COMMUNICATION & SOCIETY

Maha Abdulmajeed
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7390-4674
m.attia@ajman.ac.ae
Ajman University

Rasha El-Ibiary
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9902-0316
rousha@aucegypt.edu
Future University, Egypt

How to cite this article:
Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R. (2020). Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts. *Communication & Society, 33*(2), 295-311.

Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts

Abstract

The advantages of social media platforms as interactive information sources raise the importance of examining how they are used by political digital opinion leaders to influence public perceptions. Twitter, especially, played a major role in Egypt's January 25 revolution facilitating news dissemination, public discussions and debates. Analyzing the communicative strategies of two Egyptian political influencers –Ammar Ali Hassan and Ezzedine Fishere– ten years after Egypt's political change, and the role they play in public discourse through their Twitter accounts, this research offers an overview of the current role played by Egyptian digital political influencers in influencing public opinion. Focusing on the content and discourse of their tweets for two months, October and November 2019, the digital political influencers were selected based on the number of followers divided by the amount of interactivity on their tweets, such as retweets and favorites. The unit of analysis is the tweet that received the largest amount of interactivity. Results showed that both influencers had a *unidirectional* opinion strategy. While Hassan's tweets, @ammaralihassan, seemed purposeless, not yielding any clear and valuable content to the reader, Fishere, @FishereEzzedine, was more outspoken and clearer in his communicative strategy, using evidence in defending human rights in Egypt and the Arab World. The analysis indicated more fact-based tweets by Fishere, who seems to play a more significant role in his communication network, despite minimal interaction.

Keywords
Digital Political Influencers, Twitter, Communicative Strategies, Egypt, Ammar Ali Hassan, Ezzeldine Fishere.

1. Introduction

While originally used as platforms for facilitating relationships and self-representation, Social Media Networks (SNS) are also news sources and political expression and participation forums (Winter & Neubaum, 2016). Dependence on SNS has taken precedence over other media due to their "heightened accessibility and usability," lending individuals greater "rewarding interactions" (Hellweg, 2011; Baran & Davis, 2006).

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

The advantages of social media platforms as interactive information sources raise the importance of examining how they are used by political digital opinion leaders to influence public perceptions. Egyptians' preferences in using social media in terms of the most widely used platforms have changed during recent years (Fahmy & Abdulmajeed, 2017). Despite the role of social media in influencing public opinion during the January 2011 revolution, the popularity of and dependence on digital opinion leaders have changed over time due to shifting political conditions.

Analyzing the communicative strategies of two Egyptian political influencers –Ammar Ali Hassan and Ezzedine Fishere– and the role they play in public discourse through their Twitter accounts, this research offers an overview of the current role played by Egyptian "digital" political influencers in influencing public opinion. This analysis focuses on the content and discourse of their tweets for two months. Digital political influencers were selected based on the number of followers divided by the amount of interactivity on their tweets, such as retweets and favorites. The unit of analysis is the tweet that received the largest amount of interactivity.

1.1. *Public Opinion and Egypt's Digital Blogosphere*

Exploring the role of political j-blogs in disseminating news, Fahmy (2014) proved that the Egyptian blogosphere played a vital role in public discussion and awareness of the news 'cut' from mainstream media. In another study, Fahmy (2012) demonstrated an increasing use of evidence by Egyptian influencers during Egypt's revolution to support the credibility of information they tweeted, such as news, pictures, and videos. Influencers tweeted in English as well as Arabic to convey their messages to non-Arabic speaking users. Abdulmajeed (2008) analyzed the content of renowned blogs to describe how Egyptian influencers conveyed public affairs issues to the public.

Studies about social media usage in the Arab world examined the role of political blogging in sharing news and enhancing public discussions and its impact on public awareness (Fahmy, 2012, 2013; Samir, 2015). Other studies analyzed social media users' evaluation of news credibility received from SNS, news sources' preferences and the factors affecting news consumption behaviors (Abdulmajeed, 2017).

1.2. *How Do Digital Influencers Affect Public Opinion?*

Interactive communication through social media is arguably an extension to traditional face-to-face communication, since it enables digital influencers to access wider audiences, as they can communicate with their followers regardless of distance. Studying interactive social media communication is crucial as some digital influencers face impediments to their ability to reach the public.

Lazarsfeld (1948) –who presented the two-step-flow model– focused on the impact of communication flow on social mobilization to examine the role of face-to-face communication in shifting political attitudes. He coined the term 'opinion leaders' (OLs) to show how mainstream media can indirectly influence the public (Yan Su, 2019). Lazarsfeld found that media messages were mediated by OLs who "diffused and interpreted messages to their personal networks," highlighting the role of "individuals and group interaction as an essential component in shaping perceptions and communication flows," says Karlsen (2015).

Bennett and Manheim (2006) and Karlsen (2015) argue for a return to a one-step flow of communication in the age of social media due to direct interaction (Karlsen, 2015). Although the role of interpersonal communication in disseminating information and influencing public opinion is key to the Two-step flow model, SNS has reproduced interpersonal communication on the web, as interactive communication through social media. While this may be an extension to traditional face-to-face communication, it enables people to get information directly from various sources. The personal influence of digital opinion leaders thus plays a

significant role in both: (1) news diffusion, and (2) discussing and shaping public opinions (Winter & Neubaum, 2016).

According to Shirky (2008, cited in Hellweg, 2011), the Internet has been a campaign tactic since 2004, with Facebook, Twitter and blogs serving as crucial mobilization tools. In SNS, where the "receiver cares about the sender" (p. 24), and tends to seek out information about the sender, the likelihood for activism is high. SNS enables politicians to earn support, encourage participation and open the way for a continuous dialogue. Most importantly, it allows "the highly motivated people to create a context... in which the barely motivated people can be effective without having to become activists themselves" (Shirky, 2008, cited in Hellweg 2011, p. 24), boosting the web of influence through social media, which in turn permits "a new arena of grassroots politics" (Axford & Huggins, 2001, cited in Hellweg, 2011, p. 24).

Exploring the characteristics and motives of online opinion leaders, Winter and Neubaum (2016) related personality traits to the use of SNS for influencing others' attitudes on political topics, using status updates and private messages, and the motives driving them to disseminate information and opinions. They identified three main traits of OLs: (1) "role in communicative network," (2) "perceptions of being persuasive" which is "the core of being an influential," and (3) "personality strength" (p. 3).

Winter and Neubaum (2016) showed that political interest and personality strength are significant predictors of perceived opinion leadership. Accordingly, besides the motive for information dissemination and persuasion as traditionally conceptualized (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), self-presentation motives are significant in predicting digital influencers, as they have crucial implications for the dynamics of public debates in social media. This is also consistent with Winter and Neubaum's (2016) findings on news sharing, with the goals of feeling important or gaining higher status among a circle of friends.

Kedzie (1997) differentiated between *uni-directional* and *multi-directional* communication styles. While *uni-directional* involves opinion expression with little or no interaction with others, *multi-directional* reflects a relatively open flow of discussion, encouraging the engagement of different opinions. Likewise, Nisbet and Kotcher (2009, p. 23) identified the dimensions of traits and behaviors of opinion leaders. According to Katz (1957), these include, "*Who one is,*" their personality characteristics or values; "*What one knows,*" the degree of knowledge and expertise they have about a particular issue or product and "*Whom one knows,*" the contacts they have as part of their circle of friends and acquaintances.

Using a combination of these traits and behaviors, opinion leaders not only draw others' attention to an issue or behavior but also, perhaps most importantly, signal how others should in turn respond or act (Weimann, cited in Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). This influence may occur by giving advice and recommendations, serving as a role model, using persuasion, or by contagion, whereby ideas or behaviors are spread with the initiator and the recipient unaware of any intentional attempt at influence.

Katz and Lazarsfeld indicate that "offline" opinion leaders were characterized as "people with a large circle of contacts and social skills who frequently use mass media," (Winter & Neubaum, 2016, p. 2). The emergence of SNS, where users can choose from a tremendous range of information sources and personalize them, raises questions about the validity of the two-step-flow model. Users' engagement experience in discussions about public affairs reproduces the interpersonal relations in the online environment and emphasizes the importance of personal influence in news diffusion and shaping public opinion.

In the same vein, Yan Su (2019) examined whether and how opinion leaders on Weibo –a micro-blogging platform in China– concluded that it is hard to get inferences regarding the role of OLs in influencing public opinion, without measuring shifts over time. Yan Su's study revealed that the effect of Weibo's opinion leaders is minimal, since they are relatively effective at reinforcing subjective opinions and attitudes, but "have no effect changing the community's objective assessment of who is at fault" (p. 17).

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

Bulovsky (2019) analyzed how authoritarian leaders use social media platforms to enhance their interests and maintain regime stability. Results showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between a country's democracy level and its leader's (1) number of tweets per day and (2) number of tweets that are replies to other users. Other qualitative case studies revealed the existence of an authoritarian preference for *uni-directional* communication and a democratic preference for *multi-directional* communication in social media, according to the country's state of democracy. Results proved authoritarian leaders prefer to apply *uni-directional* communication, which Bulovsky (2019) describes as "networked authoritarianism."

Conceptualizing information and communication technologies (ICTs') influence on authoritarian regimes, Bulovsky (2019) identifies two trends: "cyber-optimists" and "cyber-realists." While cyber-optimists believe ICTs empower citizens and can challenge authoritarian leaders, cyber-realists believe authoritarian leaders may block ICTs or use them themselves to limit their potential benefits.

While new media technology intensifies fragmentation and isolation, says Karlsen (2015), innate aspects of new technology –the network structure– of SNSs arguably "connects people to a greater extent than isolates them." The communication flow in overlapping networks of individuals, through Facebook and Twitter, depends on the individuals passing on information. Therefore, OLs –conceptualized as nodes connecting the media to interpersonal networks– are equally crucial to the flow of communication on SNSs. "OLs are ingrained as nodes in the very structure that defines the medium," says Karlsen (2015).

According to Bobkowski (2015), OLs are distinguished through the information and social attributes they use on social media. Both contribute to more information sharing in various contexts. Gatekeeping is a key function for OLs, as they "gather news from outside sources, filter what they deem to be worth sharing, and pass this information on to their networks," (Bobkowski, 2015, p. 324). OLs, Bobkowski adds, "use more informational media than *nonleaders*, and… are more involved in news and more informed about news than *nonleaders*."

1.3. *Why is Social Media an Ideal Platform for Influencing Others?*

According to Winter and Neubaum (2016), social media gives less talkative people an opportunity to express their opinions, and have the chance to become OLs, as "being talkative in offline realms is not a prerequisite for becoming an online influential" (p. 9). Social media users are able to reach public updates, interact and recontextualize news, add comments, recommendations, sources and news verification in some cases (Abdulmajeed, 2017), increasing news relevance to their social networks (Winter & Neubaum, 2016; Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2015).

The various communication types, eased by social media, make it possible to combine interpersonal and public web-based communication. The conversational mode of interactivity through social media discussions (Qiao, 2019), and having more time to compose messages on social media compared to face-to-face communication, makes it an ideal platform to influence information dissemination and opinions (Winter & Neubaum, 2016). This makes social media more suitable for digital influencers to affect public opinion.

Studies on the formation of online public opinion and the *growth law* propose three steps in influencing online public opinion: "formation, peak, and recession." *Formation* happens as a controversial issue is raised by digital influencers, *Peak* is when the public have continuum discussion about an issue and start opinion convergence, then *Recession* begins when the government intervenes (Yan Su, 2019; Jing, 2013; Liu, Peng & Che, 2012). Thus, followers' interactivity with digital influencers is an essential factor in developing a case for public opinion formation. Zhang *et al.* (2014) referred to the possibility of having multiple peaks in online public discourse about a topic, as followers contribute to a second peak, while digital influencers are the ones who shaped public opinion during the first peak.

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

Interactivity between opinion leaders and their followers is a vital factor in describing how the influence of opinion leaders occurs. According to Ellison *et al.* (2011), *social capital* –defined by Bourdieu (1986)– as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources... linked to possession of a durable network of... institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248, cited in Ellison *et al.,* 2011). Ellison (2011) and Putnam (2000) outlined two forms of social capital: *bonding* and *bridging*. While *bonding* social capital includes benefiting from close personal relationships, such as seeking emotional support, *bridging* social capital benefits from casual acquaintances and connections, leading to tangible outcomes such as gaining new information from distant connections. Granovetter's (1973) study into "the strength of weak ties" confirms that weak ties in a social network were more likely to have information not possessed by individuals nor by their strong ties (Ellison *et al.,* 2011).

Research showed contrasting results on the relationship between the number of friends and online opinion leadership. Winter and Neubaum (2016) pointed out that a large network is helpful for spreading information and opinions, while another study by Jang *et al.* (2014) found a negative relation between the number of friends and the amount of political talk on controversial issues, as "they may hesitate to express their honest views on sensitive issues" (p. 274). Even if the number of followers is not an indication of opinion leadership, it is still a signal that influencers' active posting behavior has grabbed many friends and followers.

2. Methodology

Using a mixed methods approach, this research applies both content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to two Egyptian political influencers' accounts on Twitter during October and November 2019.

The two accounts, Ammar Ali Hassan and Ezzedine Fishere, were selected based on three variables: the number of tweets, the percentage of total interactions, and the number of followers. We prioritized the second variable as interactivity reflects potential influence and can indicate involvement in the communication process.

In our content analysis sample, we systematically analyzed all tweets from both accounts during October and November 2019. CDA was used to analyze tweets with the highest interaction from both accounts, providing descriptive/analytical answers to bolster the results.

The content analysis units are all tweets posted on the selected accounts during the two months and represented a total of 1124 tweets (231 for @FishereEzzedine and 893 for @ammaralihassan). Fishere's tweets totaled 3.522K, while Hassan's tweets reached 10.3K, at the time of this analysis.

We developed a data analysis tool representing the operational definition of communicative strategies –the political influencer's strategies to influence his followers– and a codebook for content analysis and CDA. To examine the communicative strategies of both influencers, we coded all tweets posted for two months, then we coded the following main (A) and subcategories (B):

A. *Tweet forms of presentation*, including the Language of the tweet (English or Arabic, formal or informal); Tweet format (only text, or text with multimedia, etc.); Connectedness in the tweets (associated with links or no).

B. *Tweet content structure*: how the influencers conveyed their opinions to their followers. This category included: *originality* (whether the tweet is written by the influencer or retweeted from other sources), *content type* (news, opinion, merged.); *attitude* (the influencer's attitude explicitly shown in the tweet; agree, disagree, or neutral); *sources of information* (personal experiences, mainstream local/international media, or social media (public accounts, governmental sources accounts); and the nature of *interactivity* with tweets.

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

3. Results

3.1. *Critical Discourse Analysis*

Analyzing OLs' tweets to determine the main feature of their communicative stratagems through the tweets' structure entailed using CDA. According to Foucault, CDA refers to groups of statements structuring the way a thing is thought, and the way we act based on that thinking (Rose, 2007). CDA, thus, is the most suitable method to investigate a tweet's meaning, analyze OLs' communicative strategy, and evaluate how users react to it.

CDA predominantly relies on three Foucauldian terms of discourse: (1) *intertextuality,* the way meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts; (2) *discursive formation*, the way meanings are connected in a particular discourse or the relations between parts of a discourse; (3) *regime of truth*, whereby photographs are proof of 'What was really there,' and claim absolute *truth* and reflect the *power/knowledge* of the tweet. Discourse is *powerful* when it is *productive* –producing discussion and debate (Rose 2007).

Analyzing the communicative strategies of both accounts, CDA provides a descriptive account of (1) the tweets' information sources, (2) the themes they address, (3) the attitude reflected in opinion tweets (positive, negative, or unclear), (4) the type and (5) source of evidence supporting opinion tweets, (6) the adjectives of players in the tweets, and (7) the interactivity between the influencer and followers, giving examples of those elements.

Following is a detailed in-depth CDA of tweets with the most interactivity selected for each account. CDA primarily investigates the *intertextuality* of those tweets, their *discursive formation*, and the *regimes of truth* brought to them.

3.1.1. Ammar Ali Hassan's Account

His name and biography written in Arabic, Hassan's account, @ammaralihassan, indicates his tweets are primarily directed to the Arabic speaking user. In his biography, Hassan described himself as "Novelist and thinker" listing his publications, awards and education.

Based in Cairo, Hassan joined Twitter in April 2011. He follows 561 people and has 109.6K followers; he is a columnist in *Almasry Alyoum* newspaper in Egypt, and a public figure. All Hassan's tweets before 9 October 2019 have been deleted.

As he follows many fewer people than he has followers, a detailed look at their accounts indicates they are public figures/entities with large followings –Egyptian and Arab poets, novelists, publishing houses, politicians, activists, chief-editors, international media, human rights organizations, and renowned Egyptian and Arab media figures.

The information sources in Hassan's tweets, consist of (1) his opinion tweets, (2) retweets from other people's accounts, either with an associated comment or not, and (3) tweets with media links, such as his weekly column from *Almasry Alyoum*.

The themes addressed in his tweets include political commentary, literary posts indirectly addressing a political issue, praising a renowned personality, retweets of political news from @rtnews, *Alsharq Alawsat*, @skynewsarabia, opinion tweets about issues like hunger, criticizing Black Friday sales, retweeting news and praising a news report on Egypt's success in publishing research on using gold to fight cancer, and links to his *Almasry Alyoum* column.

Hassan's attitude in his opinion tweets indicates that he avoids criticizing the current regime, yet he is not supportive of it either, as conveyed in his articles. He uses hidden critique in his literary tweets reflecting a mild opinion in addressing different topics. He praises positive news, locally or internationally, whilst his critical voice is very subtle.

As for the type and source of evidence supporting his opinion tweets, most of his tweets include literary statements, not showing a clear opinion. Tweets are usually linked with news from *Alshark Alawsat*, or *RTArabic* or retweets from famous personalities, commenting on

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

current events, accidents that involve death, regional events, or sharing links to his own article in *Almasry Alyoum* newspaper –usually not revealing a clear opinion. Evidently, Hassan is careful and conservative in expressing his opinion, especially about Egypt. He is not overtly pro-government, yet it is worth noting he lives in Egypt at a critical time for opinion expression.

The attributes of players in Hassan's tweets depends on the player. A tweet in memory of writer Mahmoud El Saadany included a long comment remembering his writings and personal qualities. Meanwhile, a news report about the charges against Netanyahu carries negative attributes. Overall, tweets related to people reflect his opinion of them, positively or negatively. Quite remarkably, Hassan does not interact at all with followers' comments, even in tweets with the highest number of comments.

Discursive Analysis of Selected Tweets of Hassan

Tweets in this section were selected based on the highest amount of *favorite* in the sample, often including the highest number of *comments* too. The tweets are analyzed according to their *intertextuality*, *discursive formation*, and the *regime of truth,* which consists of the *power/knowledge* of each tweet. *Power* is *productive* because it creates resistance, produces discussion and debate, and yields *interactivity*. This is assessed according to the information included in each tweet and the comments on it.

The first tweet analyzed had the highest amount of *favorite* among all tweets in the selected sample, 2.144K times, 392 comments and 424 retweets. In the tweet, dated 12 October 2019, originally in Arabic, Hassan wrote:

> Those who attacked Egypt harshly for securing its western borders, not by attacking Libya, but in cooperation with an internal party, even if they refute it, and we had our reservations about him. Those are now finding excuses for Erdogan to invade Syria, Turkey has the right to protect its borders. Every day we find out more of those who flout others for the sake of their own interests.

The tweet's *intertextuality* reflects that he is criticizing people with double standards, who attacked Egypt's collaborating with allies in Libya, despite his [Hassan's] reservations about this, while they are now supporting Erdoghan's military attack on Syria. The tweet text is based on a factual incident, but it did not include a link to the news. The *discursive formation* of the tweet is clear, including his opinion on Egypt's cooperation with Libya, his justification, and his critique of those who have double standards. However, it is unclear who he is criticizing and there is no evidence to empower his argument, which weakens the tweet's *regime of truth*.

The *power* of the tweet, as reflected in the *interactivity* or the *productivity* of the discourse through the users' comments, is evident in the 392 comments it produced –the largest number of comments in all his tweets. Yet Hassan did not reply to comments, weakening the tweet's *power/knowledge* and its *regime of truth*. The comments included people from various political orientations in Egypt; while many insults him, a few are praising his opinion. A detailed look at their accounts shows they include both regime supporters and opponents. Some criticized his unclear political position, saying he deleted his old tweets in fear of being imprisoned.

Hassan's second most favorited tweet –with 1.714K favorites, 349 retweets and 121 comments– is dated 18 October 2019. It is an opinion tweet originally in Arabic translated as follows:

> Most of those who ruled Arab countries after the occupation did what is more severe and vicious, stealing its goods, enslaving its people, and getting those countries out of history. And when people revolted asking to get back their countries they were imprisoned, killed, accused of treason and obliged to accept what they have as a [national] duty.

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

The *intertextuality* of the tweet shows he is criticizing the current status of Arab regimes as well as what has been happening since their independence. The meaning of the tweet reflects the current situation of Arab regimes. The *discursive formation* of the tweet is clearly connecting the attributes of the occupation to the attributes of Arab states. The *regimes of truth* are not clear, as there is no link to evidence.

The *interactivity* or *productivity* of the tweet, which got 121 comments, is nonexistent, since Hassan did not reply to comments, which weakens the tweet's *power/knowledge* and thus, its *regime of truth*. Most comments are insulting him, making fun of him, and only a few praises his ideas. The people commenting include all political persuasions.

Hassan's third favorited tweet with,1.6K favorites, 193 retweets and 99 comments, is dated 15 October 2019. The Arabic tweet is translated into English as follows:

> If artist Mohamed Ramadan does not know the repercussions of what he did inside the civil plane cabin carrying passengers because he did not continue his education, doesn't the pilot know?

> Isn't the pilot ignorant and careless to announce that this arrogant actor is the one conducting the plane in the air?

> Poor Egypt, what prices are paid because of such people?

The *intertexuality* of the tweet shows the influencer is criticizing a specific incident involving the singer Mohamed Ramadan, featured in the news piloting a plane from the flight deck. Hassan criticizes both the actor and the pilot who allowed him to fly the plane. He relates this to the political situation in Egypt. The tweet's *discursive formation*, refers to Egypt's paying the price for such actions, hinting at the dangers it might cause. There are no *regimes of truth* included, no evidence is provided. This incident had provoked wide criticism on social media.

Although the *productivity* of the tweet reached 99 comments, there was no *interactivity* as Hassan did not reply to comments, which weakens the tweet's *power/knowledge* and its *regimes of truth*. Most comments are criticizing Ramadan, yet some criticize Hassan and insult him too.

Overall, the similarities between the three tweets are evident in the *intertextuality*, involving mostly hidden/unclear criticism of the regime. The *discursive formation* of tweets involves reference to real occurrences, yet without evidence, which weakens their *regimes of truth*. The lack of *interactivity* and *productivity* of each tweet, despite the large number of comments, also weakens their *power/knowledge* and thus their *regimes of truth*.

3.1.2. Ezzedine Fishere's Account

Ezzedine Fishere is also a political science professor, novelist, and a public figure. His fame started after he published the novel *Bab Elkhoroug* or *Exit Door* in 2011. His name on Twitter, @FishereEzzedine, appears in both Arabic and English, to attract both Arabic and English-speaking users. Fishere left Egypt for the US in 2016, and his Twitter biography reads, "Novelist, Senior Lecturer at Dartmouth College and a *Washington Post* Global Opinions columnist," a clear and concise description of his attributes. Fishere follows 115 accounts on Twitter, and has 25.1K followers, as he joined Twitter in January 2016.

Just like Hassan, Fishere's followers outnumber those he follows. A close look at the 155 persons he follows shows that he is primarily following human rights defenders: Egyptian, Arab and American political activists; women's rights defenders; political science professors in Egypt and the US; public American personalities; American media professionals; media in the US, Israel and only *Mada Masr* from Egypt; Egyptian lawyers; and human rights organizations.

A detailed look at Fishere's account shows that he is more outspoken in criticizing the regime in Egypt, not only through his tweets, but also his opinion articles published in both Arabic and English in the *Washington Post*, where he is now the second *Jamal Khashoggi Fellow*,

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

and a *Global Columnist*. In the pinned post, he put a link to his blog for an online Arabic e-book entitled *In the Eyes of the Storm*, comprising all the articles he published in *Al Tahrir* newspaper since 2011.

Fishere's information sources include his profile in *Valley News* (Vnews.com), news about Egypt and the Arab World from international media and accounts of human rights organizations and think tanks, such as BBC Arabic, *LeMonde*, Bloomberg, The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Amnesty International, *France24*, *Almasry Alyoum*, NBCNews, *DW, Mada Masr* and the *Washington Post*. He also retweets from accounts of American journalists, politicians, political scientists and people with large followings, carrying the blue twitter logo, such as Amy W. Hawthrone, Sarah Margon, Robert Reich, and John Hudson.

The themes addressed in Fishere's tweets are predominantly about Egypt's human rights situation, and the people detained without charges. Most remarkable are a series of articles he published in the *Washington Post*, in both Arabic and English, about the raid against the *Mada Masr* team, sharing a video of Pompeo calling on the Egyptian Government to respect human rights and freedoms, particularly freedom of the press, and referring to the incident. Fishere also tweets about the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and the news about Israel's expelling of Human Rights Watch researcher, Omar Shaker, and the news criticizing Israel for such an act.

Fishere's attitude in his opinion tweets, predominantly supported with a news link, are clear and positive. A detailed look at this account shows he is a robust human rights defender, using his own articles in the *Washington Post*, and sharing all the news and tweets related to the human rights situation in Egypt, primarily, and elsewhere, including Israel, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. In one tweet, he criticizes international law saying, "How nice of international law to be so malleable!" with a news report from the BBC, dated Nov. 18., reading, "Jewish settlements are no longer illegal." He also shares tweets of journalist Khaled El Balshy, on the detained lawyers, journalists, activists and Human Rights defenders in Egypt. He criticizes Egypt's control of the media, and inflating hate, commenting on and translating from Arabic a headline, from @Youm7 on 17 November, with a link to the Arabic story: "Egyptian Security controlled media at its finest: 'The [Muslim] Brothers, the Jews and the Shia'a: The triangle of evil in the world'."

The types and sources of evidence supporting his opinion tweets are predominantly based on news, providing links to the news. The news is sourced from either trusted news reports or famous people with large followings. There are no clear players' attributes, since his tweets are more subject oriented. There is also no interactivity with the followers, since he does not reply to followers' comments, with a few exceptions.

Discursive Analysis of Selected Tweets of Fishere

Tweets in this section were selected based on the higher amount of *favorite* in the sample, as well as the biggest number of comments. They are analyzed consulting their *intertextuality*, *discursive formation* and *regimes of truth*, which incorporates their *knowledge/power,* as reflected in their *productivity* or *interactivity*, since they provoked the largest number of comments, compared to other tweets. The first tweet, dated on 10 November 2019, received 1257 favorites, 256 retweets and 105 comments. It is an opinion tweet, in Arabic and can be translated into English, as follows:

> I was informed that a government media worker appealed to me to return to writing in Egypt's *Al–Ahram* newspaper, and I am ready with my first article about the arrest of Ziyad Al–Alimi and Hussam Moones, and how it constitutes a violation of the law and constitution in many ways and the beginning of the fall of the regime as a whole. Is *Al–Ahram* newspaper ready for publication?

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

The *intertextuality* of the tweet shows Fishere is making fun of *Al Ahram* newspaper's quest for him to publish in Egypt, proposing to write his first article about a human rights lawyer (Ziyad Al-Alimi) and a renowned journalist (Hussam Moones), both detained without charges, and how their detention undermines the law and the constitution, and threatens the existence of the regime. He knows that his proposal is unrealistic, not only because *Al Ahram* is the official state newspaper in Egypt, but also because of the current status of free media expression in Egypt.

The *discursive formation* of the tweet shows that Fishere –who predominantly writes in English– writes this tweet specifically in Arabic to address *Al Ahram,* as well as Arabic speaking Egyptian readers, to seize the opportunity and mention those two renowned people who played significant roles in public life since January 2011, and to remind readers of the many detainees held without charge in Egypt. Fishere warns that this undermines the law, the constitution and the whole regime, probably to remind people of the entities they formerly sought to reform. He wonders, then, "Is *Al Ahram* ready to publish this?" Maybe the *intertextuality* of the question is whether they are willing, not ready. The question probably addresses the editors at *Al Ahram* newspaper, who may reconsider their gatekeeping principles.

The *regime of truth* is clear. Fishere speaks about a *truth*, the status of detainees in Egypt, the law and constitution. He does not provide evidence since those facts are regularly documented in international media coverage and human rights organizations' reports. The *power* of the tweet, its *productivity* or *interactivity*, is evident from the comments, since most followers are supportive of his political position and warn him against responding to this call or even visiting Egypt. Many say that the regime is only ready to detain him. Yet a few of them –whose accounts show they are regime supporters– insult him. Fishere does not reply except for a sarcastic response to only one comment.

One follower asked him, "When you welcomed, and I won't say supported, the post-30/6 regime, did you imagine what is happening now? I hope you answer my question Mr. Ambassador." Fishere replied, "Are you asking me about my imagination? Seriously?" Fishere's reply may be understood both ways. It might convey that nobody has imagined this, or that the question about his imagination contradicts the fact that he predicted in detail in his famous novel, *The Exit Door*, bloody outcomes of the revolution, at a time when most people in Egypt and the world were still hopeful.

The second tweet analyzed is the one Fishere tweeted in memory of Jamal Khashoggi. The tweet received 846 favorites, 175 retweets and 18 comments. The tweet text, featuring a picture of Khashoggi, looking healthy in daylight in a park, reads as follows:

> Exactly two years ago, I took this picture of Jamal when he came to Dartmouth to discuss writing a book together and talk to my students.
>
> Every time I cross the Green, I think of you Jamal. RIP; your ideals, sincerity, curiosity, decency and humor will always stay with me. https://t.co/TyPCNjvoSv

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

Image 1: Fishere's 2nd tweet.

The *intertextuality* of the tweet is clear. The human-interest part related to Fishere's missing and thinking of Khashoggi demonstrates his pride in this friendship is true, authentic and sincere. *The discursive formation*, including the image of Khashoggi in full health surrounded by greenery, with the detailed description of the great qualities of Khashoggi, is meant to remind people of his loss and his fatal death, a year after his disappearance in the Saudi Embassy in Turkey, where he was viciously slaughtered. As for the *regime of truth*, it depends by and large on the linked picture, which Fishere took of Khashoggi two years ago, information that he mentions to assure the authenticity of the moment, his detailed memory of him, and the qualities related to Khashoggi's rich and deep personality.

The *power* or *productivity* of the tweet, as reflected in the comments, show that most comments are mourning his tragic death and hoping for justice for his family. Although Fishere did not respond to any of the comments, we may argue that the comments indicate that the goal of the tweet was met perfectly. People mourned Khashoggi, remembered his tragic death and that injustice persists despite all the international pressure to realize justice for him and his family.

Fishere's third tweet, dated 8 October 2019, received 671 favorites, 208 retweets and 66 comments. The Arabic tweet is translated into English as follows:

> The Renaissance Dam is not the fault of the revolution, neither Morsi nor Sisi; the default is old and complex, exacerbated by the paralysis that has afflicted foreign policy since 1995 and the confusion between the presidency, foreign affairs, intelligence, and irrigation, and the pretense that everything is perfect. The dam is the outcome of prolonged failure and cannot be addressed with the same policies and tools that failed.

The *intertextuality* of the tweet shows a strong and crystallized opinion of the issue. Fishere starts off by defending Egypt's Jan 25th revolution, not blaming the existing sides, since the failure started in Mubarak's time due to the deficiency of Egypt's foreign policy and the lack of specialization. He concludes with a logical statement that the tools and policies that failed cannot be reused to resolve the problem, which indicates other tools need to be developed. The *discursive formation* of the tweet indicates a well-organized mind. First, he is defending the Jan. 25 revolution; then clearing the blame from others; then linking events together, putting the blame on the more responsible first, the presidency, followed by the foreign ministry, the intelligence, and the irrigation ministry. At the end, he declares it is an accumulated failure that cannot be resolved using the same old methods.

The *intertextuality* of the tweet, as well as its *discursive formation*, yields a credible *regime of truth*, where the reader can be easily convinced of Fishere's viewpoint, regardless of his/her

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

political position, since he is being fair and referring to truthful occurrences. The *power* of the tweet exhibited in its *regime of truth* depends on its *productivity* or *interactivity and* is evident in the 66 comments it produced. Most of the comments praise his viewpoint, discussing it objectively and asking for his vision of the solution or way out of this situation, which indicates followers respect him and take him seriously. Fishere only replies to one of the comments asking for a solution, sarcastically saying, "Those who have studied, have studied!" –an Egyptian expression denoting that there is no hope. The commentator then asks him, "So there is no hope of resolving it?," to which he says, "Yes!" While this shows minimal *interactivity* from the side of Fishere, yet the influence might be far reaching. Fishere, in this situation, as Weimann (1994) analyzes, is signaling to his follower how she should then "respond or act," by "giving advice and recommendation."

3.2. *Quantitative Content Analysis*

3.2.1 Tweet forms of presentation

Analyzing the *language of tweets*, the results showed 55.84% of Fishere's tweets were in English, while Hassan tweeted only in Arabic. Even tweeting in Arabic varied between using formal and informal language in Fishere's account (21.60% informal Arabic, 20.34% formal Arabic), while tweeting in formal Arabic represented 92.70% of Hassan's tweets.

In addition, both influencers used different *formats* in their tweets. While "pictures" associated with text is the dominant format in Fishere's account, representing 54.6% of his tweets, Hassan's tweets that were only in "text", represented 55% of the sample. Hassan, however, used videos associated with text more than Fishere, representing 16.6% of Hassan's tweets compared to 3.5% for Fishere. Neither influencer relied solely on texts to convey their messages, instead, they combined different formats of content, and supported their tweet text with pictures and videos.

As for the tweet *connectedness*, results showed that both influencers supported their tweets with links to other sources. Links represented 61.50% of analyzed tweets from Fishere's account compared to 46.80% of analyzed tweets from Hassan's account. Results showed that mainstream media, both local and international, as well as official sources, represent the main links included in Fishere's and Hassan's accounts. These include *Almasry Alyoum*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the Human Rights Office account on YouTube.

### 3.2.2. Tweet content structure

Both influencers presented *original tweets* more than retweeting others. Fishere's original tweets comprised 68.5% compared to 72.6% for Hassan. As for retweeting others, Fishere's retweets represented 31% compared to 27.30% for Hassan. This is consistent with the characteristic tendency of public opinion leaders to be conversation starters.

Figure [2] Types of Content
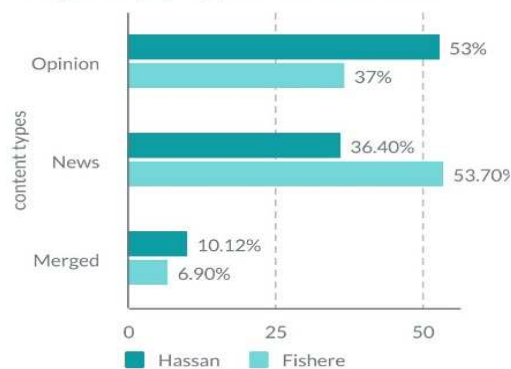
As for the *types of tweet content,* the influencers differed in the way they approached issues, whether in expressing their opinions or disseminating news about them. While Fishere's news sharing represented 53,70%, Hassan's opinion tweets comprised 53% of his tweets. In fewer cases both tweeted news and opinion merged together, representing for Hassan 10.12% compared to 6.9% for Fishere.

Influencers' attitudes and opinion expression indicate how much they use their accounts to influence followers' attitudes towards the issues they raise. This is not only about sharing the news, but it is more about influencing how followers think about a topic, person, case, etc. Our analysis proved that Fishere tends to express his opinions and attitudes in 64.5% of his tweets, while 32% of the sample are tweets without opinion. In the same context, 37% of Fishere's tweets reflect news criticism compared to 27.7% for news support.

Figure [3] Influencers' attitudes
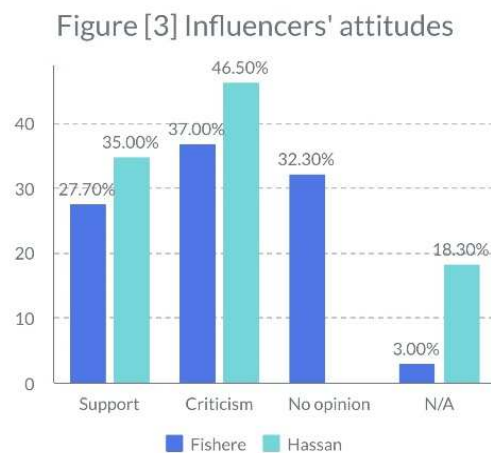
Comparatively, Hassan expressed his opinions in all his tweets, whether it was only an opinion tweet or news he commented on, with 46.5% of his tweets reflecting news support compared to 35% for news criticism.

News selection and the influencers' attitude towards the news is another indicator of their communicative strategy to influence followers. Our analysis of the influencer's attitude towards the news he tweeted revealed that Fishere criticized 61.53% of the news he shared while 38.4% of the news received a positive attitude. In contrast, Hassan tweeted news he supported (62.4%) more than that which he criticized (37.5%).

This shows a higher critical voice for Fishere than Hassan in their communicative strategies, both in cases where they are tweeting opinions or news accompanied with opinions, and when they are supportive or critical of the news they tweet.

Figure [4] Sources of Information
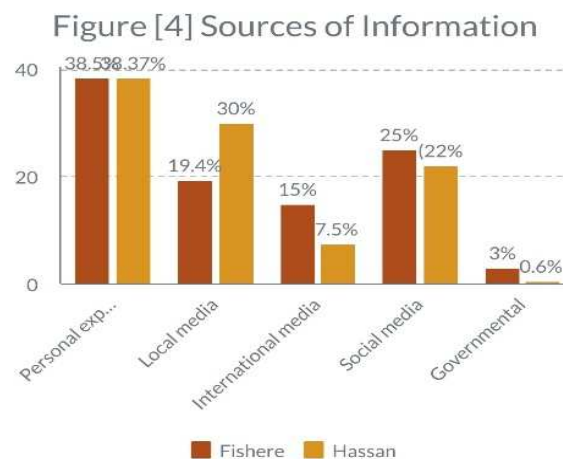
Both influencers relied in their tweets on their personal experiences as *sources of information*, representing 38.5% of Fishere's tweets and 38.37% of Hassan's tweets. Equally, neither showed interest in governmental sources, representing less than 4% of their tweet sources. They differed, however, in how much they relied on other sources of information. While Fishere relied on social media's public accounts (25%), followed by local mainstream media (19.4%), followed by international mainstream media (15%); Hassan relied on local mainstream media (30%), followed by public accounts on social media (22%), then by international mainstream media (7.5%).

Being a keystone in all forms of social media communication, *interactivity* between influencers and followers is central to describing influencers' communicative strategies. *Interactivity* on twitter takes different forms/actions, including tweet favoriting, retweeting, and commenting. Although the number of comments on tweets is also important, we could not extract it by the automated quantitative analysis we used. Thus, comments were qualitatively analyzed using CDA extracting samples of agreements, disagreements and ideas raised in the comments.

As an influencer's rate of replies to his followers' comments can indicate a preference for multi-directional or unidirectional communication (Bulovsky, 2019), we analyzed interactivity on the two accounts in terms of (a) the number of favorites, (b) the number of retweets, and (c) the number of influencer's replies to followers.

Analyzing the extent of *interactivity penetration* among followers on each account, the average of total action for both accounts, favorites and retweets, reached 591 on Fishere's account, compared to 221 on Hassan's account. Although the total number of tweets during the same period is higher in Hassan's account in comparison to Fishere, the percentage of total action showed high *interactivity penetration* among followers of each account, representing 564.30% in Fishere's account compared to 170.89% in Hassan's. Additionally, Fishere's percentage of replies on comments represented 28.57%, while Hassan had no replies at all to any of his followers' comments.

As for the *followers' reactions to tweets*, analyzing which tweets scored higher in the *retweeting* action, results showed that 4.7% of the sample tweets of Fishere's account and 2.3% of the sample tweets of Hassan's account scored retweets that exceed 1K. Most of the tweets that had been retweeted for more than 1K on Fishere's account were related to foreign issues, like USA policies in the Middle East, the protest movements in Catalonia, Chile, Lebanon, and the memorial of Jamal Khashoggi, etc. Most of the tweets that had been retweeted for more than 1K on Hassan's were general quotes related to religion, sympathy and not related to certain issues.

As for *favoriting* tweets, results showed that only three tweets out of 231 posted on Fishere's account and 39 tweets out of 839 (4.6%) on Hassan's account were favorited more than 500 times. Tweets that grabbed more than 500 favorites on Fishere's account were about Egypt's policy towards the Nile Dam issue, the freedom of expression in Egypt and about Jamal Khashoggi. Most of the tweets that grabbed more than 500 favorites on Hassan's account were about public issues in Egypt related to economic and political conditions like the Nile Dam issue, poverty, and the influencer's attitudes towards controversial issues in Egypt, like the debate about former Egyptian president Mubarak's achievements.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The content and discourse analyses showed that both influencers followed a *unidirectional* communicative strategy in addressing their followers on Twitter, since there is no balance between the interactive action made by the followers to the influencers' tweets and the interactive action they got from both influencers.

Both Fishere's and Hassan's accounts conform with Katz's (1957) dimensions of the traits and behaviors of opinion leaders. Consulting (1) "Who one is?," we find that both are renowned

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

figures who became famous in the wake of the January 2011 revolution; (2) "What one knows?," it is evident that both are political science professors and experts in analyzing politics; and (3) "Whom one knows," is evident from the high number of followers and retweets on their twitter accounts.

Expressing opinions about public issues is the most obvious goal for both accounts. Both focused on expressing their viewpoints depending on original tweets more than retweets, relying on their personal experiences more than other sources. Even when they differed in their focus on tweeting news or opinions, they expressed their opinions by commenting on the news they shared. Tweeting news was either to support or to criticize it, so they mainly used their accounts to express their opinions about public issues.

Referring to other sources that support their viewpoints was another obvious feature of the communicative strategies they applied. Both supported their tweets with links to various sources, besides using pictures and videos to support text-format tweets. The fact that the amount of information and news tweets, linked with evidence, on Fishere's account outnumber those on Hassan's account make Fishere a strong opinion leader. In comparison, Hassan may be considered a *nonleader*, since his vision is unclear to the reader, because OLs are distinguished by Bobkowski (2015) as the ones who use more informational content in contrast to *nonleaders*.

Discursively analyzing the accounts of both Hassan and Fishere demonstrated that Fishere is much more overtly outspoken than Hassan. It is remarkable that Hassan's existing tweets started just last October, although he joined Twitter in 2011 and has a huge number of followers compared to Fishere. The nature of interaction on Hassan's account, including rarely but subtly criticizing the regime, not responding to any comments and avoiding direct expression of opinion, indicates he might have deleted his past tweets for fear of being endangered by anything he may have tweeted since 2011. Perhaps the fact that Fishere lives in the US while Hassan lives in Egypt plays a significant role in this discrepancy. Being in Egypt, Hassan obviously faces more constrictions on expressing his opinion than Fishere.

Returning to the one-step-flow model, the lack of interactivity does not necessarily indicate a lack of influence since the mere exposure to the information circulated by OLs may still have an influence on public opinion through the diffusion of news and discussion and shaping public opinion. This is especially true for social media since the "receiver" cares (probably more) about the "sender," as Shirky (2008, as quoted in Hellweg, 2011, p. 24) analyses. Barely motivated people, with simple retweets, can become influential themselves, boosting the circle of influence and opening "a new arena of grassroots politics," (Shirky, 2008, as quoted in Hellweg, 2011, p. 24), facilitating activism and collaboration in some cases.

Exploring how the *intertextuality*, the *discursive formation* and the *regimes of truth* in Hassan's and Fishere's tweets resonates to Winter and Neubaum's (2016) main traits of opinion leaders. It seems that, despite his large following, Hassan does not play any significant role in his communicative network, since his opinions are not clear and he does not address the most significant topics related to current issues, nor does he interact with his followers at all. In contrast is the nature of the hot topics and outspoken opinions overtly expressed by Fishere, who apparently plays a more significant role in his communication network, despite little interaction.

Secondly, Hassan (2) does not perceive himself as being persuasive, which is the core of being influential, since he does not present a strong or clear straightforward opinion, nor does he react to people's replies. In the meantime, Fishere constantly uses strong evidence from the news or accounts of human rights organizations to support his online campaigns to defend human rights and freedom of expression, which was evident in the tweets in support of *Mada Masr*, towards the end of November, which makes him more persuasive and influential.

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

Thirdly, Hassan's tweets reflect a weak personality, compared to Fishere's strong personality, essentially supporting human rights everywhere and condemning all regimes violating human rights. Using formal language, whether English or Arabic, is dominant in the two accounts; this is well-matched with their cultural and academic backgrounds. Moreover, it fits with the kind of Twitter of Egyptian users who tend to be of a higher cultural level than other social media users.

Bulovsky's (2019) conceptualization of *cyber-optimists* and *cyber-realists* is probably true especially for Egypt, since ICTs empowered citizens to challenge authoritarian leaders during the January 2011 revolution. Equally true, authoritarian leaders used ICTs to block the internet during the revolution, or block websites as has been happening since 2017, to limit its benefits.

The large following of OLs can be characterized as "bridging social capital," (Putnam, 2000), since it helps in spreading information and opinions of OLs, as suggested by Winter and Neubaum (2016), through retweets, even if followers or OLs "hesitate to express their views", especially when living in a repressive environment.

References

Abdulmajeed, M. (2008). Egyptian Political Blogs: Freedom of Expression and Social Responsibility. Paper presented at the 14th International Conference of "Media and Social Responsibility", 1-3 July 2008, College of Mass Communication. Cairo University, Egypt.

Abdulmajeed, M. (2017). Religious Information Sources of the Arab Youth and its Impact on their Attitudes towards Terrorism Attacks. *Arab Media & Society*, *24*, Summer/Fall, 1-54.

Bennett, L. W. & Manheim, J. B. (2006). The One-Step Flow of Communication. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 608*(1), 213-232. https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0002716206292266

Bobkowski, P. S. (2015) Sharing the News: Effects of Informational Utility and Opinion Leadership on Online News Sharing. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 92*(2), 320-345. https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1077699015573194

Bulovsky, A. (2019). Authoritarian communication on social media: The relationship between democracy and leaders' digital communicative practices. *The International Communication Gazette 2019, 81*(1), 20–45. https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1748048518767798

Ellison. B N., Steinfield, C. W. & Lampe, C. (2011). Connection Strategies: Social Capital Implications of Facebook-Enabled Communication Practices. *New Media & Society, 13*(6), 837-892. https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1461444810385389

Fahmy, N. (2012). News Diffusion and Facilitation of Conversation: Twitter's role in the Revolution of 25th January. *Journal of Middle East Media, 8*(1), 1-21. Retrieved from https://jmem.gsu.edu/2014/10/07/volume-8-2012/

Fahmy, N. (2014). J-Blogging and Agenda Cutting Phenomenon in Egypt. In H. Mabweazara, O. Mudhai & J. Whittaker (Edw.), *Online Journalism in Africa. Trends, Practices and Emerging Cultures* (pp. 172-188). London: Routledge. Retrieved from https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9780203382530/chapters/10.4324/9780203382530-19

Fahmy, N. & M. Abdulmajeed (2017). Online News Usage by the Arab Youth through Electronic Platforms-Field Study. *Arabic Journal for Media & Communication, 18*, 167-226.

Hellweg, A. (2011). Social Media Sites of Politicians Influence their Perceptions by Constituents. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communication, 2*(1), 22-36.

Jang, S. M., Lee, H. & Park, Y. J. (2014). The more friends, the less political talk? Predictors of Facebook discussions among college students. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking, 17*, 271–275. https://www.doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2013.0477

Karlsen, R. (2015) Followers are Opinion Leaders: The Role of People in the Flow of Political Communication on and Beyond Social Networking Sites. *European Journal of Communication, 30*(3), 301-318. https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0267323115577305

Abdulmajeed, M. & El-Ibiary, R.
**Analyzing the communicative strategies of Egyptian political influencers: content
and discourse analyses of Twitter accounts**

Kedzie, C. R. (1997). *Communication and Democracy: Coincident Revolutions and the Emergent
    Dictators*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from
    https://www.rand.org/pubs/rgs_dissertations/RGSD127.html

Nisbet, M. C. & Kotcher, J. E. (2009) A Two-Step Flow of Influence? Opinion-Leader
    Campaigns on Climate Change. *Science Communication, 30*(3), 328-354.
    https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1075547008328797

Qiao, F. (2019). Conceptualizing Interactivity on Social Media and Exploring the Effects of
    Interactivity on Consumers' Engagement with Online Social-Interactions. *Online Journal
    of Communication and Media Technologies, 9*(3), e201913.
    https://www.doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/5781

Rose, J. (2007). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*.
    Second Edition. London: Sage.

Samir, I. (2015) Dor Shabakat al Tawasel al Egtemaai ala Internet fi Tadaeem al Mosharaka al
    Sayssia. [The Role of Social Media Networks in Political Participation]. Ph. D Thesis.
    College of Arts. Ain Shams University.

Winter, S. & Neubaum, G. (2016). Examining Characteristics of Opinion Leaders in Social
    Media: A Motivational Approach. *Social Media + Society,* July–September, 1–12.
    https://www.doi.org/10.1177/2056305116665858

Yan, S. (2019). Exploring the effect of Weibo opinion leaders on the dynamics of public opinion
    in China: A Revisit of the Two-step Flow of Communication. *Global Media and China, XX*,
    1–21. https://www.doi.org/10.1177/2059436419866012

Links to interactive content analysis infographics

Ammar Ali Hassan,
    https://create.piktochart.com/output/43058585-political-digital-bloggers-2
Ezzedine Fishere,
    https://create.piktochart.com/output/43056600-political-digital-bloggers