mass protest in Cairo was initially conducted by a group of young Egyptians on
Facebook. It was the same in Tunisia. More than 35 percent of the Tunisian people and more than 20 percent of Egyptians had internet access. So, in Egypt and Tunisia social networks such as Twitter and Facebook could turn the revolutionary movement engine and accelerate it (Shahabi, 2010). In Yemen many opponent activists declared that when for the first time we called on Facebook for holding protests, many people didn't correctly understand the number of those who accept this invitation, but the result was surprising. The importance of social networks and internet role was to an extent that Saudi king's offered $150 billion to buy all shares of Facebook to distort the media wave of Arab uprisings and to avoid the uprising spread to Saudi. Experts refer to social networks such as Facebook and Twitter as important levers and influencing weights of popular revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa. That's why just after the protests began in Bahrain, Facebook was blocked in the country and main page of the country's Shias -as the largest group of protestors - with about 100 thousand members was removed.

The role of the internet and new media in these revolutions was so leading that some call it Facebook or Twitter Revolution. These networks due to the extensive capacity and functionality provide the necessary coordination among communities and local demonstrators (Dourandish, 2011).

Communities captured by dictatorship like Egypt and Tunisia suffered from weak social links. Formation of the links was not basically allowed by the rule. But just when parties and civil organizations' repression had destroyed any hope for establishing communication, cyberspace suddenly arrived with powerful networks. Citizens who before had no socially constructive communication with each other suddenly found the opportunity for the formation of virtual networks to communicate with each other and to form new bonds. The formation of social networks and the resulted communication, suddenly freed a stunning energy so that the government structure of Egypt and Tunisia were incapable to cope with.

Through the media tribune protesters and revolutionaries managed to make their objection outcry and legitimacy heard throughout the world. The media removed restrictions and physical distances through playing the images of police violence in dealing with protesters, government corruption and injustice; thus, led to the inspiration of justice and rejection of oppression among people, political mobilization and their awareness. To disclose Kuwait MPs vote-buying, to broadcast images of Libyan protesters reception with tanks, missiles and shoot as well as to crush protestors in Bahrain is only one part of the media services (Lynch, 2006).

Among the many factors that caused the spread of revolution in some countries and quickly fruited in some others, the role of the media and social networks is undeniable. Tools such as satellite, mobile and blogs, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, web sites, television and radio enhanced people's solidarity and awareness in different ways and achieved an important position in global developments.

The impact of the media and social networks was so broad and obvious that many analysts refer to Arab Spring as Facebook and Twitter Revolution. The media were able to attract people
especially the youth and to challenge the dominant system entity. It is called as the basic and driving element of the demonstrations, too.

Furthermore, the media guides and encourages people to continue protests. This acts as one of factors leading to the achievement of popular uprisings. If total flow of the uprisings was considered to be due to the people's will, digital media would be provider of a new environment for shaping the basis of future political activities during the flow. The media certainly were not factors underlying the Arab world's uprising, but surely the it wouldn’t developed to such a wide scale without the new media and to ignore its role means to disregard an undeniable fact of popular uprisings in the region and the Islamic world.

5. Conclusion

Popular movements in the Middle East and North Africa beginning from Mohamed Bouazizi's objection either shook the foundations of the region authoritarian regimes or reflected the thought and practice evolution in Arabic nations. These movements at first toppled Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's regime in Tunisia and then overthrew Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Muammar Gaddafi in Libya and Ali Abdullah Bin Saleh and provided the context for massive and continued protests in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia Syria and Jordan.

The continuation of authoritarian and rentier regimes, unequal income distribution, government unaccountability, non-political and economic development, accumulation of power and wealth in the hands of the ruling family, intellectual and cultural development of the Arabs, desires flooding, anger of young people, obvious role of the media and communications, the lack of democracy and institutionalizing a civil society are named as causes of the popular uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. All these factors created a context to shape Arabs protesting chain and with the help of several components such as unity and integrity of popular uprisings, protests focus on specific goals despite different political origin, place of Islam and Islamic slogans, companionship of the army and military forces, public opinion advocacy and the support of human rights institutions and international organization's media achieved a major success.

Among the factors mentioned, the role of the media and social networking as a new variable is of fundamental importance. Since this study attempted to indicate the influence of the media and social networks position in the Arab spring, the first signs of the media and social networks in the Middle East uprisings can be seen on YouTube importance. YouTube provoked people's feelings and fueled the flames of their anger through the broadcast of Tunisian Tareq Tabib Mohammad Bouazizi's self-immolation images.

As well as, broadcasting photos and videos of a Mubarak's rule the opponent blogger, Khaled Said, was an underlying agent for the development and organization of protest by the people. Gradually the role of Facebook, Twitter and satellite media like Al Jazeera increased and affected the speed of revolutions. Because of this performance, the media and social networks was censored, confiscated and filtered by authoritarian governments and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia offered to buy Facebook in order to prevent people from enjoying it. However, his
request was rejected by Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook's other stakeholders. Among the effect of globalization different aspects, the media and social networks formed the major axis of the present research and by extensive investigation of the media concept and its types as well as introduction of three major social networks of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube the required theoretical background was provided for their application.

There are different points of views about the social networks role in the revolution extended all over the Middle East. Some groups and experts regard social networks as the revolutions main motive and some others argued that they are just hollow and stagnant tools. However, it can be said that most of calls and communications were made initially on Facebook and the pages to protest in the region. It should be noted that Facebook and its pages were not the only agent of movements’ formation; though, its role in movements’ mobilization and organization is undeniable.

Meanwhile, some believe that protests and riots in Tunisia and Egypt and other MENA countries in the region didn't happen due to the information and communication technology. North Africa protests were a combination of non-technologic factors such as repression, political and economic marginalization, structural stagnation, the loss of legitimacy, inefficiency of state institutions and the rise in food prices. With no doubt revolutions initially and mostly began through the people's wills and online and digital tools as well as social networks only strengthened, sustained and advanced it. Although the Egyptian January 25 Revolution was broadcasted and developed on Facebook pages, it should be considered that local people came to streets for their right to determine their fate and to cope with authoritarian regimes. Revolutions are created and managed by people not tools and media. Social networks especially Facebook played an effective role in organizing people and the youth who have been the driving engine of revolutions. Basically, the mass protests in Cairo were initially organized by a group of young Egyptians on Facebook. It was the same in Tunisia. More than 35 percent of Tunisians and more than 20 percent of Egyptians had internet access. Therefore, in Egypt and Tunisia, social networks such as Twitter and Facebook could turn the revolutionary movement engine and accelerated it every day.

The role of internet and new media in these revolutions was so significant that they are referred as Facebook or Twitter revolutions. Due to the capacity and wide functions, these networks provided the required coordination among communities and protestors. Communities captured by dictatorship such as Egypt and Tunisia suffered from a weak social links which governments didn't allowed to be formed. But just after repression of parties and civil institutions had destroyed any hope for establishing communication, suddenly virtual space arrived in with its strong networks. Citizens who before hadn't any social constructive communication with each other found opportunity to communicate with each other via virtual networks formation and to make new connections. Social networks formation and the resulted communications suddenly freed a stunning energy so that government structure of Egypt and Tunisia were incapable to cope with.
Through the media tribune protesters and revolutionaries managed to make their objection outcry and legitimacy heard throughout the world. The media removed restrictions and physical distances through playing the images of police violence in dealing with protesters, government corruption and injustice; thus, led to the inspiration of justice and rejection of oppression among people, political mobilization and their awareness. To disclose Kuwait MPs vote-buying, to broadcast images of Libyan protesters reception with tanks, missiles and shoot as well as to crush protestors in Bahrain is only one part of the media services.

Among the many factors that caused the spread of revolution in some countries and quickly fruited in some others, the role of the media and social networks is undeniable. Tools such as satellite, mobile and blogs, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, web sites, television and radio enhanced people's solidarity and awareness in different ways and achieved an important position in global developments. The impact of the media and social networks was so broad and obvious that many analysts refer to Arab Spring as Facebook and Twitter Revolution. The media were able to attract people especially the youth and to challenge the dominant system entity. It is called as the basic and driving element of the demonstrations, too. Furthermore, the media guides and encourages people to continue protests. This acts as one of factors leading to the achievement of popular uprisings. If total flow of the uprisings was considered to be due the people's will, digital media would be the provider of a new environment for shaping the basis of future political activities during the flow. The media certainly were not factors underlying the Arab world's uprising, but surely the uprising wouldn't developed to such a wide scale without the new media and to ignore its role means to disregard an undeniable fact of popular uprisings in the region and the Islamic world.
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