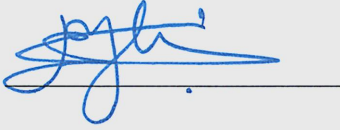KADİR HAS ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

LIMITED EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND RELEVANCE OF
OPINION LEADER THEORY ON ARAB SPRING: THE CASE OF
TUNISIA AND EGYPT

GRADUATE THESIS

TUGAY SARIKAYA

June, 2016

LIMITED EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND RELEVANCE OF
OPINION LEADER THEORY ON ARAB SPRING:
THE CASE OF TUNISIA AND EGYPT

TUGAY SARIKAYA

Yeni Medya Programı'nda Yüksek Lisans derecesi
için gerekli kısmi şartların yerine getirilmesi amacıyla
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KADİR HAS ÜNİVERSİTESİ

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LIMITED EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND RELEVANCE OF

OPINION LEADER THEORY ON ARAB SPRING:

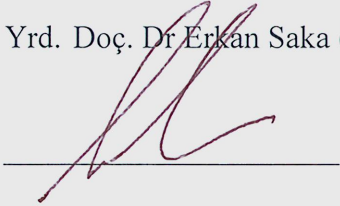# THE CASE OF TUNISIA AND EGPYT

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"Ben, Tugay Sarıkaya, bu Yüksek Lisans Tezinde sunulan çalışmanın şahsıma ait olduğunu ve başka çalışmalardan yaptığım alıntıların kaynaklarını kurallara uygun biçimde tez içerisinde belirttiğimi onaylıyorum."

TUGAY SARIKAYA

ABSTRACT

LIMITED EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND RELEVANCE OF OPINION
LEADER THEORY ON ARAB SPRING: THE CASE OF TUNISIA AND EGYPT

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Master of Social Science in New Media

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eylem Yanardağoğlu

May, 2016

According to The World Bank in 2009, Internet usage in Tunisia was 34.1% (The World Bank, 2009). Tunisia has been considered where Arab Spring started but it has not internet users as much as most of Middle East and European countries. Therefore, regarding to numbers, how it is possible to make strong connection between social media and uprisings. On 17 December 2010, Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire and started uprisings in North Africa and Middle East. By this incident, suppressed people of nations found opportunities to be union and rebel against their regimes. These uprisings created domino effects and spread to the other nations one by one in Egypt, Libya and Yemen. As classical media was under government control how people in Tunisia found opportunity to revolt against their government? At that point, study of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) about limited effects of media and importance of opinion leaders are important to evaluate the situation during uprisings. When uprising started in Tunisia, participation of rural people and people without internet show that Arab Spring is merely more than effects of social media platforms (Mabrouk, 2011). Purpose of the research is to understand limited effects of social media platforms and relevance of theory of opinion leader (1955) in Tunisia and Egypt. The research merely tries to highlight limited effect of social media platforms in Tunisia and Egypt and focus on opinion leaders in offline communities in order to understand what was behind uprisings besides social media platforms.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Opinion, Leader, Theory, Tunisia

ÖZET

ARAP BAHARINDA SOSYAL MEDYANIN SINIRLI ETKİSİ VE FİKİR
ÖNDERLERİNİN ROLÜ: TUNUS VE MISIR ÖRNEĞİ

Tugay Sarıkaya

Yeni Medya, Yüksek Lisans

Danışman: Doçent Dr. Eylem Yanardağoğlu

Mayıs, 2016

Dünya Bankası'nın 2009 yılında yaptığı araştırmalar sonucundan Arap baharının başladığı yer olarak gösterilen Tunus'ta internet kullanım oranı %34.1'dir. (World Bank, 2009). Bu rakam birçok Ortadoğu ve Avrupa ülkesinin internet kullanım oranlarından çok daha düşüktür. Bu rakamlara bakıldığı zaman, Arap Baharını sosyal medya etkisine bağlamak ne kadar doğru olabilir sorusu tartışılabilir bir konu olarak önümüzde durmaktadır. 17 Aralık 2010 yılında kendini yakarak Tunus devrimini başlatan Muhammed Bouazizi ülkede geri dönüşü olmayan bir yola girilmesine neden olmuş, baskı gören halk ayaklanmak için kendine ortam bulmuştur. Bu olay kısa bir süre sonra "domino etkisi" yaratmış Mısır, Libya ve Yemen gibi Arap coğrafyasında yer alan ülkelerde sırasıyla ayaklanmalar yaşanmıştır. Klasik medyanın tamamen devlet kontrolü altında kaldığı Tunus ve Mısır'da, insanların ayaklanmak için nasıl bir araya geldiğI sorusu birçok açıdan tartışılmaktadır. Bu tartışmalar ve soru işaretleri içerisinde 1955 yılında Elihu Katz ve Lazarsfeld tarafından ortaya atılan "opinion leader" teorisi tekrar gündeme gelmektedir. Bu teoriye göre, medya insanlar üzerinde sınırlı bir etkiye sahiptir ve asıl etki toplumun önde gelenleri tarafından yapılmaktadır (Katz ve Lazersfeld, 1955). Tunusta, kırsal kesimde yaşayanların ilk etapta durumdan habersiz olması, ancak ayaklanmaların boyut değiştirdiği günlerde bu eylemlere katılması olayın sosyal medya etkisinden daha fazla olduğunu göstermektedir (Mabrouk, 2011). Ancak sosyal medya etkisinin sınırlı olduğunu düşündüren rakamlarla beraber, Arap Baharı'nın bu denli boyutlara ulaşmasının nedeni ne olmuştur? Bu çalışmada temel amaç, sosyal medyanın sınırlı etkisini gözler önüne sererek, Katz ve Lazersfeld'in ortaya attığı fikir önderlerinin toplumdaki etkisini Arap baharı üzerinden ortaya koymaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Baharı, Sosyal Medya, Tunus, Mısır,

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Table

1. Introduction

Arab Spring occurred when Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire in January 2011. Millions of people participated uprisings after the incident in Tunisia. As frustrations and protests spread national wide, many journalists and scholars called the uprising "social media" or "Facebook revolution". However, in 2011, only 39.1% of population had access to Internet in Tunisia (World Bank, 2012). In parallel with the number, in Egypt, only 25.6% of Egyptians had access to Internet (World Bank, 2012). Even thought these percentages are not considered high as much as many Middle East or European countries, how does many journalists and scholars make the statement as "social media revolution"?

The number of Internet usage directed to the research re-consider the relevance of the theory of opinion leadership (Katz, 1955). Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) studied and tried to understand the media effect over people. According to their fieldwork, media has limited effect on people and initially opinion leaders take role and spread the information to their adjacent and families. This theory is taken as a basic of the research.

This research is important to understand behavior of offline people and reason of Arab Spring beyond social media platforms. The study may open up new discussions about participation to Arab Spring and importance of societies' dynamics. This research is also significant to understand the relevance of opinion leader theory even in Internet age.

As I question the limited effect of social media and relevance of opinion leader theory, there are some studies which are important to come to a point in my research.

There were many studies about face to face communications and effect of online and offline communities. According to Manuel Castells (2014) and Jerzak (2013) offline communities played significant role during Arab Spring. According to Ekwo (2012), even if social media platforms had played a great role during uprisings, cafes, mosques and Friday would have been important communication networks. Additionally, Baron (2012) suggests that before calling "Facebook revolution" we must consider other communication forms, media and socio-political contexts. In order to find out the power of offline communities, I focused on some researches about how does people participate an uprising? Who shared information online? And If there were

no Internet, was it possible to discuss social movement Arab Spring? I do not totally refuse the power of Internet but questioning, is it only simple to revolt just because of having social media platforms? Therefore, regarding history of social movements, usage of cell phones and satellite TV in Egypt and Tunisia are important. Primary sources are also significant to empower our statements and research. It is also essential to understand how a social movement starts and process.

      Concisely, from beginning the end, I try to pinpoint limited effects of social media and relevance of opinion leader theory in offline communities like Katz (1955) found that out.

Limitations and Methodology

In this research, primary and secondary sources were used to gather necessary information for the research.

The research was initialized with information gathering of media overview of the two country Egypt and Tunisia. There were many reports, graphics and documents which helped to overview the media landscapes and previous movements. The purpose was to use secondary sources to understand what difficulties and situations media of these countries dealt with in the history. It is intended to figure out how these countries have lack of media freedom and private media ownership. These information was essential to understand how Internet and social media brought new estimations to media landscapes of these countries. The purpose of providing these information was to understand the power of traditional media and offline communities during uprising.

In this approach, despite all descriptions of uprising as "social media revolution", understanding offline communities and their role during movements was aimed during this research.

My Tunisia trips and experiences during uprising in 2011, encouraged me to find out the role of offline communities like people in cafes, mosques and streets and how people participated uprising by relating themselves with societies in small towns without Internet Access. That is what I witnessed there during uprising. Housewives, retired people, prayers, street cleaners, taxi drivers or people who were without Internet access, participated uprising and shaped the future of the countries. Hence, main purpose of the research was to reach and interview with these people and try to understand the real causes and communities that shaped the movements and illustrating that social media was just a tool rather than a cause during the time of uprising. For that reason, initially, reaching these people offline as primary sources and interview with them about the incidents was one of the essential of the research. However, there were some issues occurred during the research; firstly, it was hard to afford to go these countries. There was also language barrier as second issue in term of affordance to find someone to simultaneous interpreting. It was also problem during literature review as Tunisians use French as an academic language. Time was also another barrier in order to stop working and going Tunisia and Egypt time to time.

As second step, I sought to find people as online to reach people in offline communities to interview. That was less reliable for the research but was another

solution to reach these people. Unfortunately, accessibility of these people were quite hard as much as it was hard to organize one stranger to organize offline people. This fact changed methods of the research. It was also not possible to do telephone interview due to language barrier. It could be manageable by a company to deal with telephone or outdoor surveys but that would cost for the research more than it could be afforded.

Online survey method (Wright, 2005) could help the research as well. However, it could be like judging one side of reality. It was not realistic to survey people with unequally ethnographic dispersions. As being foreigner in these countries, reaching thousands of people for a survey was also impossible. Additionally, without knowing the idea of offline people it would be dead end survey. If I had asked people, they think social media was a main reason of uprising, that would be unnecessary because those people are already online and it is highly possible, they only believe the power of social media. Therefore, more reliable people was needed as they had more connections as offline and online.

All these limitations were made the research to refer to secondary sources and evaluate previous studies done in this area in the existing literature. This method was main source of the research. There were many qualitative and quantitative data, analyses and studies and they were used for the research. Opinion Leader Theory (Katz, 1955) was also studied during the research along with many studies. The theory helped identifying opinion leaders of the uprising.

There was another issue came up with the research as most of the studies were focusing on online outcomes. This obviously did not cover the research topic. The research also needed people who participated the uprising as offline or with the help of traditional media.

According to some studies, there were some Facebook pages and Twitter accounts to examine. We tried to reach tweets from Tunisia and Egypt which was posted between September 2010 and May 2011. However, as they were checked deeply between June 2014 and March 2016, some of these accounts were removed and some of them was in Arabic. Thus, there were no chance to deeply analyze them and learn their interactions with offline communities. Hence, some data and analyses could not be used for the research as they had not supporting documents.

For the research, online interview method (Nunes, 2012) was used and 10 questions prepared about uprisings to understand the role of offline and online

communities. I also asked about their role during uprisings. Many studies illustrate that social media had importance during uprisings. It was also considered in the research. In order to understand the role of both online and offline communities, I asked questions to bloggers, activists and people who helped to shape movements as online and offline. The aim was to highlight that social media was a tool rather than a cause and significant role of face to face communications. These statements also supported with literature review.

Online interview via skype (Doyle, Alison, 2016.) could be better solution as providing face to face communication and interaction as emotionally but many people were not online as they promised. Due to this issue, we decided to reach bloggers, activists via mail and send them all questions in one time and collect answers as much as we can. This had positive side as well. E-mail interview method (Meho, 2006) could not affect feelings and emotions of interviewees during answering because, interviewees could be easily affected as talking to someone about their country face to face.

For e-mail interview, snowball sampling (Marshall, 1996) was used as we find people who knows people in these countries. Then, these people helped to find another people. There were more than 30 people who were reached out but only 10 of them answered these questions. After collecting answers from these people, the results were matched with literature review and finalized with a conclusion

The best research method could be observation (Ritchie et al., 2013). As I had decided to research uprisings after three year was made this method impossible. There was also no any offline observation method used in literature.

2. Media Landscapes

2.1 Media in Tunisia

Tunisia gained its freedom against France in 1956. After first year of independence, Tunisian television and radio institution was founded as "Tunisian Radio and Television Establishment" in 1957.

The printed media was dominated by Tunisian government under Zine El Abidine Ben Ali control for several years. Family of Ben Ali owned newspapers and magazines for more than a decade. These newspapers and magazines had advertised Ben Ali regime and published news and reports under state control for years. Television and radio channels had also controlled by Ben Ali regime and endeared the regime to Tunisians.

There were two private TV channels (Nessma TV and Hannibal TV), which were allowed to broadcast under state control. There are also several national and local radio stations that held by the state. All the television channels and radio stations were controlled and limited by Ben Ali regime and deprived from content independency. In addition to these controls, newspapers and magazines were lack of own authorization. In order to understand manipulation and oppression of Ben Ali over classical media, we can exemplify his action on state television after immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi On 28 December 2010, shown as visiting Mohammed Bouazizi peacefully and helpfully at hospital.

Between 2003 and 2010, two private TV channels and 5 private radio stations obtained broadcasting license. However, family of Ben Ali was shareholders of the all private media platforms. Belhassen Trabelsi who is brother in law of former president was shareholders of first private radio channel Mosaique. His daughter Cyrine was owner of Shams FM. Additionally, Larbi Nasra who is from family of Trabelsi was owner of Hannibal TV. The first private TV channel Nessma had many shareholders including business groups that close to regime of Ben Ali.

The language of Tunisia is Arabic. However, most of Tunisians can properly talk French. There are also some radio stations broadcast in French. Hereby, Tunisians turned their satellites to other frequencies to watch MBC, Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera in Arabic or TV5 and France 2 in French to avoid the media control in Tunisia.

According to Institute National de la Statistique of Tunisia, in 2010, 87.3% of houses in Tunisia had satellite TV beside 97.1% of household TV.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Téléviseur	92,4	92,7	94,2	95,4	96,7	97,1
Parabole	55,4	60,6	68,4	75,4	83,5	87,3

Table 2.1 - Satellite TV usage in Tunisia (Sigma Dos Tunisia, 2013)

These limitations and censorships affected journalism in the country. For over a decade, police have beaten many journalists and activists. Some journalists were in jails and accused of being traitors. However, censorships were not for the first time in the history of Tunisia. In 1977 and 1990, there were two "short spring" that were arranged by media workers and journalists. These two "short spring" were about publication rights of media workers. During these years, journalists and writers were obligated to send one copy to state before publishing books and articles publicly. (El-Issawi, F. 2012).

Furthermore, Internet was another way to express public opinion despite classical media censorship. When Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire, 17.55% of total population had access to Facebook in Tunisia. If we match the rate with total Internet users, 51% of Internet users have access to Facebook. ("Social Media in the Arab World," 2012). Internet was also under government control. According to Dubai University report, Internet in Tunisia was filtered by state in December 2010 ("Social Media in the Arab World," 2012). All these censorships and oppressions over classical media and Internet continued until 14 January 2011.
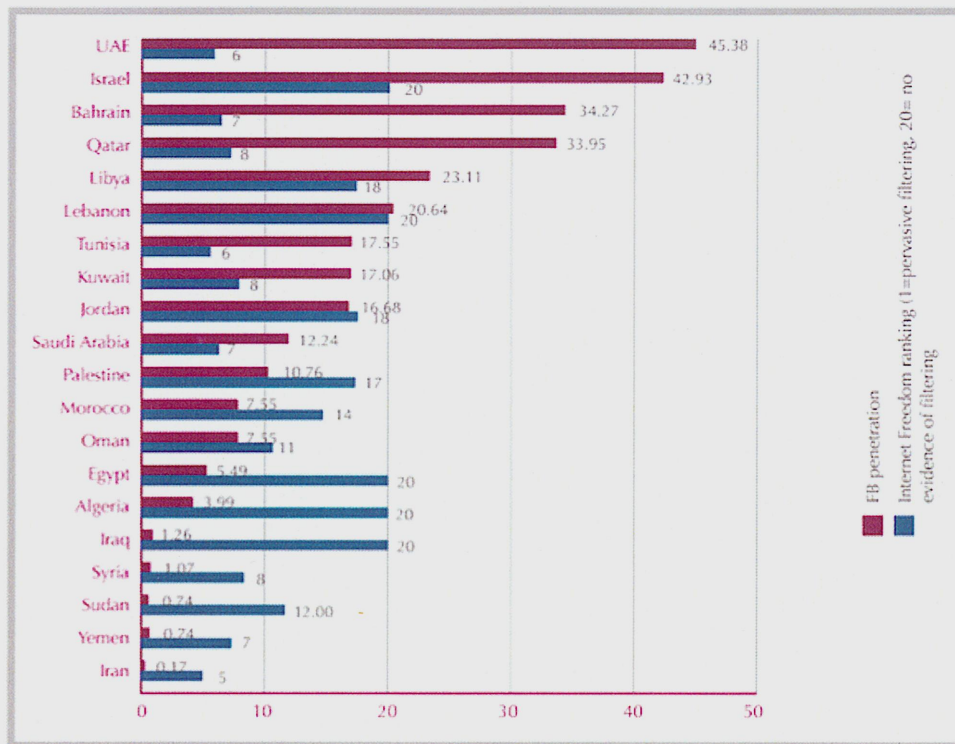
Figure 2.1 Internet Freedom Ranking ("Social Media in the Arab World," 2012)

However, according to Pew Research Center, uncensored media and Internet are not priorities of Tunisians. 87% of Tunisians say that improvement in economic conditions is priority for the future of Tunisia. On the other side, 69% of Tunisians claim that uncensored media is the priority of Tunisia. In addition to these numbers, uncensored Internet access on the bottom of the chart with 45% as a future priority.

Priorities for Tunisia's Future

% Very important

Priority	%
Economic conditions improve	87
Fair judiciary	81
Maintain law and order	80
Honest elections with at least two parties	71
Uncensored media	69
Equal rights for women	63
Free speech	62
Religious parties can participate in gov't	53
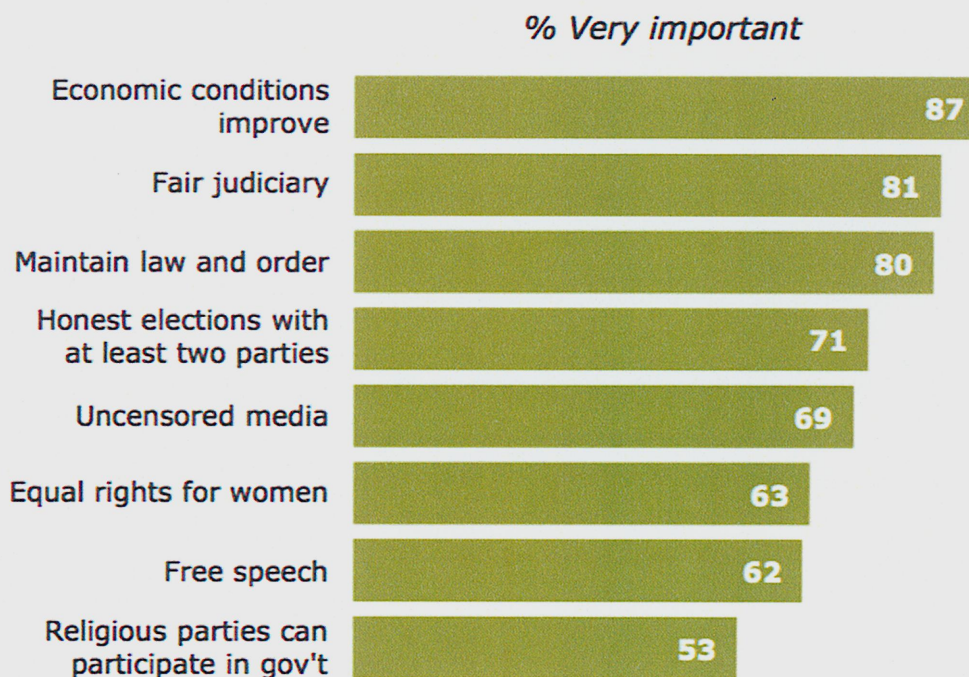
Figure 2.1 Priorities for the future of Tunisia (PEW Research Center, 2013)

The survey is very understandable for Tunisia from many points. According to World Bank, GDP per capita is approximately 4.000 dollars and this is dreadfully low according to developed country ("Tunisia GDP per capita - Forecast," 2015). Most of people cannot have a vacation or luxury spending even the country is a heaven for many Europeans. In addition to these facts, an unemployment rate of the country is too high. The research of Trading Economics indicates that 15% of the country has not a job. ("Tunisia Unemployment Rate - 2005-2015 Forecast," 2016.). These data and researches are proven that Tunisians need better economic conditions to live better quality of life rather than seeking uncensored access to the Internet.

From media perspective, after Ben Ali regime, pressure over media particularly decreased. However, people who had strong relationships with political parties continued to attack journalists and activists. Between 3 May 2011 and 3 May 2012, there were 30 journalists were beaten in Tunisia (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2012). The most of the hatred against journalists came from religious perspective. The growing of extreme Islamists groups in Tunisia, tried to provide their own control after lifting power of Ben Ali over media. In order to exemplify the control over media

channels, we can mention about Azyz Amami who is blogger and human right activist. In 2011, Amami showed up in state television and accused police forces to set police station fire in La Goulette. After his arrestment on 12 May 2014, he sent a letter publicly and said that he was beaten violently and refused to make drug test under Police control. He demanded to make test under judicial supervision. After this incident, many journalists and activists protested the situation and demanding the release of Amami. There were also 4 journalists who were arrested while protesting accusation of Amami. ("Azyz Amami, Tunisian Blogger and Human Rights Activist Arrested," 2015)

According to Committee to Protect Journalists, there were 22 attacks on journalists and 10 journalists threatened. There were also 5 journalists jailed. These numbers indicate that there is no sharp development in media platforms in term of freedom (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2013). In this regard, it is clear to see Tunisia needs stronger free press guarantees in Tunisian constitution.

The growing social media usage and media freedom could not locate the country as a free. According to Freedom House, Tunisia is a party free in 2013. The press freedom score of Tunisia is 52 (0-100) and that means, in order to reach total freedom like developed countries, Tunisia has long way to understand what is freedom like. ("Freedom of The Press 2013," 2013)

Overall, Tunisians released from the solid control over media but the effects of Ben Ali control continue because of misunderstanding of freedom of expression like in many Arab countries. However, media in Tunisia is unfortunately not more independent and freer after 14 January 2011.

2.2 Media in Egypt

Media in Egypt has significant importance. Egyptian media influences many Arab nations including many African countries. Egyptian TV channels and movies are followed regularly by millions of Arabs worldwide. According to Telelaws, 95% of households TV have Nilesat in MENA region. In 2009, more than 40 million household TV had Nilesat ("Egypt - ICT market," 2010). As it is known more than 100 Egyptian TV channels exist, we can assuredly claim that the most significant and effective media is Egyptian media in the MENA region.

Egyptian media have played great role for promoting and praising the ruling parties in the country. There are three-type press ownership in Egyptian media as government owned newspapers, partisan newspapers and independent newspapers. In 1970, political parties were allowed to have their own media sources to promote themselves. As a result of that, there are more than 600 newspapers, journals and magazines in the country for diverse of people at the present time. These sentences sound like there is media freedom in Egypt but the media reports indicate the opposite. According to Freedom House, press in Egypt is "not free at all". There are many journalists imprisoned and forced to stop debating the current government decisions. ("Freedom of The Press 2011," 2011).

First television broadcasting in Egypt aired in 1960. There were three TV channels, which was surprising development for a developing country. After a short period of time, TV was a part of propaganda tool of government. All the Egyptian regimes have used TV as a promoting tool in the history of modern Egypt.

There were not any private TV channels until 1990's and all TV channels were under government control. In parallel with Tunisian media, after 1990's, the former government allowed private TV channels with many oppressive rules. Beside these private TV channels large numbers of TV channels were remained state-owned. The first private TV channel was Dream TV, which was owned by Ahmed Bahgat in 2002.

In 1998, Egypt became the first Arab nation that had its own satellite as Nilesat 101. The satelite caused the domination of Egyptian channels over Arab Nations. However, Nilesat or private media ownership did not provide freedom of expression in the country. Egypt has the same issue with Tunisia about media ownership and freedom. Private media stations have always co-owners who are close to regimes. This fact has been always a treat for Egyptian media sources in order to broadcast freely. For example, in 2006, many journalists of Al-Jazeera were detained when they investigated violence of police in the country. As parallel with this fact, during Arab Spring, many Egyptian and foreign journalists were detained and accused for being traitor.

At the present time, Egypt is the first country with 12.8 million household TV and the number is one of the highest one in North Africa, Middle East and Africa ("Egypt - European Journalism Centre (EJC)," 2011). This number indicates importance of TV channels in the country. According to media reports, an Egyptian spends at least 4 hours of day by watching TV. Satellite TV usage is also high in Egypt.

According to Broadcasting Board of Governors (2014) 95.9% of TV viewers have satellite TV. This is significant as we will come to the importance of satellite TV usage in next chapters.

Radio was also important part of the media in the history. The first radio broadcast started in 1934 and controlled by the government.

In 1954, there were many radio stations started broadcasting by different topics like economy, social life and Qur'an. In end of 1980's, local radio stations commenced broadcasting like South Sinai Radio and The Canal Radio. In end of 1990s, there were more than 100 radio stations. At the present time, radio is the second most popular mass medium after Television in Egypt ("Egypt - Media Landscape | European Journalism Centre (EJC)," 2012).

The Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) is controlling all the traditional media sources in the country. New TV channels and radio stations need to get broadcasting permit from the foundation.

Telecommunication industry is also important in the country. Vodafone, Mobilnil, Egypt Telecom and Eitsalat are the main communication companies. In 2003, The National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (NTRA) established and has regulated the telecommunication sector. In 2007, there were 30 million subscribers and the number increased to 90 million in 2012. ("90 million cell phone subscriptions in Egypt, ministry says | Egypt Independent," 2012.)

These media sources in Egypt could not create opportunity to threat the former and current regime. Former government helped to develop these media sources but keep them under control. However, the biggest threat was Internet and social media. The increase of Internet usage and social media changed the media dimensions of the country and allowed people raise their voices against the current regime.

2.3 Internet and Social Media in Tunisia

Tunisians started using Internet publicly in 1996. In short time, the usage of Internet increased rapidly and became a threat against Ben Ali regime. The regime realized the menace against its authority and commenced filtering by using its power and capabilities.

The regime filtered thousands of mail addresses, blogs, search engines and webpage even most of them had no political and pornographic point of view, Furthermore, Tunisian Internet providers were forced to share personal information of Internet users and their data with the government regardless political opinions and activities of users on Internet. This control made Tunisia one of the top 10 countries that filter Internet. ("Top 10 Internet-censored countries," 2014.)

Beside this internet blockage, rates of internet usage had continued increasing between 1996 and 2013. In 2000, according to Internet World Stats, there were roughly 100.000 Internet users in Tunisia. In 2013, Internet could only reach 39.1% of the population and their 86% used internet for chatting (Aline, 2013). However, Internet usage of European Union was 73% at the same period ("European Union Internet User Statistics | Statistic Brain" 2014). These statistics indicate that Tunisia is not one of the most effective country about Internet. However, many researches claims that social media had lead Arab Spring in Tunisia, even if we compare the Internet usage of Tunisia with similar countries, which have same cultural and historical background, we can certainly witness that Tunisia is almost poor country about Internet usage. According to Internet World Stats, 49% of Moroccans have access to Internet. Besides, 44% of the world population overall has access to it. In order to understand Internet in Tunisia, we initially need to regard these numbers.

Social media platforms were also restricted by Ben Ali regime for a long time. Most popular social media platforms, which are Dailymotion, Youtube and Flickr were blocked by the regime. Furthermore, Facebook was banned in 2008. In 2011, new government changed rules for digital media in the country and lifted some blockage over Internet. However, the censor is still going on over Internet even after the new elected government and its new constitution. The approach of the new government has also frightened people who seek more freedom at the present. Today, people are still afraid of sharing their idea over digital media. Beside all the uprisings, there are tens of journalists and bloggers in jail and waiting to be free again.

In April 2011, just after the uprising started, 21% of Tunisians had Facebook account. (*Arab Social Media Report*, 2011). This percentage reached 33% in 2013. From different perfective, less than 4 million people had account on Facebook (Aline 2013). These percentages prove that Facebook has been being more popular years by years. However, the effects of social media publicly increased after the uprising.

18

These numbers indicate that Tunisians discovered power of Internet after Arab Spring and this might cause another uprising in the country on the following year.
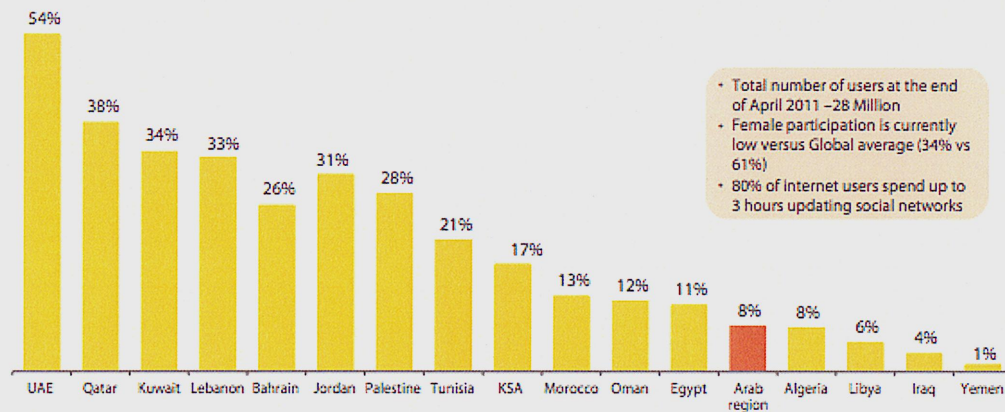

Figure 2.4 Facebook Penetration on Population in the Arab Region (Arab Social Media Report, 2011).

If we compare these numbers with social media usage of Turkey during Gezi Protest, we will observe a significant difference as there were 33 million Facebook users in June 2013. ("Facebook Türkiye rakamlarını açıkladı," 2014). However, the biggest difference between Egypt and Turkey during social movements, 88% of tweets during Gezi protest were in Turkish and from Turkey. On the other hand, only 30% of tweets in Egypt were actually from Egypt (The Monkey Cage, 2013). We will come that point once again when we discuss effects of face to face communication during Arab Spring.

On the other hand, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain were not affected by Arab Spring, even thought they had considerable Facebook users. This graphic may show the economical issues lead the uprising more than social media. Tunisians who protested during uprisings demanded one definite thing "better life standards". In the article of Politics Come First (2013), Wolfsfeld discusses this point in order to understand the reason of Arab spring. As it is significant discussion, we will focus on his study in the next chapters.

There is one relevant example about economical demands of Tunisians in Arab Spring. The powerful Tunisian trade union was against the former regime with its 500.000 members during Arab Spring. The members of the union were workers in state and private sectors and constitute the labor force of the entire country. These

people demand more powerful economy in order to live in better life conditions. One of union represent, Mohammed Boukhari says one of his speech, "the member of the union has many demands however we need to wait at the moment because there are people who need money and job" (Abouzeid, 2014). Beside the discussion of Arab Spring, we might discuss the opinion leadership at the point, by regarding Boukhari's speech, could we call him an opinion leader as a presenter of the union? This question will be mentioned in the next chapters in details.

Twitter is another social media platform, which is mentioned many times for causing Arab Spring and its spread. Researches indicate that there are 10.000 new Twitter users came up in the beginning of uprisings. After uprising in Tunisia, Facebook and Twitter protected their popularity in the country. On the other hand, according to Freedom House, there were no social media platforms, which were blocked by the new elected government, but there are many Twitter and blog users arrested because of their ideology. It is undeniable that between 2012 and 2014, Internet has been being freer or considering as freer by removing blockage for some websites.

In order to understand this sharp improvement, we can compare 2009 and 2014. In 2009, Internet is in Tunisia was not free with score of 79. At the present, the score is 39 and the country is considered "party free" in usage of Internet ("Freedom of The Press 2014," 2014).

In 2014, 44% of the population had access to Internet ("Freedom of The Press 2014," 2014). There were also thousands of people who shared their ideology and opinion from political point of view. As we regard these statistics, we can discuss how social movement was caused freer digital media and social media platforms even with dissatisfactions of new government steps for controlling Internet.

The most clarification of that is research of PEW about priories of Tunisians. Internet is not first concern of Tunisians. Tunisians mostly concern about economical issues. We need to remember that the country is still not growing even after Ben Ali regime. ("Tunisia GDP Growth Rate | Forecast," 2015)

According to Trading Economics, Tunisian economy is getting smaller after the uprising. In 2015, the economy decreased -0,20% and expectations are also negative until 2020. ("Tunisia GDP Growth Rate Forecast," 2015.). Do these expectations and indications cause another Arab Spring in Tunisia? As many politicians and scholars claimed that if the economic conditions ruled Arab Spring in

Tunisia, how will Tunisians react against the economic expectations? From many point, Tunisians cannot react for situations about media censorship or economic conditions. They need opinion leaders to see what is really going on in the country. As we will discuss in the following sections, in the history of movements in Tunisia, uprisings started with worker groups or unions. The big question mark here is, who is reason of uprisings and who leads people in Tunisia and how do they take action on social media platforms? If we find answers to these questions, we might understand the uprising in detail.
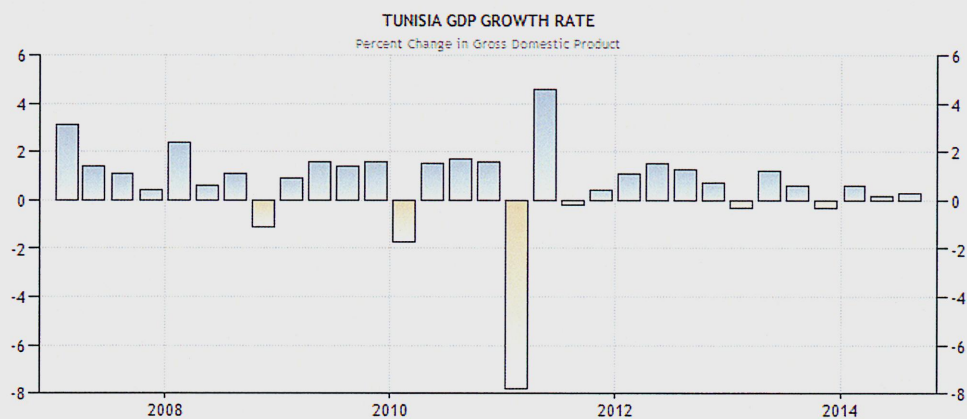
Figure 2.4 – Tunisia GDP Growth Rate ("Tunisia GDP Growth Rate Forecast," 2015.)

2.4 Internet and Social Media in Egypt

According to many academics Internet and social media provide opportunity to force Mubarak for his resignation in Egypt. People were mobilized and followed each other via Internet during Arab Spring and the revolution became effective worldwide. Internet undeniably changed the understanding of news and information. News is spread faster and wider than before Internet age. In order to understand Arab Spring and its effects in Egypt, I believe we need to look closer to Internet developments of the country.

Internet connection initially started in Egypt in 1993 with cable. In the following year, there were almost 3000 Internet users. Egypt had almost the same development process of Internet like any other country around Egypt.

The use of Internet in Egypt has been increasing rapidly last 5 years. In 2000, there were approximately 450.000 Internet users in the country however, the rate of Internet users had increased to 30 million in 2012 ("Internet World Stats (2012),". These numbers indicate sharp increase of Internet users. According to World Bank (2013), in 2012, 26.4% of population had access to Internet. At the present time, there are almost 40 million Internet users in Egypt, which means half of the population around the country ("Internet Users by Country, 2014)

Egypt is the second country, which has most Twitter users after Saudi Arabia among Arab countries. According to Arab Media Reports (2012), Egypt has almost 500.000 active Twitter users.
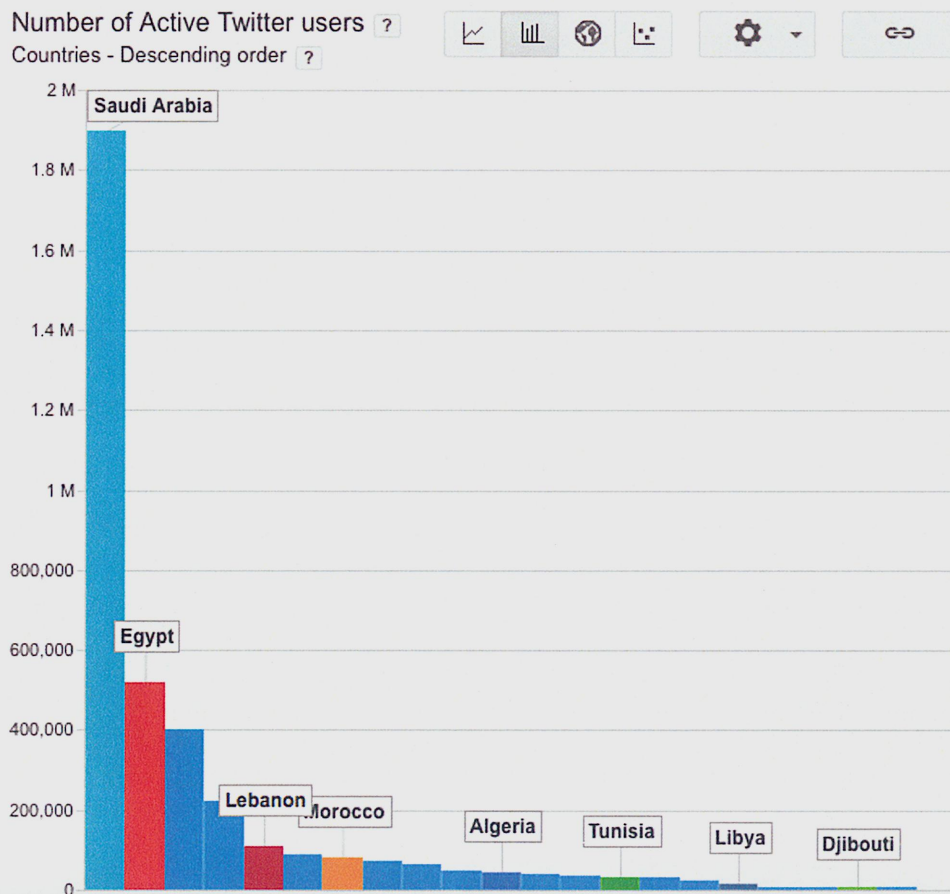

Figure 2.5 Number of Active Twitter Users (**Arab Social Media Report**, 2013)

Saudi Arabia has the most active Twitter users in the region but there was no uprising. They also live under dictatorship and have lack of freedom of speech and women rights. The chart indicates that social media platforms may not be only reason

of social movements in a country. If many people believe as Twitter and Facebook had lead uprisings, Saudi Arabia would be like Syria or Egypt in these years. Libya is better example as they live more tribal life style. Twitter and Facebook was not significant until tribe leaders in Libya call people to reach against Gaddafi. One of the most powerful tribe spokesmen of Zawiya in one of his speech threatens Gaddafi to interrupt oil exports (Alaaldin, 2011). According to Mokhelifi who is scholar in Libya, When Gaddafi lost his power and control over tribes, he lost control of the country. (Alaaldin, 2011). This statement may expose the discussion of opinion leadership once again rather than effects of social media and self-determination of people. From many perspectives, opinion leader theory may prove the same situation in Egypt and Tunisia in different way. The question is; social media platforms metaphorically are modern tribes with tribe leaders or people make their own decisions independently? We initially need to find that out.

Facebook is also quite popular in Egypt, as usual the most popular social media platform in the country. There were approximately 4 million Facebook users in 2012. (*Arab Social Media Report*, 2012).
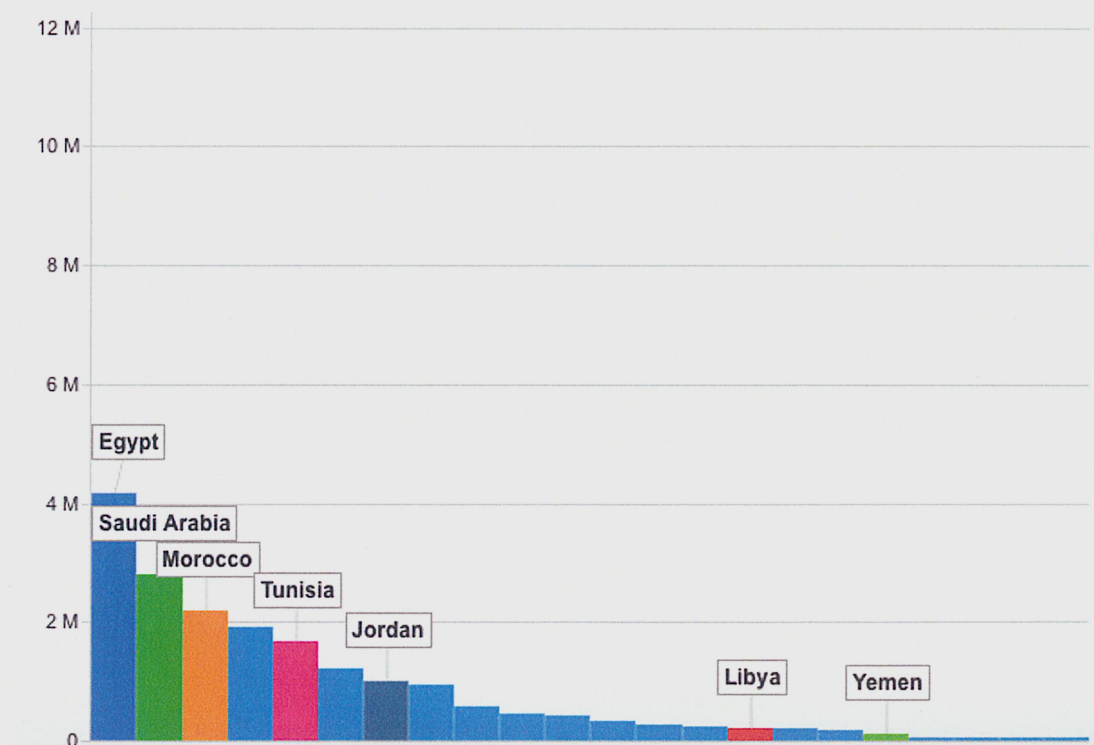

Figure 2.5 Facebook Users ((*Arab Social Media Report*, 2011).

In order to understand social media and its effects for Arab Spring in Egypt, we need to emphases on Internet report of Nielsen Company in 2012. According to Nielsen report, 39% of population has access to Internet in 2010 just before the uprising. There are also 22% mobile Internet users, which can have direct effects on Arab Spring. 56% of Egyptians who are between 15-24 age are using Internet. That statistics are significant because many reporters claimed that the uprising led by youths. Mobile phone ownership might be the one of the most important. In Egypt, 90% of people have mobile phones. This could be great factor for mobilizing people around country rather than Twitter and Facebook. Internet was censored during the uprising in Egypt and most of the people communicated via mobile phones in order to escape from police force. One of Syrian protestor also said; "This couldn't have happened earlier. Now we have cell phones and talk to each other, and know what is happening in other towns. "("Mobile phones, social media and the Arab Spring", April, 2011)

Those words are actually underlining the importance of mobile phones during Arab Spring.

As we regard, Egyptians have strong relations with Internet and mobile devices unlikely in Tunisia. We also witnessed the effects of Internet during Arab Spring. According to many scholars, uprising in Egypt called "Twitter Revolution", which is enough to show power of Internet in the country.

On 28th January 2011, Hosni Mubarak regime shut down the Internet in order to stop protests around the country. This step could show the power of Internet and its spreading and leading power for Egyptians.

When activists claimed "Day of Anger" for 25 January, there were 80.000 people who joined the Facebook group and told they could participate the uprising. All around country, people initially came together via Internet and social media platforms then started protesting in streets. That is debatable in Tunisia but undeniably valid for Egypt.

In next sections, we will look deeply to social media effects, regarding the theory of opinion leader (Katz 1955). Examples, stats and theories will show us the relevance of the theory at the present time by regarding Arab Spring. However, regarding the history also important to understand uprisings at the present.

3. Social Movements

Tunisia has more complicated history about social movements than most of us think. In order to understand that sentence, we initially need to focus on General Union of Tunisian Worker (UGTT). Many researches indicate that the union has been playing gigantic role for social movements in Tunisia. Therefore, understanding the purpose of the union and their activities may let us understand what is behind Arab Spring at the present.

UGTT was firstly founded in 1920 and ruled under French colonization. After 26 years, by leadership of Farhat Hached, the union had attempted once again to release from the colonial rule. This attempt was in fact for struggling against the colonial rule and gaining the independence of the country. However, when Tunisia gained its independence in 1956, the union changed their perspective and turned against Tunisian regime to get their political freedom. (Anonymous, 2007). Anyhow, Farhat Hached was accepted as "public hero" and emblematic figure in these independent movements against France. However, he has never found the chance to see the independence due to his murder on December 5, 1952 in Rades.

The success of UGTT in the independence movements made difficult to gain control of Tunisia for first president and the founder of the republic Habib Bourgiba. He eventually gained the control and took UGTT under his oppression. Habib Bourgiba controlled the union of workers between 1956-1978. In January 1978, UGTT conducted a general strike against the current regime in order to have better job opportunities and working conditions. The movement was repressed by the regime. In the following days, the general secretary of UGTT was captured and jailed by regime forces. At the end of the general strike, according to officials, at least 100 people died and more than 300 people injured (Gershoni, 2002). Tunisians remember the day as "Black Friday"

In 1983, IMF visited Tunisia for the first time and the current regime was forced to be provident. On 29 December 1983, the government made its decision to increase pasta and bread prices 70% including many cuts for consumer products. That caused bread riot in 1984. It started in Gafsa then in the following days, the riot spread the capital, Tunis. However, the government arrested UGTT leaders and started fighting against the union with new rules and oppressions in 1985. (Gershoni, 2002)

In 1987, new leader Zine El Abidine Ben Ali had different strategy. He negotiated with UGTT and controlled them as differently. As Ben Ali came to the power, he tried to restore the union with new logic of economy and policy. Besides, In 1988, many UGTT members freed from jail and the union found a chance to resurrection. Ben Ali also provided publication right to the union as they could discuss in a sense of policy and economy (Bellin, 2002). One of the significant reasons of his approach to the union was because of Islamic movements. He somehow did not want to handle with the two powerful groups at the same time. Hereby, the union stayed silent between 1987 and 2011. The oppression of Ben Ali had on the top level since the republic founded in 1956.

In 2008, a revolt occurred in the city that close the Algerian border, Gafsa. Miner workers in Gafsa started increasing their voice against the poverty, terrible working conditions, joblessness and corruption of the regime. In a few days, high school and university students, wives and jobless people joined the revolt. Ben Ali regime repressed the revolt brutally and killed some workers. The revolt was unsuccessful due to the action of UGTT. The workers' most respected union remained silent and tolerated the government action against the revolt. From that perspective, we testified the importance of the union for social movements in Tunisia.

After all these oppressions and struggles, the ties between the regime and UGTT broke off in 2011. UGTT was the leading organization group in the country while Arab Spring was occurring. The union mobilized demonstrations and played key role against Ben Ali regime. ("Tunisian trade unions receive Nobel Peace Prize 2015," 2015). The union additionally kept the factories and markets open during Arab Spring in order to protect rights of workers. At the present, there are more than 750.000 member of UGTT and the union was nominated for 2015 Nobel Peace Price. (Marks, 2015)

All the information and the history may give a clue about Arab Spring with the history of democratic structure of Tunisia. Today, we discuss the effects of social media and how it leads social movements. However, Tunisians already know the sense of revolt. From that perspective, we need to focus on the effects of social media as a tool rather than a cause. The nation has already revolted many times for the same reasons and same conditions even without media or social media.

In this regard, more than social media, the founder of UGTT Farhat Hached guided Tunisians as a public figure. His brother and currently politician Nouraddine

Hached emphasizes on Farhat Hached's importance for the country in Farhat's death anniversary. He said, his movements and purpose must be understood by youths. Nouraddine also said; "I want my right to memorize, my right to truth. It is not permissible that some people come and colonize our country for 75 years, kill our parents and our own people. Then, they leave and take everything with them including archives and therefore our memory" ("Foundation Formed to Honor Farhat Hached," 2014). These words might be more powerful than social media platforms in Tunisia.

3.1 Islamic Movements in Tunisia

Tunisia also faced Islamic movements in the history. In the early period of 1970's, some young people came together and moved collectively as "Islamic Action". Their initial activity was educating people from Islamic point of view in mosques and at schools. This "little action" got attention by group of people and started growing step by step. In 1972, this growth caused another organization with upward influence as al Jama'a al Islamiye "The Islamic Group" (Peter and Ortega, 2014), Muslim Brothers had important role to shape the Islamic group and lead their way in the middle of 1970's. This action propelled the new movements away from the political action. At that period, Bourgiba's oppression and westernize ideology was the dominant and accepted by citizens. Action of Muslim Brothers to keep the new Islamic group away from the policy was the wise movement to save the newborn group. Otherwise, most probably, we would not be considering the effects of NAHDA movement in Arab Spring at the present.

1977 was the critical year for Islamism in the country. The Islamic revolution of Iran in 1976 changed the dimensions of Islamic movements in Tunisia. In 1977, at universities, the official declarations published about al Ihtiyat al-islami (The Islamic Trend). Some students' initial purpose was pushing the Islamic movement more into the political issues. Their key aim was a revolution which was similar to Iran based on Muslim Brothers understanding of Islam (Peter and Ortega, 2014). This action was considered and accepted as a dangerous movement by the current leader Habib Bourgiba. However, the movement was growing rapidly and influencing thousands of Tunisians.

In 1980, A few leaders of Islamic organizations were arrested by police forces but Rachid al Ghannouchi was trying to find out the way to be official and accepted Islamic political party at the same year.

In 1981, Ghannouchi announced the new movement as Islamic Tendency Movement. Yet, the oppression over the movement was increasing and being illegal with arresting 150 member of the new movement regardless all the growing support to the leadership of Ghannouchi. Besides, the biggest and more powerful oppression started in 1987 just before Ben Ali had ruled the country. In the beginning of 1987, people were sentenced to death and Ghannouchi was sentenced to lifetime prison. (Peter and Ortega, 2014)

However, On November 7, 1987 Bourgiba was deposed by the military and Ben Ali became the new president of the country. At the beginning, this coup was perfect step for Islamic movements to get their political right in the country. In the first years of Ben Ali, The Islamic movement and Ben Ali set up a good relation regardless their different political perspectives. At the short time, Ben Ali ordered to release Ghannouchi. In 1988, NAHDA was founded as a second political party and registered for the first pluralistic election. NAHDA unsurprisingly gained 17% of the votes according to official records. In some cities, that percentage was more than 30% (London, 2001). This success actually brought the end of NAHDA party. In 1989, Rashid Ghannouchi exiled and went to London. After his exile, many party members were sentenced to prison. Once again, westernize and oppressive Tunisian government had won the competition and gained one more silent enemy until 2011.

In 2011, we witnessed the consequences of the oppression over organizations in Tunisia. I suggest that UGTT and Islamic movements took revenge in Arab Spring. This revolt which has started with Mohammed Bouazizi was the end of the patience of Tunisians who were silenced and held by the government because of their demands of freedom of expression. That was also significant in Arab Spring. People and their son who oppressed by the government for years revolted against the government to raise their voice for their demands. Social media was in fact not the reason in that uprising from that perspective; it was a way to illustrate the weakness of regime to people. The historical leaders, their beliefs and words guided the country to revolt and earn their democratic rights. For this reason, we need to evaluate the uprisings from historical respective beside interactive media at the present.

Tunisia and Egypt have many similar points to focus on Arab Spring. They both had elections after the collapse of regimes unlikely Libya and Yemen. As uprisings stared in Tunisia, Tunisia gained importance and also Egypt is one of the biggest country of the region. In that respect, regarding to these two countries has important with their similarities. The uprisings additionally in these countries started with common factors and beliefs (Al-Monitor, February 17th, 2014).

In the next chapters, we will focus on more deeply about uprising in each country.

3.2 Arab Spring in Tunisia

Tunisia is the smallest country with 10.974.900 population in North Africa ("Unicef," 2012.) The first president Habib Bourgiba established the modern Tunisia in 1956 after many independent movements against France. Until 1987, Habib Bourgiba thoroughly dominated the Tunisian government and ruled the country. In 1987, Ben Ali Zeynel Bin Abidin became the second president after Bourgiba's fatal disease. Ben Ali governed the country between 1987-2011 and he surprisingly won all elections. His popularity and oppressions over Tunisians continued increasingly year by year until 2011 as we mentioned before. One of the reasons of his success and compulsion was the classical media and his propagandist media usage over Tunisians as well as holding police force in control. He controlled television channels, newspapers and magazines and made his own propaganda. Most of people were deprived about real events of Tunisia even if there had been an insubordination in a part of the country against his authority.

On December 17, 2010, graduated student Mohammed Bouazizi (26) set himself on fire. He was trying to help his family by selling vegetables in Sidi Bouzid. However, he was out of permit and police had distained his vendor. This incident was the first footstep of the uprising in Tunisia. After that day, in the entirely country, fear barricade was commencing to be broken.

Bouazizi's reaction against the police force caused protests in Sidi Bouzid at the same day. People gathered to protest against excessive police force, lack of human rights, unemployment and living standards of Tunisians. The protest expanded from local region to entire country in a little while. Media was close-tongued for the footsteps of the uprising.

In the short time, Ben Ali took his first step against the inceptive uprising and sent Tunisian Development Ministry to Sidi Bouzid to announce new employment project for high rate of unemployment. Yet, the uprising was irrepressible. At that point, many journalists surfaced corruption of Tunisian government and Ben Ali's family. People started shouting the corruption beside unemployment and indigent living standards in streets. However, the fear barricade against the current government was not wholly broken at that time. There were still people who support and believe Ben Ali's power over the country.

The growing uprising took one step further with first casualties and deaths in a little while. In Menzel Bouzaiene, two people killed by police. The unstoppable uprising caused excessive police force against demonstrations. Mohammed Ammari (18) and Chawki El Hadri (44) killed with gunshots by police. After this incidents, the uprising swiftly spread to entire country.

These situations unsurprisingly did not reverberate to the media. Media continued keeping its silence against the situation. After 12 days of Bouazizi's own immolation, the private TV channel Nessma TV outlet the control of media and commenced publishing news about the uprising for the first time.

Some activists and social media users shared photos and videos of uprisings on Internet. The youth in Tunisia started communicating over social media platforms. It caused collective demonstrations in some cities. In reply to these collective demonstrations, Tunisian government hacked important Facebook accounts and mail address of some activists. Additionally, many bloggers, activists, journalists, UGTT members and lawyers arrested by police because of their opinion expression on social media platforms. This caused more hatred against Ben Ali.

The power of demonstrations and broken fear barricade caused new circumstances. For the first time, Ben Ali announced new concessions and promised to investigate the death of demonstrators. He also pledged to give more freedom to citizens. However, the detestation to him and his family was on the highest level and irreversible. His reactions and decisions did not suffice to stop the frustration against him and demonstrations increasingly continued.

The growing uprising and more hatred forced Ben Ali to impose state of emergency in January 14, 2011. He also announced a fair election for 6 months later. These decisions of Ben Ali made people feel that he lost out his power and authority. His statement of emergency and new election was his last struggle against

demonstrations. In a little while, Ben Ali and his family escaped from the country by plane. After this incident, the uprising changed the dimension and people started celebrating the day. Stated media has also released and commenced broadcasting celebration of Tunisians.

Just after that situation, Prime Minister of Tunisia, Mohamed Ghannouchi announced that he temporary takes the president role under 56 of the Tunisian constitution. He also said there will be election hold in 60 days. However, in the following days, Ben Ali announced that he is still president of Tunisia. After the declaration, his partisans started spreading fears and tried to aware people with extreme violence and guns that Ben Ali is still in power. However, army and police force defused these partisans of Ben Ali.

Political discussions started with existence of political parties. In the following days, Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi announced new coalition. However, there were many politicians that close to Ben Ali took place at this coalition and that caused another unrest in Tunisia.

The leader of Islamist NAHDA, Rachid Ghannouchi was exile for more than 20 years and his political activities was forbidden in Tunisia. On 22 January 2011, Ghannouchi's exile was lifted and NAHDA Islamic movement took their place in political discussions in the country. This success of Islamic movement and Tunisian people encouraged people in Libya and Egypt and the uprising created domino effect in Arab regions.

Tunisians have started Arab Spring but each Arab Nation has its own conditions. From this distinction, we essentially need to evaluate each Arab country differently. There are currently 22 Arab Nations and they all have different economic statues, educational level and history. As a result of that, Arab Spring in Tunisia did not conclude as the same as in Egypt and Libya. Tunisians succeed and concluded the uprising. However, uprising in Egypt failed and people had not been called down since the beginning of uprising in spite of similarity of demands in the both country.

In the two countries, Islamists won the first election. In Tunisia, NAHDA Islamist movement and in Egypt, Muslim Brothers obtained great success. People of the both nation demanded job opportunities, freedom of expression and better life standards but there is one occasion that differentiated the two countries.

Tunisian military had always less interest in political actions. In history of Egypt there had been several coups. Egyptian generals always expose their political

points of view publicly. As an example of this fact, in 1975, Husnu Mubarek was retired from Egyptian army and became vice president of Egypt. In the following years, he took the head and became president of the country. In addition to this, retired colonel Cemal Abdul Nasir was president of Egypt until 1970.

If we return present days, we witnessed one election in Egypt in 2014 after Abdel Fattah el-Sisi deposed the elective president Mohammed Morsi. That was another coup in the history of Egypt. The history repeated once more and Sisi as a general stand for the president election 2014. He "surprisingly" won the election with 96.91% of votes. ("Landslide victory for Al-Sisi, inauguration slated for Sunday," 2014). This happening caused different outcome of Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt.

Egypt has 80.721.900 population and located strategically ("Unicef", 2012). It shares border with Israel in East and Nile River that gives life to many African nations. From this perspective, Egypt is more important for Western countries. Egypt has many historical places that held by Western students. There are many Western company's factory and work force as well. Tunisia is smaller, less strategic and less productive. At that point, Intervention of Western Nations from political perspective is unavoidable for Egypt. Tunisia can be eventually role model for many Arab Nations and this will not harm economy of developed country at all.

3.3 Arab Spring in Egypt

Egypt is the biggest country that witness Arab Spring in the region. The country had several coups and social movements in the history but the military always controlled the situations around the country.

On January 25Th, first demonstrations started in Cairo, Tahrir Square and people demand ousting of Mubarak. He was aware of the power of social media and its power of spreading information. Therefore, he stopped all Internet connection around the country. Mubarak commanded the security forces to arrest demonstrations and use tear gases and capture foreign journalists. He believed that the uprising was organized from out of the country with the help of his oppositions. After 3 years, Egyptian media reported 25 people death around the country after the first demonstrations. This incident forced Mubarak to step down. He decided to sack his government but he refused to leave. According to some journalists and politicians, he believed that if he had stepped down, people would have wanted his execution.

On February 1st , Mubarak declared that he would not run for next election. However, after 10 days of his declaration, he was forced to resign and leave the control to military. However, this caused worse days in Egypt. Military refuses the demands of protesters. The situation and conflict between the security forces and protesters became bloodier. Civil war was on the way for Egypt. People were witnessing terrible incidents and situations around the country. The control of military and its executions increased furious and causalities in Egypt.

On November 28th, people voted for their new government under military control. The election was new record for the history of modern Egypt. 80% of Egyptian approximately participated to elections. Results were not surprising according to many journalists. Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party was the top winner with 37%. The second party was Nour Party with 24%. ("Muslim Brotherhood top winner in Egyptian election," 2012.). These results were considered as defeat of military. However, those developments could not stop the military power over the country. As a result of that, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi became new president on 8 June 2014. These incidents were interpreted as fail of Arab Spring in the country. At the present, the power of the military and its control over the entire country is on the top level. Many Muslim Brotherhood's member is executed by the current regime. As a final result, Arab Spring was completely in vain for Egypt.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Social Movements and Media

Media has been seen as propaganda tools since its early emergence. Adolf Hitler's Germany or Soviet Union in 1940, used the media as a tool to spread their ideology more strongly. As it is discussed in many studies, Adolf Hitler spread fear on his country by preparing films and news which can be understood as people were aware of power of media in early period of 1900'.

There was no debate to evaluate media as a source of social movements until privatization of media platforms. The privatization of media brought along new discussion to the media theories. Effects of media was discussed more by some scholars like Lazarsfeld and Katz (1955). After media tools entered houses, media effect being discussed much more than before. In this chapter, we will mainly focus on evolution of social movements and media usage by regarding some studies.

Before the discussion, we need to understand what is social movement. According to Herbert Blumer (1939) social movements are collective action to create new order of life. According to Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine (1970), one of the key factor of social movements is recruitment of committed individuals who are using their significant social relationships.

There are two significant theories about why people participate to mass movements. The first one is deprivation theory. According to the theory, people who feel deprived among others feel that they are disadvantage. The theory firstly mentioned by Robert Merton (Gurney and Tierney, 1982) and seen as a one of most important reason of social movements.

The second is mass society theory. The theory is more significant in the research. According to the theory, media is powerful force for shaping social movements. Media has direct effect on people and influence them directly. People's thoughts are also transformed by media platforms according to this theory, It is also significant to keep religion groups and communities together to create a social movement. The theory was initially mentioned by political sociologist William Kornhauser (Staggenborg, 2015).

According to Charles Dobson (2001) factories and university campuses help to occurrence of social movements. Also religion groups, clubs, special interest organizations, community groups made social movements more possible. Thus, in other words, social movements are reason of face to face communications.

For social movements, it is expected that people who was in initiative collective action for a movement will most likely play prior role in the next movements (Donson, 2001). This is also defined as activism. Beside that Dobson (2001) also claim that people who have family and full time jobs have less chance to participate a social movement that means social movements are mostly shaped by students and youth. In addition, Dobson (2001) mentions about leaders of social movements which is important to roll a movement. According to his study, social movements need charismatic and powerful leaders to respond people's concerns and demands. The significance of his study is his ideas and opinions were before emergence of social media platforms. It can be claimed that these are basics of people's attractions to social movements in history.

Media landscape is also important to understand the evolution of social movements. Before new media, social movements and media relation was much more complicated as it was hard to pretend how a media organization will react against movements (Donk, 2004). Media could ignore social movements or pride them with their own way. For instance, media could stay silence, pretend like nothing happened or claim there was an enormous social movement. Hence, face to face relationships and physical areas were important in order to interact with people without expecting attention of media (Donk, 2004). This is one of the significant point in order to understand the evolution of social movements because at the present, many scholars tie social movements mostly to social media platforms by underestimating effects of physical presents of people on grounds.

On the other hand, Dieter Rucht (2004) believes that mass media is essentially important to create awareness of social movements. According to him, if a movement is not seen on mass media, only the participant will be aware of it, which mean the movement will have no effect on others (Rucht 2004). By regarding this view, he points out that getting a mass media organization along protesters is important. Rucht (2004) also criticized the limitation of mass media in 1960s and 1970s and he analyzed the journals during social movements of left groups in Europe as only seen by leftist journals. The problem was journals were only mention about social problems from

perspective of intellectuals and they did not see the daily news and problems. Hence, help of the leftist journals was limited in public (Rucht 2004). Therefore, these movements did not get fully public attention due to lack of spreading tools.

In early period of Internet, as Aelst (2004) suggested new media provide easy way of communication and interaction. People can share their public opinion and ideas to react against politicians or social structure. However, there is significant question as Etzioni asks, can virtual interactions be real as much as face to face relationship to create communities? (Etzioni, 1999). New media undoubtedly removed the physical borders. Dependence of mass media has decreased in a way. However, the discussion of effects of face to face communication and effects of offline communities still remain. As Van de Donk and Feodere (2001) debates, how virtual participants can be transferred to real direct action still under discussion of many scholars.

Later on, Manuel Castells (2014) brought new discussion to media and social movement relations. According to Castells, social movements in Iceland, Iran and Tunisia shows great example of effects of social media platforms despite escaped media attention. People still could be organized and shaped on the online platforms. He also claims that people are mobilized and organized on social media during protests in Mexico, Wall Street, Turkey, Brazil and Russia despite their different demands. Castells (2014) suggests that all social movements need communication methods even people communicate in churches or mosques. However, the networked communication de-centralized social movements. In spite of his new media and internet movement approach, he believes that traditional movement methods are still remain important. According to his multimodal theory Castells points out, beside new media effect, in Egypt, offline networks and football fans played significant role. In addition, communication between religion networks or families were remain significant as much as online communication. In parallel with Castells opinion, according to Jerzak (2013), one of the biggest Egyptian football fans group ULTRAS acted politically against authoritarian tendencies during Arab Spring. Even Mubarak regime was challenging with ULTRAS, they were protesting against the regime in front in public spaces. This gave ULTRAS a role in Arab Spring. According to Egyptian blogger Alla Abd El Fattah, ULTRAS played bigger role in uprising than any other political party. (Zirin, 2012)

As we understand from previous discussions, the evolution of media brings along new discussion to the social movement theories. However, face to face

communication never loose its effects on social movements even there are easier ways of communications. In next chapters, we will focus more on face to face relationships and its power in shaping Arab Spring.

5. Limited Effects of Media and Opinion Leader Theory

Many scholars have studied Media's use of propaganda for long time. In the early period of 1900's, media was densely used as propaganda tool to express opinion of leaders and hide their failures. Adolf Hitler as an example used the classical media to control and frighten people. The Nazi Propaganda Ministry, which was managed by Joseph Goebbels, controlled all media tools and spread their ideology. The regime of Adolf Hitler burned more than 25.000 books including books of Albert Einstein and some scientists. (Monmonier, 2005)

In 1944, When the WWII was ended, Lazarsfeld and Katz made fieldwork and tried to understand the effects of media over people. They also sought for an answer for how do people affect each other despite the media effect. The result of the fieldwork brought along new discussion to media theories. According to the research, there is media as a source of information. When the information publicly flows, opinion leaders take the role and spread that information to their adjacent or families. The result propounds limited effects of media on communities. (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). However, the outcome brings along two important questions, which are who are the opinion leaders and what makes them opinion leaders?

In 1960, one of Lazarsfeld student Joseph Klapper also analyzed the opinion leader theory and achieved similar conclusion. According to research of Klapper, the effects of opinion leaders over people are limited as well and they are able to influence minor group of people. As a result of his studies, opinion leaders have limited effects as much as media itself (Klapper, 1960).

Scholars Chen and Hernon (1982) surveyed 2.400 people in New England. By the survey, two scholars tried to figure out the effects of opinion leaders among people. According to the survey, 74% of respondents said that they buy things by considering their own experiences. Besides, 57% people accepted that close friends or family members affect them (Chen and Hernon, 1982).

Today, new media platforms revive the opinion leader theory once again. By regarding social media platform, is that possible to describe the opinion leader theory from today's point of view? As we seek to find out does social media platforms suffice for social movements despite the low usage of them or were there other reasons and factors behind the reality of Arab Spring in terms of leadership? In the next chapter,

we will focus on thoughts and studies about opinion leadership and academic studies to understand how the uprising evolved.

5.1 Opinion Leadership, Media and Arab Spring

In order to expose who is opinion leader, who and what lead people and who was worth to follow during Arab Spring? we will emphasize opinion leader discussion with the case of Arab Spring. There are many significant examples and speeches that guide us to understand new opinion leadership after 60 years of opinion leader theory. The discussion will may help us to understand the basics of Arab Spring and its evolution.

Scholars studied the effects of cell phones beside social media platforms. In order to understand the primary cause of uprising in Egypt, they asked youth about which communication and media tools they used in general. The most significant response was two-thirds of respondents said that their source of information and communication were their families and friends. (Kavanaugh et al. 2012). That was actually 66% of total respondents. The result indicates the importance of face-to-face communication and maintains the necessity of personal relationships as offline. The more interesting result was 80% of respondents said that they communicated with their friends and families via cell phones and home phones. (Kavanaugh et al. 2012). In another question, scholars asked to youth about their face-to-face communication with people on the streets and tried to figure out the important of offline communities or organizations. During the uprisings in Egypt, 34.7% of respondents reported that they communicated and were informed by people on the street, such us taxi drivers and shopkeepers (Kavanaugh et al. 2012).

Beside all these reports, TV channels also informed these people. More than 80% of respondents reported that they watched ON TV and Dream TV. They also followed some French and Russian channels (Kavanaugh et al. 2012). These results demonstrate that beside social media platforms, people used another media forms and face to face relationship to get informed. Another precision point was 92.6% of respondents used cell phone during Arab spring and 65.2% of them send messages to people. (Kavanaugh et al. 2012). The same survey figured that out youth also used online media tools as much as classical media.

As a result of the survey, scholars finalized their study with their critical views about traditional and new media usage. According to their conclusion, opinion leader theory is the exact point to understand uprising in Egypt. People who used social media platforms during uprising played role of opinion leader and inform people with face-to-face relation or cell phones. The conclusion may be considered that social media was not the only reason of uprising. Offline communities and shares had also significant role. The result may explain the effects of offline communities like in mosques and cafes in Tunisia and Egypt.

As we followed some commentators during Arab Spring, they generally call uprising "Facebook revolution". Even if we google the term, there will be many news from 2011. In the article of Social Media and the Arab Spring: Politics Comes First (2013), There is one sentence which is important in our case. As Communello and Anzera (2012) mention, "Internet scholars cannot see the full picture of uprisings". In addition, another scholar Norris (2012) pinpoints that social networking was essential before the invention of internet. He also said that,

"Social media may function to sustain and facilitate collective action, but this is only one channel of communications amongst many, and processes of political com- munications cannot be regarded as a fundamental driver of unrest compared with many other structural factors, such as corruption, hardship, and repression." (p. 5)

Baron (2012) also in his study argues that before calling "Facebook revolution" we must consider other communication forms, media and socio-political contexts.

According to the study of New Media and Conflict After Arab Spring, social media platforms did not play significant role in Arab Spring (Aday, 2012). In this study, five scholars used bit.ly linkage to understand the usage of social media during Arab Spring. The purpose of using bit.ly linkage to shorten link on Internet to find out who and how people clicked and shared the information during uprisings. They believe that more than usage of social media platforms, it is important to know who shared and received information. Therefore, they tested social media usage by using bit.ly and found that out, most of the news on social media platforms clicked from out of Tunisia and Egypt (Aday, 2012).
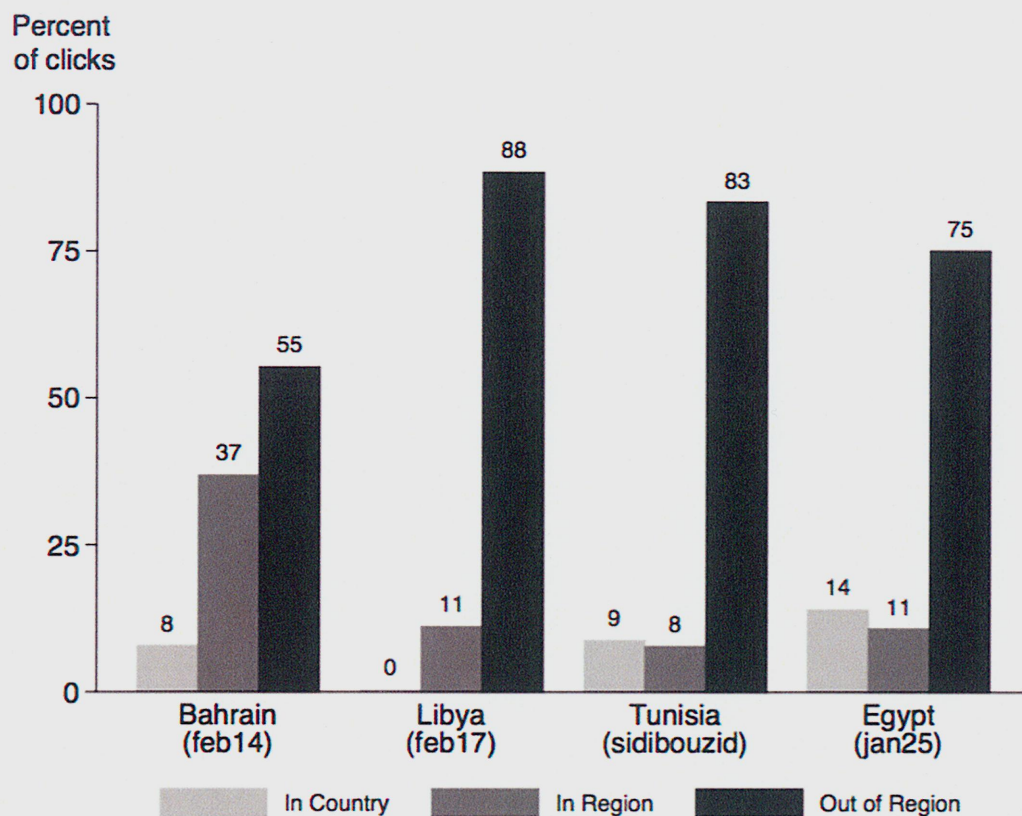
Figure 5.1 – Clicks by location (Aday, 2012)

As a result of that, they suggest that social media was not unimportant but only exaggerated. In addition, as tested, social media platforms caused international awareness rather than public awareness. Therefore, according to scholars in this study, we need to have data of TV, mobile phones and radio usage during Arab Spring from companies like Nielsen. In other words, we need to know how did information flow as digitally and traditionally.

At that point, they think that differentiation of new and traditional media is not easy to understand the evolution of Arab Spring. Thus, TV channels like Al Jazeera, used videos from YouTube and social media accounts of people to show what was going on in Egypt and Tunisia rather than using their own footage. This is one of the most important reasons of knowing the data of TV audiences during the social movement as much as usage of social media platforms. As we know so far, TV audiences are more than internet users in Egypt and Tunisia and most of houses have satellite TV's to watch all international channels.

One of the most important statement for understanding the uprising is Kuzman's idea which is about how people participate an uprising. According to Kuran, initially few people revolt against the regimes and in accordance with response of security forces, others join uprisings (Goodwin, 2011). The study highlights that there are people who lead uprisings. When we research about Arab Spring, we precisely witness the same conclusion. People first started shouting and gathering in small towns with the help of activists and politicians then the uprising spread countrywide. However, there is more important facts to understand about opinion leader theory. Who were the first rebellions and how they affected the others for the evolution of Arab Spring. By regarding Kuran's study, it is possible to understand, if Tunisian government had reacted to kill people at the beginning, the uprising would not have emerged? As we know, many people died in the first days of the movement. Therefore, we may assume that some people show how to react against government with the help of social media or offline communication. Basically, as Kuran discussed, we need to find those few initiators that shaped the uprising. The study may help us to point out that there are leaders in Arab Spring.

According to Wolfsfeld et al., (2013) there are opposite correlations between social media usage and uprising. If people have high income and high interest to social media platforms, they live in better environments and have less interest in politics. However, people live in poorer regions have more interest in politics and less access to Internet. People who live in poorer area are more suppressed and controlled by the regimes. Beside that, people have Internet access found more opportunity to follow Arab Spring but according to the study, people in better environments use the social media and Internet for chatting with friends rather than following politics. (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013). Question is who awaked poorer people against governments? As it can be seen, we may need leaders to influence them to revolt. Researchers as a second step figured out the correlation between Facebook usage and participation of Arab Spring. The results were significant in many ways. Countries like Qatar, Dubai and Saudi Arabia use social media tools more than Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen and there were no rebellion movements against their government. Is the result of study enough to question the idea of "social media revolution"? They additionally suggest that, people could join Facebook just before the uprising. If this had been the case, they would explain how poorer and more suppressed people reacted against government. These more suppressed people joined Facebook after Arab Spring (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013).

Therefore, the question remained as who influenced the suppressed people against government? We also asked the question during interviews and we will profoundly discuss it in the next chapter. By regarding the question, we may think of movements in Tunisian history as we discussed before. There are many workers and politic unions, which joint social movements in Tunisia like NAHDA and UGTT. In order to understand how did Arab Spring begin, these unions were quite important and effective as well as social media platforms. According to Shadi Hamid (2011) who is director of research at the Brookings Doha Centre, social media helped people to tell their story however, people in social media are mostly seculars and liberals and majority of Egyptians are not in Facebook and Twitter. From this perspective, he claimed that social media is only one side of reality not whole. As we mentioned in the last paragraph similarly, he also points out that Muslim Brotherhood was not powerfully exist in social media platforms but they were the most powerful figure of the uprising in Egypt (The National, 2011)

Social media precisely played important role in Arab Spring. People communicated and interacted via Facebook and Twitter. By regarding from that point, we cannot separate use of social media from Arab Spring, but it does not mean it was a leaderless uprising. According to article of Twitter as "a journalistic substitute", even some studies called the uprising leaderless and spontaneous; there were still vertical relationship. There were central individuals to interact with activists and union groups to move in cooperation (Gerbaudo, 2012). We will try to figure out in the next chapter who were central individuals that shaped the uprising.

People who use social media platforms generally do not describe or call themselves as journalists. They act as normal citizen who follow uprisings. I also figured that out in interviews which will be analyzed in the next chapters. However, spreading news about ongoing uprising made by journalists. (Veenstra et al., 2015). The basic difference is, in traditional media, there are filters and editors before publishing news in media studios. First, an author or journalist create news, then editor once again control it and in a final step, we can see it on a journal or TV channel. Twitter and Facebook are different at that point. These social media platforms are less reliable because we do not know the source. At that point, we need opinion leaders or reliable people to believe. Otherwise, we must call the uprising as "conspiracy movement". We also get this point during interviews which will be also analyzed in the next chapter.

There are also some figures like Rashid Ghannouchi who has thousands of followers in Tunisia. They could also play significant role during uprisings rather than social media platforms. We also need to evaluate their power to understand the uprising in detail.

In the end of 1980's, The Islamic Movement of NAHDA members are exiled and imprisoned. We looked at their history in the previous sections. When Arab Spring occurred and Ben Ali escaped to Saudi Arabia, Rashid Ghannouchi returned Tunisia and legalizes his party NAHDA. In a way, this is a leadership. The movement of Ghannouchi gathered people in a "political" group. Thousands of people welcome him in airport. His speeches in airport were quite historical;

"Why do people want to compare me to (Osama) Bin Laden or Khomeini, when I am closer to Erdogan?" (AP, personal communication, January 31, 2011)

The speech caused many academic studies about role model of Turkey in Tunisia. However, Some of Tunisians found a leader to worship. The leader is much more significant than social media to control and rule the country for these people. He has millions of followers and people were angry and wanted to get revenge.

Rashid Ghannouchi is an important figure due to his struggles against regimes which was resulted exile of him in the history. As it is discussed before, his political party won the first democratic election in the country. Therefore, it is important what he has said before and during the uprising as public figure or opinion leader. However, should we evaluate his leadership over social media platforms or offline communities? As he has long history in Tunisia, his speeches on television or radio probably affected older people who are going to cafes and mosques. However due to limited sources and accessibility, we could not determine his effects on people during uprising with tangible data.

The resistance against the dictatorship in Tunisia started with the unemployment, and bad economical situation in local areas. This offline resistance existed even before social media tools. As it is mentioned before, there were many social movements in history of Tunisia. However, in 2011, online communities structured the movement from local to countrywide and showed people the reality of the country. Facebook groups shared videos and demonstrations and connected people

somehow. However, according to Mohan Dutta, online platforms are not a deterministic tool to get freedom. Social media platforms are just a tool to complete offline movements (Dutta, 2013). In other words, online networks provided connection between worker unions, teacher, students and local or rural communities. From that point of view, online networks were only tools for the social movement rather than cause of Arab Spring. We also asked questions during interviews and most of the interviewees gave the same answer as "social media is only a tool" we will profoundly focus on this point in the next chapters.

According to Uchenna Ekwo (2012) who studied for media convergence on Arab spring, even though social media platforms played a great role in mobilizing people, face to face communications and offline communities played an equally important role. Especially, cafes, mosques and Friday prays were significant communication channels to spread information around cities (Ekwo, 2012).

Ekwo also emphasized on power of satellite TV channels in Egypt. TV channels like Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya reflected people's anger to all over the world. As governments cannot control the satellite TV channels internationally, these two channels collected information from Twitter, Facebook and videos from YouTube and informed Egyptians countrywide. Hence, it can be claimed that as much as social media platforms, face to face communications and mainstream media forms shaped the uprising. In parallel with this approach, Executive Director of SAT-7 Kurt Johansen also suggests that, social media cannot play the biggest role during uprising due to limited usage of Internet (Bard, 2013). He said one of his interview;

"The revolution was driven mainly through satellite media. It started in Tunisia and in the beginning none of the bigger networks believed that there was something going on; then Al Jazeera started showing it, and then Al Arabia, and then CNN, and so on. Because so many stations started showing it, people started believing that this was the truth. So I think it's fair to say that Twitter and Facebook played a role but not alone – to mobilize the millions you needed you couldn't do that with Facebook alone, because too few people have Facebook and so it had to be done through the satellite television" (Kurt Johansen, personal communication, September 11, 2013).

We also focused on satellite TV usage in Tunisia and Egypt in previous sections.

There is also one survey made with 3469 Egyptian responders about relying on sources during Arab Spring. According to this survey 49% Egyptians relied on Satellite TV during uprising. The interesting result is, only 14% of respondents relied on Internet during uprising (Mansoor Moaddel and Arland Thornton, 2011).

Ekwo (2012) additionally claimed that economical conditions, unemployment and lack of freedom was reason of anger in cafes and mosques even they discussed these issues in silent and muted tone and with the support of Western countries and youths. Hence, mosques and cafes became the one of most important information network of uprising. He elaborated self immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi as word of mouth example. When Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire, the incident shared between people by word of mouth. In other words, "nobody said I would go and spread it via YouTube at the beginning. In the study of Uchenna Ekwo, one of respondent additionally said that people used public address system and call people out face-to-face and people who had not job, was very helpful in mobilizing people (Ekwo, 2012).

As we could not reach people offline in Tunisia and Egypt, In the next chapter, I will look more deeply the opinion leadership and its redefinition with social media platforms and try to evaluate who was opinion leader and how people were affected by them to revolt. I will also analyze studies and interviews altogether and try to figure out effects of face to face communications and social media during Arab Spring.

We need to figure out does social media redefine the opinion leader theory or not. Determining opinion leadership will shape the basic discussions of social media platforms during Arab spring. The theory and its definition should be expanded and considered more widely than 1950's even 1990's. In order to understand the new borders of the theory, Arab Spring must be inspected more deeply. In addition, knowing opinion leaders and influencers will help us to understand what was behind Arab Spring.

5.2 Re-definition of Opinion Leader Theory and Describing Opinion Leaders Online

As we had limitations to reach people offline, we tried to profoundly focus on new studies about online opinion leadership as it is easier to reach people online to

seek to get answer about evolution of Arab Spring. The purpose of finding these people were to understand their thoughts about importance of face to face communications, offline and online platforms during Arab Spring. However, we initially seek to identify who were opinion leaders online and what was criteria of being an opinion leader?

According to study of Lotan (2011), Mainstream media organizations, mainstream new media organizations, non-media organizations, mainstream media employees (journalists), bloggers, activists, digerati, political actors, celebrities, researchers and bots are the actors of information flow on Twitter. By regarding the result, it can be claimed that opinion leaders as our friends, families in the past evolved with social media as bloggers, activists or political actors. In order to come to this conclusion, he identified 20.848 Twitter accounts and analyzed their behavior online.
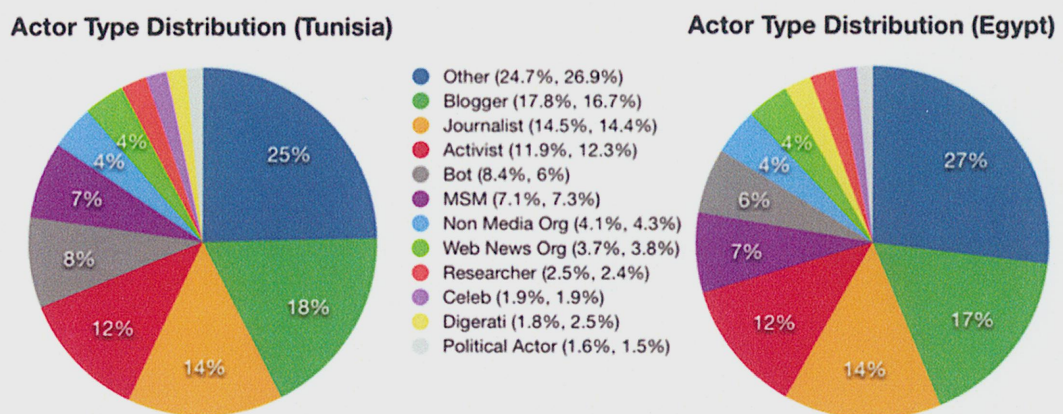

Figure 5.2 – Actor Type Distribution (Lotan, 2011)

Matthew Nisbet and John E. Kotcher (2009) studied on opinion leadership on climate change campaigns and tried to define an opinion leader. According to their study, opinion leadership is important to organize and shape thoughts of people about climate change. More importantly, they study to figure out who is opinion leader and categorized opinion leaders with 3 steps. According to their study; *"who one is"* (This includes certain personality characteristics or values held by the individual), secondly *"What one knows"* (This includes the degree of knowledge and expertise that one has about a particular issue or product.) *"Whom one knows"* (This includes the number of contacts one has as part of their circle of friends and acquaintances) (Matthew Nisbet and John E. Kotcher, 2009).

These three categories can be considered as the closest explaining to Katz and Lazarsfeld's because they have general opinion about the opinion leadership. They do not limit people as journalist or singers. Opinion leader can be anybody in different place with different incidents. Therefore, as it can be seen being an opinion leader is about being in right place in right time.

According to Dubois and Gaffney (2014) digital technologies play important roles for ordinary people. People find opportunities to involve political discussions and discussions of future of societies. In this article, they mention about two theories, which are related to the political influence of ordinary people. The first one is "opinion leadership" and the second one is *influential*. According to the study, an opinion leader forces to change position of people about political discussions. However, *an influential* try to explain his/her positions to his community widely (Dubois and Gaffney, 2014). Distinction of the two definitions are problematic because there are varieties of media platforms which has different dimensions than each other, such as blogs, social media platforms, newspapers, books, e-magazines, radio or television.

There is another issue about definition of opinion leader. How much does an opinion leader know more than us? According to Decatur study of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), 46% of people who are high information level are considered as opinion leader. The same study also indicates 35% of people who has medium information level are considered as opinion leader. These results are actually relating the knowledge and opinion leadership theory for 1950's. Additionally, in 1965, Troldahl and Van Dam defined knowledge as precondition of being opinion leader. Myers and Robertson in 1972, Schenk in 1985, related the knowledge and opinion leadership from political perfective.

Some studies like The Million Follower Fallacy (2010) tends to measure opinion leadership according to followers and following of people or how many kilometers the message has gone on social media platforms. Some academics like Domingos and Richardson (2001) claim that only data of followers and followings are not enough to call people opinion leaders. The significant point is, although these studies that give importance to number of followers, it can be questioned as there are many accounts that have thousands of followers and no impact on any other accounts or people. The accounts are even not active at all. At that point, these accounts or their owners are opinion leaders? Some studies like Who is Talking? (Li and Du, 2011) and The Multiple Facets of Influence (2014) try to minimize the questions and define

opinion leadership by using mixed methods. These studies firstly focus on social media, expertise of account owners and next step evaluating their followers, followings or interactions. This method is not only interested in the data they get, it is interested more on quality of the data, which refers to expertise of account owners. In this regard, an artist or journalist has more chance than an ordinary worker for being an opinion leader. We need to have title rather than followers and followings in order to influence people.

The study of Dubois and Gaffney (2014) claim that bloggers, journalists and political commentators into the lists of opinion leaders regardless they are online or offline. Regardless of their platform, they still influence their networks or neighborhoods. From the same perspective, we interviewed with 10 bloggers and activists about Arab Spring.

Trepte and Böcking (2009) studied the relation between knowledge and opinion leadership and came up with different results. According to their study, non-opinion leaders know as much as opinion leaders. The difference between opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders are their interests about a topic. Opinion leaders ask, question and try to improve his/her abilities for certain topics and called "expert". They also have aim to pass their knowledge to the others unlikely non-opinion leaders. A non-opinion leader might have important knowledge and expertise about a topic and choose to keep that knowledge for himself. In that manner, we might suggest that, an opinion leader might not be the only and the most expert person about a subject or incident

There is another question to define opinion leadership, which is, do opinion leaders use media platforms more than others? According to Decatur study (1955), opinion leaders use media and influenced by it more than others. Some studies also indicate that opinion leaders read more books, journals and magazines but do not watch TV or listen to radio. On the other hand, according to Hamilton's study (1994), they use media platforms as much as others but discuss about the content more than others. We may understand the distinguish media usage of others and opinion leaders in the pass but today this is more controversial. In 1950's media platforms were organized as one to many communication networks. Media platforms always had news and spread it to people (many). At the present, media platforms are more integrated. Briefly, there are many to many media platforms.

Feng Li and Timon C. Du (2011) emphases on opinion leaders and word of mouth communications. They describe opinion leaders as important individuals with higher social status and education level (Li and Du, 2011). According to the article, opinion leaders are early adoptees. In order to understand opinion leadership, the articles exemplify communication and relationship of opinion leaders with others. Their article tries to define opinion leadership over blogs and bloggers. However, in order to identify opinion leaders, they come up with four terms. Initially, they believe that content of blog is important. If the content is popular publicly, blogger messages can actually reach its target. Secondly, author properties are important. The reputation of blogger can be reason of effects of the message or text on others. Thirdly, reader properties; that is actually important factor. Opinion leaders should talk the same language with same vocabulary with their followers. If a successful doctor speaks up with the vocabulary of doctors, the public will avoid the information because of being unfamiliar to the vocabulary. Controversially, the most important one is communication. Blogger and readers need to communicate and understand each other's demands.

In the article of Youngsang Cho, Junseok Hwang, Daeho Lee (2012), opinion leaders are defined as people who are on social media platforms and have effective influence on others. According to the article, if we want to control and affect people, we need to start from opinion leaders on social media platforms. There is suitable example from Uganda. In Uganda, group of people wanted justice for war criminal Joseph Kony in 2012 and the group of people enlisted many celebrities to take role and affect people and spread the campaign over social media platforms. In a short period, the campaign got worldwide impact. (*International Law, Conventions and Justice*, 2011). In 2008, there were Opinion-Leader Campaigns on Climate Change. The purpose of campaign was giving information and affecting people to understand and make them aware of bad effects of climate change. The campaign succeeded by using celebrities (Nisbet and Kotcher, 2009). These examples may prove that opinion leader theory is still relevance at the present from point of social media. However, the border between being opinion leader and not remain problematic.

Meeyoung Cha, Hamed Haddadi, Fabricio Benevenuto, Krishna P. and Gummadi (2010) regard from different point of view and tries to understand how the information is flowing and how opinion leaders influence people on Twitter. Researchers used two million follow links and tried to identify opinion leadership on

Twitter. They researched many conflicting ideas and theories to understand how information approved and spread by others. According to old-fashion understanding opinion leaders lead trends behalf of other people because they are seen respected, educated and informed. Rogers also called these people connectors or hubs (Bruns et al., 2013). According to Domingos and Richardson (2001) friends and peers are more important than people who are called opinion leaders. This is actually another problem to define opinion leadership. Age can be factor of being opinion leader? We also need to discuss that in order to identify an opinion leader.

Researches tested the traditional understanding of opinion leadership and compared opinion leaders and ordinary people. They developed many simulations to clarify how the information flows between users. The results after the simulations were surprising. According to the result, opinion leaders do not designate trends and people are not interested in who starts the trends. The importance is how the public accepts topis and spread them (Watts and Dodds, 2007). Watts also claims people who are early adopters are actually accidentally opinion leaders.

Haddadi (2010) in his study emphasizes on opinion leadership and try to figure out who are influencers. They initially came up with three points to test opinion leadership on twitter. Firstly, Indegree influence which means, followers of twitter users. How many followers the accounts have, it can spread the news as much. Secondly, re-tweet influence, which means, one account name and its post spread among others. The final one is mention influence, which means, people wants others to involve. The article tries to criticize the theory over these three steps. Twitter API is used and 6.189.636 twitter account along 1,755,925,520 tweet monitories. Then the test resulted with expected outcome. According to the study, new sources were on the top of influencers list. This may bring up a new theory, which is one flow of communication that we will mention on following lines. The other influencers are politicians, athletes, musicians, writers, models, and businessmen.

According to Article of The Million Follower (Haddadi et al., 2010) follower number on Twitter is more crucial to distinguish opinion leaders and others. Re-tweets and mentions on Twitter is just about the content value. The article also demonstrates that influencers are not influencers accidently. They have a background as singer, politician or athletes and they use that background on social media platforms to influence others. The study particularly points out that how many followers we have, as much we are opinion leader. In this regard, how many followers we have is

sufficient to call someone opinion leader without any background? As we discussed before, we need to evaluate the capability of opinion leaders as educational, economical and political. It can be questioned that can 56 years old educated Arabesque singer influence 15 years old boy/girl about an incident? We also need to consider the study of Domingos and Richardson (2001) as age and peers have also importance to call someone opinion leader.

Na Yeon Lee (2014) regards opinion leader theory from different perspective and tries to evaluate the effects of "opinion leaders" on Twitter. However, he initially assumes that journalists are opinion leaders, which is not perfectly proved. Then, 163 Korean journalists were surveyed about their impact on Twitter. As predictably, these journalists shape news and trends on news site and social media platforms. However, the survey points that something hard to predict. According to the study, journalists are actually talk and write about things that the public wants to talk and discuss. The most importantly, if journalists have different point of view than the public, they remain silent and choose not to be part of discussion (Kim et al., 2015). The result makes the discussion of opinion leadership more complicated. As we regard above, many studies show many different perspectives and understandings of opinion leadership. If a journalist remains silent about a topic that public do not like or agreed, what is the importance of being opinion leader. At the point, how come we can say opinion leaders shaped Arab Spring or can we really claim the journalist are opinion leaders.

Limitations to reach offline people directed us to identify opinion leaders online similar to study of Katz (1955) and identify people who played great role during uprising in Tunisia and Egypt. After regarding to some studies about re-definition of opinion leadership, we interviewed with ten bloggers, activists and politicians. At that point, we seek to understand power of social media and its role and importance of face to face relationships. In this regard, in the next chapter, we will analyze interviews within few chapters with the previous studies that is discussed so far.

6. Analyzing Research Data

As we sought to identify who can be opinion leader as online, we reached out ten blogger/activist/politicians with snowball sampling and asked them ten questions about their profile, social media and face to face communication during uprisings. At this point, we seek to find out to what extent Katz's theory could be instrumental in analyzing the role of media in uprising.

6.1 Social Media as A Tool

As previously mentioned, according to Dutta (2013) online platforms cannot be deterministic to get freedom. Dutta also believes that social media platforms are only tools rather than reason of Arab Spring. At this point, it is asked in interviews; what is role of social media platforms and face to face communication during uprising. Tunisian blogger Wafa Ben Hassine (26) who is also columnist in Nawaat about human rights and freedom of speech and she was also editor in chief in online news site Tunisia Live. She has been describing herself an activist for 7 years. At this point her answers were important as she had experience on online news sites and on the ground for years. She participated social media campaigning before uprising. She was on Facebook pages and trying to show people the mafia system of Ben Ali. She also helped organizers on the ground between December 2010 and January 2011. She said in interview that she was in United State before uprising so that she could raise her voice without fear. She believes with parallel to Dutta, social media platforms only facilitate action on the ground. They are tools. She also believes that without social media uprising was possible. We will come this point in next section.

Another interviewee Activist Yosr Jouini (22) who has many article about youth and Internet in Tunisia. She is also member of Voice of Youth and working as software engineering. She has been activist in social content for 3 years. At that point, her answers were also deterministic to understand uprising. As similar to Ben Hassine, she also believes that if what was discussed online would not discuss face to face, it would not initiate real movements. She also suggests that social media is just a tool rather than a cause of uprising. She believes main information source was social media but protesting in the street was more than a Facebook post.

Egyptian activist and strategists Muhammed Elabban (29) who was Social Media Research Executive in Socialeyes and Social Media Analyst in IHS. He was also on ground during uprisings in Egypt. He has been activist for 6 years and currently working as Online Community Manager in Middle East Broadcasting Networks. He believes that social media were not cause of uprising itself, it was only tools as parallel with study of Dutta. He also believes that personal talks were important to reach people offline.

Tunisian politician Rafik Boufrikha (30) who has been activist since 2007 also answered my questions and made important statements. According to him, face to face communications provided more credibility during uprisings.

Mohamed Shalaby (20) as an activist also believes that face to face communication was more trustee during uprising. Important point is he played role in uprising as social media activist. Shalaby thinks that social media cannot be cause of uprising as its own. People need face to face interaction. This answer is also parallel with statement of Shadi Hamid (2011) as a director of research at the Brookings Doha Centre, suggests that social media was only one side of reality not whole because not all groups of the countries were online during uprising.

Politician Labidi Jezia (23) who participated debates and discussions during uprising about torture and aggression of police over protesters. He pinpoints in parallel with studies and other interviews, "Arab Spring has more than social media. It is about living under dictatorship long time. One people of one country rised and the other countries followed". Besides, he believes the power of social media.

As it is discussed last 5 years by many academics, is that really a Twitter revolution? After focusing on interviews and important figures, it may be debatable that it is more than social media revolution. Indeed, social media had an important role but only as tool. Moreover, after ten interviews, only one respondent claimed that without social media Arab Spring was impossible. We will come that point in the next chapters.

6.2 Accessibility of Internet and Offline People

Ten interviews highlight another significant fact about Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt. As we focused in chapter 2, when uprising started in Tunisian, 39.1% of

the population had access to internet (World Bank, 2012). The percentage was less than Internet usage of many countries which are ruled by dictators. Additionally, only 21% of people had Facebook account (*Arab Social Media Report*, 2011). Egypt had also approximately 500.000 Twitter users in 2012 and approximately 4 million Facebook users in 2011. (*Arab Social Media Report*, 2013). These numbers brought up new discussion as how did people know and revolt against regimes in Tunisia and Egypt? When I asked that question in interviews, Activist and blogger Yosr Jouini (22) said that "People meet, discuss and share stuff when taking the public transportations, in coffee shops or in family gathering. Most adults aged more than 40 didn't necessarily have Facebook accounts but they still knew about the protests from day one". Her answer was actually parallel with Ekwo (2012). The study of Ekwo (2012) as we focused earlier, even though social media was important, face to face communications were important equally. According to him, cafes, mosques and Friday prays were also significant for uprisings. Yosr also points out that, there were many demonstrations and uprising even before Internet age in Bourgiba regime as it is mentioned before.

Another interviewee Wajdi Hamoruni (29) who is member of Tunisian General Labour Union during uprisings said that "In the street we share the feeling, the moment and the emotion that we may not share it 100% on the internet".

In another interview, Tunisian Sabbah Yasmine (23) who described himself as ordinary citizen said that "word of mouth, men's cafes, shops, all places where there has been a contact between people from different levels". He also points out that big proportion of Tunisians living without Internet access.

Rafik Boufrikha (30) also said that people without internet learnt about situation from people around them. According to Mohamed Shalaby (20) "It is ironic to think that most of internet activist are just some virtual accounts. Shalaby also said "this might be the case, especially for a few of them with louder voice in different social media platforms, but there were too many people who were on the real ground, they were very powerful and they are very active on the street and for them social media was just a secondary medium for the Arab spring". In another interview, Tunisian politician Labidi Jezia 23 points out differently about how offline people participated uprising as "in the streets, mostly randomly hitting cops with rocks to be honest".

6.3 Arab Spring Without Internet

I asked in interviews to all interviewees as was the uprising possible without internet or social media? and 10 to 9 of interviewees believe that uprising in Egypt and Tunisia would be happening sooner or later without Internet or social media platforms. Rafik Boufrikha (30) said that "people were going to revolt sooner or later". Mohamed Shalaby also said that "it would of happen eventually, might be not now and somewhere in the future, but for sure it would happen".

Lina Ben Mhenni (32) as a one of most important figure during uprising also respond my questions. She was chosen among World's 100 Most Powerful Arabs and among the 50 powerful women by Saidaty in 2014. She is currently working as producer and journalist in one of the biggest Tunisian TV channel Nessma TV. She was also freelancer journalist during Arab Spring. She gave speeches to many mainstream news channel internationally during uprisings. She also jailed and escaped from the country once. At that point, her answers were important. One of her answers, she said about Arab Spring without Internet "yes I think that is the case but it would not have been so quick. The situation became unbearable, people suffered for years and the result of repression is always a popular explosion". She also said that people without Internet, knew about uprising by word of mouth.

There was only one interviewee from Egypt believes that It was impossible without social media. Muhammed Elabban (29) said that "I think no, because there wouldn't be a sphere that allow people to communicate and start actions against regime. Maybe there would be, but not big as what happened in 2011".

The main importance of the interviews, as we identified the opinion leaders of online communities as they have more awareness of societies as being activist, blogger and politicians, they still believe the power of offline communities and regard them as a basic of Arab Spring. As it is mentioned earlier, even though, interviewees had to be chosen online due to limitations, they still believe the power of offline communities. Moreover, they more importantly suggest that without social media the uprising would be happening eventually. They surely believe the power of social media as a tool but the basic and real uprising occurred with face to face communications on the ground beside the importance of social media platforms.

7. Conclusion

In this research, I tried to highlight limited effects of social media and relevance of theory of opinion leadership (Katz, 1955). Initially, I researched media overviews of two countries Egypt and Tunisia as they have many similarities. I aimed to highlight the low usage of Internet and I figured out Tunisia and Egypt has low internet usage. This was important to study opinion leader theory (Katz, 1955). I also researched about the usage of social media platforms during uprisings.

History of Tunisia was also essential to conclude this research as they have several attempts of social movements before Arab Spring. However, in this research, I did not aim to compare Tunisian and Egypt. As mentioned before, the two countries have similar media overview but the history is completely different issue. For that reason, I mostly tried to focus on specific incidents of these countries more than comparing each situation. However, the similarity of their media overviews were significant and one of the reason of focusing on Tunisia and Egypt rather than focusing on other Middle East and North African countries.

There were many important studies that shaped the research. One of them was about social media participation during uprisings. In order to understand social media participation during Arab Spring, five scholars studied about usage of social media platforms by using link shortening method bit.ly. They found out that 83% of the links during Arab Spring clicked by out of region. The percentage was 75% in Egypt. (Aday, 2012). This was also important as we try to understand the limited media effects.

As parallel to this research, Kavanaugh (2012) researched about how people participate uprisings in Egypt is significant. He asked youth about how they communicate during uprisings and with who? Two-thirds of respondents said that their source of information was their families and friends (Kavanaugh et al. 2012). This was significant to understand the theory of opinion leader (Katz, 1955). According to the same research, 92.6% of respondents used cell phone during uprising. 34.7% of respondents also said that they were informed by people on streets and cafes (Kavanaugh et al. 2012). Significant point is the percentage of Internet usage in Egypt was 25.6% in 2011 as close to research of Kavanaugh about face to face communication. This might open up new discussions to evaluate effects of face to face

relationships during uprisings rather than claiming social media was key point of Arab Spring.

In the article of Politics Comes First (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013) there is one important point which is if people have better income and life standards, they are less likely to talk about political discussions. The same article also mentions it as an example, Qatar, Dubai, Saudi Arabia have more social media users and participators as percentage but why these countries did not rebel against their governments? (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013). This statement was also significant to re-evaluate the power of social media and face to face communications on the ground.

As mentioned previously, limitations to reach people in cafes, streets and mosques due to language and financial barriers, I asked 10 people as online about face to face communications and role of social media platforms in uprisings. These ten people was not my first target to interview but limitations to reach out offline people, conducted me to reach out 10 people online. Before I reached out 10 people, I researched about who can be considered as opinion leader online. That was also important to figure out who to ask my questions. It took almost three months to reach out these people online although I sent questions to them over and over again. Nonetheless these interviews were significant and also essential to clarify my point and match with research that have done in this study. I asked 10 questions and all participators accepted the power of social media which is I do not disagree. However, they also believe the power of face to face communication as mentioned in previous chapters. Their responses and what I have tried to say in this study fit each other and as expected before the research.

The research has shown that even thought social media platforms are important and deserve to be analyzed, face to face relationships and word of mouth still remain important and powerful factor to harp on. At that point, I tried to highlight limited effects of social media and relevance of theory of opinion leader (Katz, 1955) and at some point, I come to this conclusion with interviews and recent studies about power of social media.

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