The Role of the Media Among Egyptian Diaspora in the UK During the 2011 Egyptian Uprising and Afterwards

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Abstract
This paper focuses on the role of the media among the Egyptian diaspora during and post the 2011 uprising. The first topic discussed is how the Egyptian diaspora in the UK dealt with the media during the uprising. In order to examine how the Egyptian diaspora used the media, interviews conducted with 22 Egyptians from different generations and two Facebook pages have been analysed. Information gathered from 22 interviews and two Facebook pages were gathered and analysed using thematic analysis. Regarding the theoretical framework, the main theoretical framework is based on the concept of Goffman 'performing identity' in addition to concepts related to media, sociology and diaspora groups. The Egyptian diaspora used social media in two ways: the first was to stay informed of the uprising in Egypt, whereas the second was by way of using social media websites, such as Facebook as a platform to gather and participate in protests organised in the UK as a support for fellow Egyptians in Egypt and to prove their Egyptian identity. The Egyptian diaspora in the UK including different generations were in agreement with the notion of mistrusting Western and Arabic mainstream media. Conversely, the role of social media was controversial. Egyptian interviewees looked for alternatives to social and mainstream media as a source of information and by using personal networks to gain this information.
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Introduction
The media, especially social media, played a vital role among Egyptians in Egypt during the 2011 uprising, which is why the revolution was named 'Revolution 2.0' according to Wael Ghonim (Ghonim 2012).

The introduction of social media in Egypt approximately six years ago was a turning point in the lives of Egyptians, as they started to use blogs to express their opinions (Tufekci and Wilson 2012: 363). Tufekci adds that although authoritarian regimes, such as that of Mubarak's, were strict in limiting political activities in Egypt, social media websites thus gave freedom of expression to Egyptians. The Egyptian government had started to lose control of political activists because of social media. In addition, social media was just one part of a new form of political communication.

Most of the population in Tunisia and Egypt, for instance, is young (under the age of 34). Young people are the most common users of social media and therefore, social media websites were heavily used in Tunisia and Egypt (Howard et al., 2011). Howard et al. (2011), add that urban, young and well-educated people in Egypt and Tunisia used social media to start political debates and conversations online. Nevertheless, it was not only young Egyptians and Tunisians who used social media to be politically active regarding enhancing the situation in their countries, although social media were used to put pressure on the governments of these countries to make changes.

As a historical background on the Egyptian community in Britain, according to Karmi (1997), the United Kingdom was not the first destination for Egyptians until the 1950s when mostly Muslim Egyptians started to migrate to Britain. The migrants were primarily upper-class Egyptians who did not like the political change taking place in Egypt at the time, whereas the Coptic Egyptians started to migrate to Canada and America then Britain in the 1970s due to the dominance of Islamist groups during President Sadat's reign. Karmi (1997), estimated that the number of Egyptians in Britain totalled 22,582 thousand**,** while the UK Office of National Statistics estimated the Egyptian population in the UK to be 31,338 in 2011 (OSN, 2011). The number may be higher, but some Egyptians in Britain do not register with officials as they are illegal immigrants and mistrust officials or just categorise themselves as 'other' rather than Egyptians (Karmi, 1997).

Theoretical framework
This paper employs the concept of 'performing identity' introduced by Erving Goffman in 1959.
The link between identity and diaspora is regarding Goffman's 'performing identity'. The platform used by diasporic groups to perform their identity is media, predominantly social media.

Goffman (1959), addresses the formation of identity and deals with significant aspects relating to construction of identity. In addition, Goffman (1959), deals with the concept of 'impression management'. Impression

management is associated with how individuals represent themselves and what impression they give to others about themselves. Consequently, impression management is termed management because individuals choose and manage what to reveal and what to conceal. Goffman (1959), illustrates that in any society, 'performers' act accordingly to a set of expectations the audience in any society set for performers to perform.

Goffman's theory basically focuses on the notion of how individuals interact to form their identity in society. This theory is associated with the notion of individuals who form their identity according to the environment they are in, which is what impression management is. Goffman (1959), coined the term 'impression management' and refers to an individual's management of their activities, appearance and words in their interaction. The purpose of this management is to convey a specific image about the self to others.

In this paper, the concept of Goffman (1959) is applied to the case of the Egyptians in the United Kingdom. Egyptians in the United Kingdom, here as 'performers', performed a set of roles 'protesting on social media or on streets' to satisfy their 'audience'; in this case, Egyptians worldwide especially in Egypt. Specifically, Egyptians in the United Kingdom performed a set of roles 'protesting online or in the streets' to perform their Egyptian identity and prove their 'Egyptianness'. The 2011 Egyptian evolved in order to change the entire system in Egypt and to force President Mubarak to step down, whilst the role of the Egyptians in the UK was to support fellow Egyptians in their home country and at the same time to perform their Egyptian identity and prove their 'Egyptianness', as Goffman (1959) expressed. Furthermore, the Egyptian diaspora in the UK were active in the affairs of their countries of origin (in this case Mubarak's stepping down) and performing their Egyptian identity by way of online and offline protesting. It should be noted that Goffman used the term 'impression management' and 'performing identity'. In addition, in the case of Egyptians in the UK, social media was used as a tool to prove to others they are still Egyptian, in particular during the 2011 uprising and to play roles Egyptian society expects them to play as Egyptian citizens.

Literature review

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the role of social media in the Arab uprisings and its effects on Egyptians in Egypt. The gap in literature is the lack of research on the role of the 2011 uprising including the role of media and the Egyptian diaspora. Consequently, the focus of this paper is the role of the media among the Egyptian diaspora in the United Kingdom. One of these studies was conducted by Rane and Salem (2012). The Arab revolutions, according to their research, have been termed '*Facebook* or *Twitter* revolutions'. The role that social media played in the Arab uprisings is undeniable. Nevertheless, Rane and Salem (2012), contend that the failure or success of such uprisings depends on domestic factors and not necessarily social media, contrary to what others believe. They also state that social media was not responsible for the success of the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya – it was in fact the tool used to facilitate intra-inter group communications among protesters (Rane and Salem, 2012, p. 99).

Howard et al. (2011), argue that the media, principally social media, have played a crucial role in spreading democracy in Arab countries, essentially Egypt and Tunisia, where social media have helped young Tunisians and Egyptians to spread this concept. Howard et al. (2011), assert in their report regarding social media during the Arab Spring, by analysing Tweets on *Twitter* and other social media websites, that social media gave ordinary people the chance to be in control of their future by starting peaceful revolutions using social media to change regimes and be influential in the future of their countries. In addition, social media websites have been a successful tool for forcing dictatorships in many Arab countries to step down. Howard (2011), states that most studies conducted on the MENA (Middle East and North African countries), as well as the Arab Spring, focus on the effects of social media on the uprisings. The Internet in the MENA region is considered to have been influential in disseminating news and events that were not covered by the main media outlets. The governments in Tunisia and Egypt shut down the Internet connection during the uprisings in 2010 and 2011 in order to stop people from using it and spreading the word among other citizens. Nevertheless, this action was unsuccessful, however, as people found other ways to use social media. Besides, this action was too late, as people were already protesting in the streets and receiving global support. New technology, such as cell phones, had become one of the most effective weapons to use in uprisings, especially in the MENA region. Tunisian protestors were holding a stone in one hand and a cell phone in the other.

Consequently, cell phones were regularly used to inform others about what was going on worldwide. One of the problems is that, in order for cell phones to be effective, Internet connection is required to allow people to be in contact with the wider world; without an Internet connection, cell phones and social media are practically useless. Hence, the governments in the MENA region, such as those in Egypt and Tunisia realised this and shut down the Internet connection in the hope it would stop people from protesting, and moreover, to quell the uprisings.

Rane and Salem (2012), also highlight the role of the mainstream media in the uprisings and not merely social media. Mainstream media was responsible for conveying the message that the uprisings were peaceful, pro-democracy and were freedom movements. This resulted in support being gained, not only from Western governments but from the entire world, as their demands were also legitimate. Rane and Salem (2012:97), claim

that the main source of information remains the mainstream media. In the case of the Egyptian revolution, people were dependent on Egyptian state TV for information regarding the revolution's progress, although social media, at the time of the Egyptian revolution in 2011, was dominant.

It should be emphasised that the mainstream media has been under the control of various governments in the MENA region; consequently, content in the mainstream media was in favour of the State. *Al-Jazeera*, a channel privately-owned by Qatari businessmen, was even deliberating whether to broadcast news which contradicted the agenda of other governments in the Arab world. Therefore, the media, specifically the State media, was the first challenge that protesters revolted against in the MENA region in 2011. Rane and Salem (2012), add that, with the emergence of social media, governments in the MENA region began to understand that citizens were out of (their) control. Social media had therefore been revolutionary, especially for protesters in the MENA region, where the number of Internet users rapidly increased and where it was expected to reach 100 million users in 2015 (Ghannam, 2011:30).

Rane and Salem (2012), suggest that social media in the Arab uprisings were not been the main reasons for people to revolt, although social media played a vital part in mobilising the uprisings. It is true that the number of Internet users in the MENA region has increased by 78%, although in some Arab countries, the percentage of *Facebook* users is still low – in Egypt, for example, it is only 22%. It is evident from the above, that social media was not the main cause of the Arab revolutions – it was merely a facilitator. Additionally, Rane and Salem (2012:99), assert that some countries with a low percentage of *Facebook* users witnessed uprisings. The example of that is Tunisia with Facebook penetration of 17.6% in early 2011 (This shows that high percentages of social media use are not the best indicator that a country would go through a revolution.

Ghannam (2011:36), indicated that the percentage of *Facebook* users in the MENA region is rising, due to what he calls 'the youthful generation'. Young people make up almost 75% of *Facebook* users (Ghannam, 2011:36). It is worth mentioning that young people in the MENA region constitute one third of the population (Ibid). Most of the MENA region's population can therefore be considered to be the transmitters of the Arab uprisings, as Rane and Salem (2012) suggest. Additionally, according to the UN, most of the population in the MENA region is under 25 years old (cited in Rane and Salem 2012). In Egypt, for instance, young people constitute 52% of the entire population, making the youth the dominant population group in the MENA region, as Rane and Salem (2012) imply. This has led to young people demanding democracy, freedom and dignity, by revolting against authoritarian regimes.

The media - particularly social media (*Facebook*, for example) - was the main communication medium for protesters in Egypt and Tunisia during the uprising. Furthermore, although face-to-face communication played an additional major role in disseminating information, the print media and satellite channels played a lesser part regarding the uprising in Tahrir Square in Egypt (Tufekci and Wilson, 2012:362). It is interesting to note that the attendance of women in the uprisings was significant. These women were educated, and some came from better economic backgrounds than the males and joined in the protests to demonstrate solidarity with their male counterparts. Social media was, moreover, also liberating women principally by using *Facebook. Facebook* gave them a chance to express themselves 'virtually' and a voice when they attended meetings. The female interviewees also stated that it was difficult for them to have an opinion, although the protests allowed them to demonstrate their support (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012).Tufekci & Wilson (2012) explained how women, during the uprising in Cairo, felt empowered by posting on social media and communicating with other protesters either online or offline; protesting in streets in the past was common among men due to security reasons, while during the 2011 revolution, expressing opinion via Facebook was safe.

Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti (2013), conducted a study on the activities of the Syrian diaspora and their role as Syrian diaspora in the Syrian uprising of 2011. The study focuses on how the Syrian diaspora was the bridge between activists inside and outside the country. The term 'citizen journalists' emerged then, as citizens, acting like journalists, informed the world of what was happening in Syria. This term was later used in Egypt with the help of social media, when ordinary people were able to report incidents which actual journalists could not reach (Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti, 2013). The role of diasporic groups became more powerful when the Syrian regime restricted communication between Syrian activists inside Syria. Syrian activists in the diaspora therefore adopted a strategy to raise the issues that internal activists could not broadcast.

New media has made activists in the diaspora more powerful and helped to make their mission less challenging. The term 'members of both worlds' coined by Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti (2013), refers to the 'host country' and 'homeland'. It has been used in order to demonstrate the vital role that diasporas play with regard to repressed nations such as Syria and their rebellion against President Assad's regime. The strategy of Syrian activists in the diaspora is as follows: (i) report the sufferings of Syrians inside Syria to the whole world; (ii) share the hatred of the Syrian regime with Syrians inside Syria: (iii) tell the host country they are aware of their homeland's situation; and finally, (iv) demonstrate their solidarity with Syrians inside Syria and reveal what the Syrian regime is doing to them (Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti, 2013). One of the interviewees in the study by Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti states that even if some people are not considered journalists but act as journalists

or 'citizen journalists', they have a duty to report the truth to the whole world. In recent years, more studies have been conducted on the role of social media in the uprisings. One study, conducted by Kharroub & Bas (2015), focuses on the role of Twitter's images on protests in Egypt in 2011.

Regarding studies conducted on diaspora groups and their connection to homeland, a study conducted by Işık Kuşcu (2012) examined the role of the Egyptian American diaspora in their homeland affairs. Kuşcu claims that members of the Egyptian American diaspora group are connected to their homeland by following events there (p. 121). The 2011 Egyptian revolution has, moreover, been a turning point in terms of Egyptians abroad – they are more involved now in Egyptian affairs than in Mubarak's era (p. 121).

This study seeks to look at the role played by the Egyptian American diaspora group during the 2011 revolution and the aftermath, and how this group can influence both the homeland's and host country's politics. Diaspora groups, in general, used to be disconnected from events in their homelands. It used to be difficult to stay connected due to expensive flights, there was no social media, the lack of new communications to call family and friends at home, such as *WhatsApp* and other phone applications. However, nowadays, thanks to new technology, communication and transport, diaspora groups are now more easily able to stay in contact with their homelands (p. 122).

Methodology
The methods employed in this paper consist of 22 interviews with Egyptians in the UK and analysis of two Facebook pages. Materials were gathered and thematic analysis was subsequently used to generate themes (Table 1). Based on the themes extracted in this study, 11 out of 22 interviews were used. Moreover, 22 interviews were conducted as part of a thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Al-sheikh, 2016; 2018).

Table 1: List of participants

P'pant	Gender	Age	PoB	Generation	Source of Information	Sense of trust
1	F	22	Kuwait	1.75	Social media	Trust social media
2	M	43	Egypt	1st	Personal network and analysis	Mistrust of social & mainstream media
3	M	35	Egypt	1st	N/A	N/A
4	M	35	Egypt	1st	Social media + family & friends	Social media but not without thinking
5	M	36	Egypt	1st	Social media	N/A
6	M	26	Egypt	1st	N/A	N/A
7	F	45	Egypt	1st	N/A	N/A
8	M	38	UAE	1st	N/A	N/A
9	M	24	Egypt	1st	N/A	N/A
10	M	20	Egypt	1st	N/A	Social media
11	M	31	Egypt	1.50	Social media	Social media
12	M	32	Egypt	1st	N/A	N/A
13	M	37	Egypt	1.75	N/A	N/A
14	M	18	UK	2nd	N/A	N/A
15	F	50	Egypt	1st	Family& friends	Family & friends
16	M	36	UK	2nd	Social media	Social media
17	F	20	Egypt	1.25	N/A	N/A
18	M	32	Egypt	1st	N/A	N/A
19	F	24	USA	2nd	N/A	N/A
20	M	50	Egypt	1st	Family and friends	Mistrust social & mainstream media
21	F	31	Egypt	1st	Social media plus family and friends	Trust in social media >mainstream
22	M	33	UK	2nd	Social media	Trust in social media > mainstream

An interview is not only a structured conversation, according to Kvale (2008:5), it is 'a conversation site for knowledge'. Conducting interviews allows the exchange of ideas, opinions and knowledge. In addition, examining people's experience and feelings can be approached by means of conducting interviews. Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti (2013: 22), for instance, conducted research on 'diasporic Syrian activists and their role, as Syrian citizens, in what was happening in their homeland'. The interview method was used to examine their feelings. In the current project, semi-structured interviews were chosen for various reasons. For example, interaction between the interviewer and interviewees is possible, unlike in surveys or questionnaires.

Drever (2003:10), claims that surveys are inflexible once they have been sent by post – the researcher cannot

edit or elaborate various questions. During an interview, predominantly face-to-face, the interviewer cannot only explain ambiguous questions, other questions can also be raised. Moreover, in the case of surveys, the questions are typically close-ended and require only 'yes' or 'no' answers. These answers do not demonstrate feelings or explain a specific matter in more detail. Drever (2003), explains that several answers may possibly be incomplete in surveys, as respondents answer questions individually without supervision. These answers may be useless for the project. In addition, respondents cannot be asked to answer them again or to elaborate on a specific question. Interviews, in contrast, allow elaboration of the questions and answers to obtain an appropriate answer. It is important to note that surveys do not capture feelings or memories of a specific event, and moreover, body language and emotions cannot be observed. Consequently, interviews are the most appropriate tool to adopt for this purpose. According to Drever (2003:11), in certain cases, interviewers visit interviewees in their homes to observe their daily lives, as such details can have considerable significance when researching specific topics. Interviews are essential for the current research, for several reasons: the project examines the feelings, sense of belonging and effects of the revolution on peoples' lives. This can be examined by using the qualitative method which deals with quality rather than quantity.

In terms of generations the paper deals with, Rumbaut (2004), termed those who can neither be classified as first generation nor second generation as 1.25, 1.50 and 1.75 generations. Children of immigrants aged between 0 and 5 years leaving their home country are named the '1.75 generation'. Rumbaut (2004), contends that these immigrants share virtually the same experience as second-generation immigrants born in host countries; however, they cannot be classified as the second generation, as they arrived in the host countries at a very early age and are therefore, not pure second generation. The adaptation outcomes and experience of the 1.75 generation differ from those who emigrated when they were older. The 1.50 generation is those who emigrated to host countries aged between 6 and 12. Rumbaut (2004), terms immigrants who left their home country aged thirteen to seventeen, the '1.25 generation'. This generation is characterised as sharing similar experiences with first generation immigrants, although it differs in the level of adaptation to the host society and work or social experiences. This group of immigrants is classified as the 1.25 generation, seeing as it is neither pure first generation nor native-born second generation. The last category of generations is the second generation of immigrants: children born to immigrants in host countries, having either one immigrant parent or both, are classified as second generation.

The interviewees in this paper belong to different generations. For instance, fourteen interviewees belong to the first generation, eight interviewees are from other generations: only one is from the 1.25 generation, another is from the 1.50 generation, two are from the 1.75 generation, while the four remaining interviewees are from the second generation. In this paper, I tend to categorise interviewees from the 1.25, 1.50, 1.75 generations as part of the second generation, seeing as they are closer to the second generation than the first generation. Being in between, neither first nor second generation, is a critical situation for almost all immigrants; for that reason, Rumbaut (2004), created a new name for those who do not belong to any category in each generation. Similarly, another obstacle these people face is being rejected by each generation.

Thematic analysis has been chosen in terms of analysing the data collected from the interviews and analysis of Facebook pages. Thematic analysis is a way of observing something (Boyatzis, 1998:1). Thematic analysis is a process beginning with investigating a thing and subsequently seeing that thing as something which has a meaning. Finally, it leads to the interpretation which establishes a meaning for that thing. Boyatzis adds that if a group of people observe the same phenomenon, the analysis may well differ from one person to another. The final step is to determine the correct interpretation of that thing which makes sense (Boyatzis, 1998).

Results

In this section, the main themes extracted from the main methods in this paper are discussed. The two main themes are using media as a source of information with an overwhelming notion of mistrusting mainstream media and using social media as a platform to gather and protest in order to demonstrate solidarity with fellow Egyptians and to perform their Egyptian identity.

Source of information and notion of trust

The first theme is using media as a source of information and the idea of trust among different generations of Egyptians in the UK. Sources of information for the Egyptian diaspora in the United Kingdom differ; for instance, some Egyptians especially those under the age 40 depend on social media as the main source of information, while others over 40 do not trust social media as a source of information but depend on other sources, such as family, friends and ordinary people.

Trusting social media has been controversial among different generations of Egyptians in the United Kingdom. For instance, Participant 5 (M, aged 36, first generation) and Participant 10 (M, aged 20, first generation), agree that social media are the main source of information concerning Egypt and in general. Participant 4 (M, aged 35, first generation), argues that social media was significant, especially during the 2011 uprising, as it provided information regarding where events were being held and how people could be involved. Participant 4 adds that

without social media the source of information would have been limited if it had to depend only on the mainstream media. Social media was used as a platform for Egyptians to stay connected with what was happening in Egypt, particularly for Egyptians abroad, principally in the United Kingdom. Social media is trusted, to some extent, by Egyptians aged less than 40, although its credibility is also questioned. There are some first-generation Egyptians under forty in the United Kingdom who do not fully rely on social media news; although Egyptians abroad rely on news published on social media, but only if they believe that the source of that news is credible, if it is also reported in newspapers or on TV channels. According to Participant 4 who has studied and also used social media and protested in Tahrir Square: Social media is not the magical weapon which can lead to […making…] dictatorships […step…] down, although social media websites are a powerful tool.

The question is: from where do the first generation, mainly those over forty, obtain their information? This question has to be asked as the first generation over 40 neither trust mainstream nor social media regarding sources of information. Consequently, they tend to look for alternatives such as family and friends' network. For example, Participant 15 (F, aged 50, first generation), says her source of information is her family in Egypt, as they are the ones who can be trusted as witnesses of the events in the country, unlike the media which often provides 'fake' news. Participant 15 adds that when she reads or hears any piece of news relevant to Egypt, she immediately refers it to her family in Egypt to make sure that it is genuine and not fake. This is the same point raised by Participant 21 (F, aged 31, first generation): 'I always research news from the TV or on the Internet to make sure it is credible'. Participant 15 adds that she does not often believe anything her friends tell her. But, in addition to researching online, she calls her family residing in Egypt, specifically her brother, to ask about the credibility of the news: 'Why wouldn't I believe people who witness events live, in Egypt? […] as a result, these are my sources of information'. Specifically, ordinary people witnessing events in Egypt can be trusted more than the media for Egyptian interviewees who participated in this study.

First generation Egyptians both under and above forty tend to search for an alternative as a source of information to social and mainstream media, for instance, stories written by ordinary people published on social media or obtained verbally. Participant 9 (M, aged 24, first generation), expressed his trust in what people post online, as most news online is credible, specifically if the people posting are known to the reader: I do trust people's posts, but not everything of course. I would believe my best friends stories posted on social media, as social media give everyone the chance and the opportunity to report incidents. Participant 4 (M, aged 35, first generation) says: My source of information would be my own personal network, social media and TV, but the trick is that I would differentiate between what I am reading and eventually I would create my own truth. Participant 4 thus demonstrates how some people, in particular Egyptians in the United Kingdom, have decided to depend on their ability to differentiate between fake and true news that comes from various sources. The interesting point raised from conducting interviews with Egyptians in the United Kingdom, is that after losing faith in the mainstream media and doubting the credibility of news on social media, they believe in real people's news as their source of information, Participant 5 (M, aged 36, first generation), explains how he relies on people witnessing events in Egypt for information: 'I trust people who publish on social media, unlike the news on TV, as news on TV can be fake and I cannot trust […it…], unlike the news published on social media by trusted people or friends of mine'. This demonstrates that some Egyptians trust people who publish online more than the mainstream media which can broadcast fake news, or people are unable to establish whether the news on television is credible or not. Additionally, sources of news on social media can be investigated to determine where news items originate from.

Egyptian interviewees from the second generation tend to trust social media more than the mainstream media. Participant 22 (M, aged 33) considers social media to be main source of information regarding Egypt. Social media is considered more trustworthy and credible than the mainstream media because the mainstream media have somehow lost credibility. The alternative is social media: I use and watch both, although I take my information from social media, as social media is more democratic and you can't trust the national mainstream media, anymore, Participant 22 added.

Participant 16 (M, aged 36, second generation), agrees with Participant 22, in that he is inclined to believe what people publish on social media, more than the mainstream media: 'Social media is spontaneous, and can't really be […as…] corrupt as the mainstream media'. This indicates that as social media is operated by ordinary people, they cannot be as easily corrupted as the mainstream media, which is led by corporations that have a specific agenda. The interviewees have raised an important reason for the mainstream media losing its credibility, which is that the mainstream media require a medium to follow such as television, radio or buying actual newspapers. Conversely, social media merely requires an Internet connection on a laptop or smart phone to follow the news. This is one of the reasons for the popularity of social media in comparison to mainstream media. Participant 16 (M, aged 36, second generation), in contrast, explains how he started to watch the mainstream media after moving to stay with his mother and sister, who have satellite channels at home.

Social media cannot be fully trusted, on the other hand. For that reason, people tend to read and watch news online, but make sure the news is accurate by checking newspaper websites and people they can trust: 'I investigate news on social media and look for where the news source is coming from', Participant 1 (F, aged 22, 1.75

generation) says. This illustrates that people obtain news from social media and confirm its reliability from other traditional sources. People would read news via social media and then check a piece of news in the mainstream media, such as in newspapers or television, to make sure the news is reliable and not fabricated. Social media cannot appropriate the role of traditional media, however, even if people have lost trust and faith in the mainstream media regarding their source of information. Sources of information for participants in this study can be a personal network, including family friends and credible newspapers.

Concerning second generation Egyptians, social media has been the source of information for most of the participants in this study. Participant 1 (F, aged 22, 1.75 generation), for instance, demonstrates how she regularly follows social media as her source of information. The credibility of news on social media must be painstakingly examined to avoid 'fake news'.

News on *Facebook*, for instance, can be accurate when the source is credible. Participant 4 (M, aged 35, first generation), claims that social media can be a good source of information, notably for those living away from their home country: 'You can get accurate information from social media, especially when you are away […]. It is tricky, but you can get accurate information from social media, particularly news from people living in Egypt and witnessing events themselves'.

Real people can be trusted more than mainstream media for the news, and, to some extent, social media. It is worth mentioning that people can also trust some mainstream media, depending on the broadcasting channel and the newsreaders: 'To a certain degree, I trust people bringing news from social media, and it really depends on what kind of channel I am watching on TV', Participant 16 says. Trust can be built again on the mainstream media, depending on the broadcasting channel and the ethics of the channel. There are some Egyptians who do not completely rely on real peoples' posts on social media; Participant 1 (F, aged 22, 1.75 generation), confirms that she cannot rely on these posts as a source of information and says that peoples' posts can just be read to understand other peoples' points of view, but may not be news, as such. Participant 1 argues that her parents' generation do often rely on peoples' posts, but the younger generation do not, as mentioned previously:

I do not take peoples' stories as news, but my mother would take peoples' stories as news […]. I tend to believe stories published by people which […have been…] taken from newspaper links or even TV channel websites. This reveals the difference between the ideologies of the younger and their parents' generations and how both think differently in relation to sources of information regarding Egypt.

The notion of mistrust of the mainstream media is overwhelming among Egyptians interviewees in this paper. The findings of this study illustrate that almost all the first and second-generation participants agree that Western and Arab mainstream media cannot be trusted as they have a hidden agenda, for instance political or religious ideologies, besides the economic value [advertising and subscriptions] of their broadcast.

Social media as a platform for socialisation and belonging

The second theme extracted from the interviews and analysis of Facebook pages is that Egyptians in the United Kingdom have used social media to get together and protest so as to prove to fellow Egyptians they still belong to Egypt and to perform their identity, especially during the 2011 uprising. The sense of belonging to Egypt is enhanced through groups on social media which gather together Egyptians worldwide. Egyptians in the United Kingdom feel that they are more linked to Egypt through social media. They can contribute to Egypt via social media from the news extracted from the postings and videos, unlike the mainstream media which is not helpful. Participant 10 (M, aged 20, first generation), as a migrant living in the United Kingdom, describes how social media has been playing an important role and how his life cannot be defined without its existence. As an Egyptian living abroad, social media is not just a source of information for Participant 10; it is a lifestyle.

Analysing Facebook pages has revealed that Egyptians in the United Kingdom, including first and second generations used media, principally social media to demonstrate their sense of belonging and solidarity with fellow Egyptians in Egypt during the 2011 uprising. Egyptians in the United Kingdom were interested in events, but only online, not offline, in terms of going on the streets to protest. In addition, Egyptians in the United Kingdom were interested in protesting primarily on the streets of Britain during the rebellion of 2011, though the spirit of protesting died down afterwards.

The first group observed is '25th of January Egyptians in the UK'. This group was created after the 2011 Egyptian revolution. It was chosen for this study because it is particularly for Egyptians in the UK and the activities held in London and the rest of the UK. The group aims to be 'the voice of Egyptians in the UK', according to the group's description. Most of the posts in this group oppose the current military rule of President El-Sisi and the group always supports activists fighting for freedom under El-Sisi's regime.

Observing this group confirms how Egyptians in the UK would like to have a voice in what is going on in Egypt and that they are still part of Egypt despite the poor attendance at activities organised by the group. In addition, this shows how social media are used as a tool to perform identity and prove 'Egyptianness'.

The second group I observed is called: 'Egyptians abroad are all coming back to rebuild Egypt'. This group was created in February 2011 after the resignation of President Mubarak. This group was chosen because, firstly,

it is related to Egyptians abroad and their contribution to their country of origin, notably after the 2011 uprising and the huge change in Egypt; and secondly, this group did not attract much attention or many 'likes' (it only has eleven 'likes').

The manager of the page was interviewed and said that the principal purpose of the group is to encourage Egyptians to participate in political protests and events, once again, in order to restore the spirit of the 2011 uprising. Asser, the group's manager claims that almost all Egyptians were hopeful of rebuilding Egypt once more, immediately after President Mubarak stepped down as the president in Feb 2011:

> "Many Egyptians shared the dream of being part of rebuilding Egypt, which is why I created this group. In retrospect, it was such a naïve way to look at it. Now, I guess we all realised that countries don't just become better in a few days or months."

Asser also adds that he organised rallies for Egyptians abroad to meet and discuss what to do regarding Egypt; although these meetings were successful immediately after the revolution, but not afterwards. This once more emphasises that Egyptians abroad shared a sense of euphoria during the 2011 rebellion. However, these days, the spirit of protesting and participating in political activities has subsided, as Participant 19 (F, aged 24, second generation) and Participant 16 (M, aged 36, second generation) expressed.

Discussion

Social media is not only used for publicising goods and services, but as a source of information for various audiences (Waters and Lo, 2012:299). *Facebook* and *Twitter* were used as a source of information, as people had lost faith in the mainstream media during the Arab uprisings. Egyptians in the United Kingdom interviewed in the study have shown how they used media, specifically social media as a source of information to stay up to date regarding Egypt. In contrast, Rane and Salem (2012), claim that the main source of information remains the mainstream media.

Members of social media platforms such as *Facebook*, use them as a source of information by interacting with others – the unique feature of social media is the communication and interaction facility. People who are concerned about a specific topic for instance, can receive immediate responses on social media, rather than using search engines to receive automated responses. However, as social media responses are based on personal opinions, these can be misleading and even problematic as they are regularly subjective and even biased.

Conversely, Agichtein et al. (2008:186), believe using social media regarding questions and answers is more accurate than traditional content.

The mainstream media employ correspondents, whereas ordinary people can act as voluntary correspondents. People will generally believe news from those witnessing events, especially if they are friends or relatives. This demonstrates that the news reported by citizen journalists is more believable than that reported via the mainstream media. Participant 21 (F, aged 31, first generation) claims that social media can be trusted as a source of information, though various news verification skills are required: a person working in the media industry, for instance.

Trust in social media has been generated by freedom of use, in addition to news distribution and credibility. One of the reasons for trusting social media is the combination of news. To prove the power of social media in the uprising, Participant 21 mentions that a large part of what happened in 2011 would have been silenced, without social media. Social media was significant regarding making Egyptian voices heard, and without social media the revolution would probably have failed. It is worth mentioning that social media is easy to access on smart phones, unlike mainstream media.

There are ordinary people who are being used as a source of information known as 'citizen journalists'. Goode (2009), defines citizen journalism as ordinary people acting like journalists when reporting the news by sharing photographs and videos and by blogging. This method of journalism allows ordinary people to share those photographs or news and to participate in discussions around that piece of news. Furthermore, this type of journalism is interactive, unlike the mainstream media where the audience is unable to interact with the news on TV for instance. Participant 4 (M, aged 35, first generation) agrees with this point by observing how social media today is powerful and being interactive indicates that people can be a part of creating news and distributing it, unlike the passive role audiences have in the mainstream media.

Singer et al. (2011), referred to citizen journalism as 'participatory journalism'; that is, citizen journalism indicates its collaborative nature, such as participatory journalism on social networking sites.

Johnson and Kaye (2004), conducted a study to measure the credibility of online sources. Although the results reveal that online sources are more trusted than traditional sources, people still test the credibility of such sources from other sources or ordinary people, as there is a substantial amount of fake news on the Internet.

The findings regarding the first and second-generation participants in this study reconcile with Howard et al. (2011) in terms of the importance of social media, although the credibility of news remains questionable. However, the sense of trust regarding social media varies among the first-generation Egyptians. Participants aged less than 40, such as Participant 10 (M, aged 20, first generation), appear to trust social media and consider them a source

of information. Participants aged 40 years and over, such as Participant 2 (M, aged 43, first generation), conversely, do not trust social media without thinking.

Participants also conform to Al Aswany's (2011) claim concerning the use of social media as a tool to organise themselves regarding protests. Social media has been a good platform for the Egyptian participants in this study to be politically active and 'perform their identity' by displaying solidarity with Egypt and to show that they are still Egyptian or by raising money for Egypt.

This section is a discussion on mistrust of the mainstream media. The findings of this study illustrate that almost all the first and second-generation participants agree that Western and Arab mainstream media cannot be trusted as they have a hidden agenda, for instance political or religious ideologies and the economic value [advertising and subscriptions] of their broadcast. Ali and Fahmy (2013), tackled the issue of bias and the Arab media when they conducted a study on the coverage of *Al-Arabiya* news and events in Egypt. The study reveals that *Al-Arabiya* news channel is biased. The bias was identified through the types of news broadcast about Egypt in accordance with the Saudi government, given the fact the *Al-Arabiya* channel is Saudi owned. This example shows that the Arab media, predominantly the mainstream media, are biased and have a hidden agenda. Moreover, this illustrates why some interviewees in this study do not trust the Arab media in general because of their hidden agenda. For instance, Participant 20 (M, aged 50, first generation), lost trust in the mainstream media as a result of their hidden agenda and propaganda. The idea of mistrusting mainstream media has united interviewees in this study, either first generations including those below and above the age of 40 or the second generation. In addition, the first generation of Egyptians in the United Kingdom above the age of 40 tend to mistrust both social and mainstream media.

The argument here could be that friends and family can also be biased, depending on their ideologies and in what they believe, but they would deliver news as it is, according to what they witnessed. To receive news from people who have witnessed events, is still better than receiving news from the media, with their own ideology and methods of presenting the news, by reporting some events and deliberately disregarding others.

Social media websites have been successful tools to organise both Egyptians abroad and within Egypt to join protests. This has been perceived from conducting interviews with different generations of Egyptians in the United Kingdom and analysing Facebook pages. For example, Facebook was used as a platform to gather Egyptians worldwide to display solidarity with both the uprising and fellow Egyptians. For Egyptians in the United Kingdom, social media such as Facebook was used to join online protests regarding Egypt to prove to fellow Egyptians that they remain Egyptian and perform their Egyptian identity. Interviews with Egyptians in the United Kingdom reveal that during the uprising, joining offline protests on the British streets was more than afterwards. The reason for not joining any protests organised in the United Kingdom is that the spirit of protesting among Egyptians in the UK died down and the sense of euphoria slightly diminished.

Conclusion

This paper has revealed that the Egyptian diaspora in the United Kingdom benefited from the media during the 2011 uprising by being a source of information, as well as a platform to protest and perform their identity. However, conversely, the Egyptian diaspora lost faith in the mainstream media.

The main finding is how social media were used by Egyptians in the United Kingdom as a tool to contribute to Egypt and stay informed as regards news on Egypt. The other finding is that the mainstream media have lost their credibility as a source of information regarding news on Egypt, and furthermore, the mainstream media have not been employed as a tool by Egyptians abroad to stay connected to Egypt. In contrast, social media, to some extent have been used as a source of information, a tool to stay attached to Egypt and for people to express their political engagement with the country. Regarding mistrust of the mainstream media and doubts about the credibility of social media as a source of information, personal networks, including family and friends, were more trusted as sources of information than social and mainstream media for certain participants in this study. The analysis of Facebook pages has illustrated that social media were used as tools for Egyptians to express themselves as Egyptians, by way of signing up for *Facebook* events but not protesting in the streets.

The main theory adopted in this paper is that of Goffman (1959) and the concept of 'performing identity' by way of online political participation on Facebook concerning Egypt. Goffman also asserts that performing identity concerns meeting other peoples' expectations and how individuals have a set of roles to play and expectations to meet in society. Egyptians perform political activities as actors on a stage and play the part to satisfy what is expected of them. Furthermore, as Egyptians, performing identity is another way to prove belonging to Egyptian identity, especially with those residing abroad.

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