

Chapter 10

The Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Arab Community

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ABSTRACT

Social media or social networking tools are Internet-based applications that focus on building social networks or social relations among people with shared interests and/or activities. Social media sites essentially consist of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Social networking sites fuss and was impressed by the community as a result of submissions from the ease and facilitated communication between people, and widened its fame and many use became their top concern, where communicating through these sites to get to know each other, and find out news each other, and receive news and themes and all that is new in the arena. However, since these sites and programs are open, there are no controls commensurate with our religion and our values and our habits of Arab and fixed principles, which impact on the lives of people in general, whether positively or negatively.

INTRODUCTION

Social media or social networking tools are Internet-based applications that focus on building social networks or social relations among people with shared interests and/or activities. Social media sites essentially consist of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. They allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks, in addition to a wider scope of applications with increasing global impact on society and government.

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programs are open, there are no controls commensurate with religion, values and habits of Arab and fixed principles, which impact on the lives of people in general, whether positively or negatively.

This chapter aims to explore and identify the social and political implications of social networking in Arab countries and to suggest policy options and avenues for further research.

Arab Community

The Arab Region, which lies at the crossroads of Europe, Africa and Asia, is the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of the three great monotheistic religions of the world. The Region benefits from a number of similarities and opportunities, including a long, rich history spanning thousands of years, strong cultural traditions, common language and a large, educated workforce, due in part to increasing female labor force participation. Furthermore, the Region sits atop more than half of the world's oil resources. Despite these similarities, the Arab Region is characterized by enormous demographic, geographic, political and socio-economic diversity. The Region includes countries with very large populations, led by Egypt with a population of 85 million, and countries with small populations, such as Qatar at 111,000, which is the smallest. While several countries in the Region are already hovering at or near replacement level fertility (Kuwait, Lebanon, Tunisia, and United Arab Emirates), other countries and areas continue to exhibit high levels of fertility (the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen). The Region is also characterized by extreme differences in land areas. For example, Sudan, the largest country in the Region with 2.5 million square kilometers, is the tenth largest country in the world. In contrast, the region's smallest country, Bahrain, covers just 750 square kilometers. Another distinguishing feature among the Arab countries is the sharp differences in population density. For example, Bahrain is the most densely populated with some 1,454 inhabitants per square kilometer. In comparison, Libya and Mauritania have a mere three inhabitants per square kilometer. In 2010, Arab world population reaches 359 million reside in the 22 countries and areas of the Arab Region and together account for five per cent of world population (Barry, 2010).

The number of Internet users in the Arab World is expected to rise to about 197 million users by 2017. the Internet penetration rate will jump from about 32 per cent in 2012 to over 51 per cent in 2017, which would be about 3 per cent above the world average at that time (Arab Knowledge Economy Report, 2014).

Contextual Background

One of the most remarkable and interesting aspects of the 2011 Arab revolts has been the use of social media tools - text messaging, e-mail, video and photo sharing, social networking, and the like - by small groups of activists and a large body of protesters in mobilizing, organizing, communicating and transmitting these events.

Social networking is a new driving force that has a significant global impact on political change. Few research studies have been published on the impact of social networking related to political change. During the first year of the Arab revolutions it appeared that 'Digital media provided both an awareness of shared grievances and transportable strategies for action'), which enabled the rise of the people and the fall of at least three oppressive regimes in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.

This section discusses the impacts of social networking tools on the recent political changes in the eighteen-day Egyptian "Revolution 2.0" of 2011. Social network-related factors appear to have had a

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