

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MOBILIZING, SUSTAINING AND ENDING THE
MAJOR PROTESTS OF THE OCTOBER 17 REVOLUTION**

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Master of Arts in Media Studies / Advertising

by

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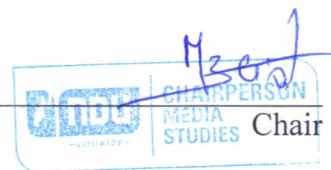
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my younger and future self, my parents and family and sincerely thank them for their patience and understanding even at the most stressful moments.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents who believed in me since day one and encouraged me to pursue my dreams, achieve my goals and reach for the stars. I am beyond grateful and blessed for your support.

To B.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand how social media affected the Lebanese revolution known as the October 17 revolution. The study explored mainly how and why people used social media platforms mainly Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and it investigated whether or not social media had an influence over decision making during the revolution.

The data gathering process was possible through a survey that was filled by 463 Lebanese from all over Lebanon, who are social media users. Also, five interviews have been conducted with public figures, journalists and activists to understand deeper the connection between social media and the revolution.

The results validated the hypothesis as they showed a strong connection between the continuity of the revolution and the content on social media. The results revealed that people see social media as their primary source of news and information as well as the space where they can reveal their anger and frustration. The results also showed that the revolution would have started without social media, yet its continuity wouldn't have been insured.

Keywords: social media, revolution, mobilization, influence, influencer, protest.

The Role of Social Media in Mobilizing, Sustaining and Ending the Major

Protests of the October 17 Revolution

I. Introduction

Social media platforms have been a source of dilemma in people's every day's life. Indeed, social media have been playing an important role in molding people's perspectives and affecting the way they think, act or live, making them praise or hate those platforms. Further, social media have been reshaping institutions and individual's lifestyles, making them adopt new approaches to business and enabling them to widen their exposure and transmit the image they need to their audience. Throughout the past decade, starting 2010, many events have been launched and/or tailored through digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Actually, those platforms became home for the rising of political debates and sociological phenomena ranging from the LGBTQ community to other sociological changes; they have helped in the launch and spread of political movements, ideologies and even extremism. The most common event that spread was mostly based on digital platforms, was the Arab spring. Indeed, the revolution that took place in Egypt in 2011, was managed by activists from many Arab countries through Twitter. Yet, the content presented on Twitter is subject to control and censorship as much as the content presented on traditional media platforms where manipulators and contributors tend to show what they want to show to the public. Those manipulators have the power and the resources to hide the negative aspects of any news from the public, and/or even veil secrets that might get in the way of their plans if exposed (Anderson & Lee, 2020).

“With over 2.7 billion monthly active users as of the second quarter of 2020, Facebook is the biggest social network worldwide.” (Clement, 2020) In Lebanon, the statistics are similar and show that around 4 million Lebanese use Facebook which is the most popular platform followed by 1.6 million Instagram users in 2020. (Data Report, 2020): This huge and ever-increasing number shows the portion of the population that is directly affected by the content being shared online and emphasizes the roles and importance that online platforms have. Journalists were not either oblivious to the extent of the exposure social media can provide compared to traditional media outlets, thus they grasped the opportunity of gaining newer exposure and acquiring a wider reach by being part of these emerging and booming platforms. Many traditional journalists have begun engaging in user-generated online content; a survey of science journalists in 2009 showed that 63% of science journalists get story ideas from scientists’ blogs, an increase from 18% a mere 5 years earlier (Anderson, et al., 2012). Also, a recent 2021 study shows the increased reliance upon Twitter by journalists; in fact 85% of journalists are citing the platform as an essential social platform in building readership (Rack, 2021). All types of industries engaging in different business activities, have seen a massive potential of growth and expansion for their businesses through digital platforms; and a wide range of businesses started adopting digital platforms to narrow the gap between their businesses and their customers: ‘93 percent of marketers utilize social media for business’ (Cooper, 2013)

In the era in which social media are present and accessible by most if not all humans regardless of their status and/or social class, these platforms have been playing a major and essential role in promoting views, ideas and opinions that not only affect others’ opinions, but also enable activist groups to communicate with potential communities over large distances (Breuer, 2012).

Looking at the Arab world and the Middle East area, social media platforms do not have a different status than the one they acquired in Europe and the new world. Nonetheless, it is obvious that the power and reach of these platforms differ from a country to another depending on the extent of censorship and governmental control (Mourtada & Salem, 2012). Compared to other countries in the Arab world, Lebanon has more freedom of speech than other countries, and people are more immersed and 'addicted' to social media than any other middle eastern country. Moreover, Lebanese people and mostly youngsters rely on social media as a source of news and tend to find news more accessible and sometimes more reliable (Melki & Mallat, 2014). In addition, Lebanese influencers have a wide reach and power over public opinion. The political discourse in Lebanon is not limited to the elite of the society, yet everyone seems to be involved. Influencers do not miss a chance of talking about political issues that bother them and use their platforms to discuss mostly political news that have influence over the Lebanese economic and social situation.

Social media platforms that originally aimed to connect people and create a platform to share meaningful moments became much more than that. The implication of social media in diverse political matters made it worth investigating. The research aims to prove that social media made the Lebanese revolution of October 17 possible; without social media platforms the revolution would not have happened or would not have attracted so many Lebanese people. Exploring the impact of social media over Lebanese citizens, mainly youngsters, will reveal the extent of their influence over the revolution.

II. Literature Review

Social Media in today's daily lives

Social media have turned from platforms to share good times and memories, to multimillion businesses, having evolved due to large content shared on them, from individuals and businesses in order to not only share photos, but also as channels to advertise on, generate more sales, create a communication chain with potential and existing customers, all in one place. In fact, social media platforms became an essential part of this generation's daily life (Hedman & Djerf-Pierre, 2013). With the ever-increasing use of social media, new businesses became able to impact the largest number of clients especially businesses looking for exposure. Building a name and a brand became much more achievable in the era of social media (Kahar, Yamimi, Bunari, & Habil, 2012). In addition to being a space to connect and share pieces of one's interests and memories, social media have been a great source of information and a means that allows the exposure to global news. Social media platforms have gained large attention because they are accessible for all, fast and easy to use, adding that it can be used by all ages (Cohen, Lund, & Scarles, 2018).

2.1. The role of media and new media in the mobilization of political protest

The importance of social media does not exclude the political field. In fact, the rapid reach of news by anyone anywhere has made people more involved in the political life and more influenced by the opinions shared about political events and political parties (Anderson et al., 2018). More importantly, social media has helped turn opinions into actions as one can fuel the rest resulting in major protests that have taken place all over the world. Political protests have taken a new turn

with the rise of new media channels mainly empowered by major social media platforms. This escalation has not only helped translate the hassles and demands of the people, but also constituted a vast, easy, and fast communication chain reaching the mass regardless of their location, age, and political views (Barnett, 2019). The fast message spread helps connecting people in a fast manner, and helps powering individuals in order to form groups and become protesters against a specific issue or cause. The protests in Egypt are a fitting example of the role of social media in mobilizing political protests (Storck, 2011). Indeed, governmental authorities proceeded to shutting down many social media platforms since protesters were fueled by opinions shared on these platforms especially what the businessman Mohammad Ali was sharing and revealing many sides of his corrupted government. Social media was then used as a tool to call for protests and the tool used to silence protesters (Barnett, 2019). Thus, political entities recognize the undeniable role that social media plays in political life and modern political protests.

2.2. The role of media and new media in the mobilization of October 17's revolution

Lebanese people have always been seen as the survivors who overcome any obstacle and 'rise from the ashes' (Khoury, 2020). Yet, the corruption that has been escalating on the Lebanese scene has angered the people more than ever, sending them to the streets in the largest protest since 2005. Imposing taxes on communication applications was the trigger for Lebanese citizens to hit the streets, block the roads and start to pressure the official authorities in the country (Ipek, 2020). While those groupings were not centralized in one main location, citizens that went to the streets had to communicate to know what is being done in every location on one side, and to invite people to join them on the other side. On another note, the news about the current situation was pushing

people to move forward with their protests and the news was mainly broadcasted on social media platforms between the protesters. Therefore, the coordination, planning and triggers for the revolution were all social media managed showing the role it played in the Lebanese revolution (Figures 1,2 and 3). Moreover, imposing taxes on WhatsApp, which is a social media platform, shows even more the connection between the protest and the virtual world. Furthermore, with the use of television channels to broadcast the revolution, its continuity depended mostly on the content shared on social media especially the trending ‘Do you know why?’ video that explained the reasons behind the revolution and that was shared nation-wide (Houssari, 2019).



Figure 1 Tweet by Ana Khatt Ahmar



Figure 2 Tweet by Minteshreen



Figure 3 Instagram post by Political Pen

2.3. Coverage of the Revolution: Social Media versus Televisions

The recent Lebanese revolution that has started on October 17, has changed the rules of media in Lebanon. Lebanese people who relied mainly on televisions, radios and newspapers for information and news, shifted towards social media platforms. The news coverage and the speed and authenticity of reporting were the most important criteria to be taken into consideration when choosing the preferred media outlet (Surprenant, 2020). What has mainly led to this shift was the subjectivity that the Lebanese TV channels adopted. Indeed, Lebanese channels got divided according to their opinions toward the revolution whether by supporting or opposing it. News channel like MTV, LBCI and New TV have embraced editorial lines that clearly support the protesters, while media outlets like the Hezbollah-led al-Manar or al-Akhbar have expressed their support for the government (Surprenant, 2020). Ayman Mhanna, Executive Director of the Samir Kassir Foundation explains that ‘social media might become the reference for all the young revolutionaries that don’t recognize themselves in the traditional media treatment’ especially in a time when traditional media outlets are more than a news medium rather carriers of bias and

opinions (Surprenant, 2020). Even when the popularity was to social media, coverage on national televisions did not stop. What was surprising though, was the extent to which TVs relied on social media. Social media became the trend setter and televisions followed those trends; they displayed hashtags similar to those trending on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, they also covered the events in the hotspots named on social media. Most importantly, we saw similar advertisements that were created to mobilize the protests, displayed on both social media and televisions especially the channels that supported the revolution. In fact, we saw that the advertisement by Ana Khatt Ahmar was trending all over social media but was also displayed during commercial breaks on TVs (Ipek, 2020). Nevertheless, the coverage was not all similar as people seemed to have larger freedom on social media. Naming politicians and coming after them for their corrupted acts, was more popular on social media rather than TV channels that are bound by censorship. Even when Lebanon takes pride in the freedom of expression, consequences are inevitable when someone targets prominent political figure. Having more freedom on social media, influencers and protestors had more liberty to attack prominent people (Houssari, 2019).

2.4. The Use of Different Social Media Platforms

The different social media platforms were used differently during the revolution. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp have different demographics and have been used for different purposes during the Lebanese revolution. Similarly to the Egyptian revolution, each platform served a purpose like Facebook organized and mobilized and Twitter was used for live reporting. First, it is important to analyze the demographic features of each platform. Specific data is absent when it comes to Lebanon alone, yet studies that target the Middle East and the Arab world mention Lebanon and offer demographic information when it comes to social media platforms. Looking at Facebook and Twitter, we find that users do not vary largely, rather they are mostly

similar and belong to different age groups, levels of education and social class. WhatsApp is the cheaper form of communication that has replaced phone calls and messaging for everyone which explains its wide use regardless the age, education and social class. Moreover, Facebook's growing popularity and the space it creates to connect with people and old friends as well as share memories and momentums, make Facebook a desirable platform also regardless of the age (Dennis, Martin, & Hassan, 2019). When it comes to Instagram, we notice that the majority of users are teenagers and young adults. The study conducted by The Northwest University in Qatar reveals that Instagram users are divided as follows: 60% are aged between 18 and 24 years old, 45% are 25-34 year-olds, 30% are 35-44 year-olds and 17% are 45 years old and above (Dennis, Martin, & Hassan, 2019). Twitter shares somewhat similar demographics to Instagram with 21% of the users aged between 18 and 24 years old, 21% are 25 to 34 years old, 19% are 35 to 44 year-olds and 14% are 45 and above (Dennis, Martin, & Hassan, 2019). It is also noticeable that the level of education of platform users varies. Indeed we see a rise of educated users on Instagram but mostly on Twitter (Instagram: 13% primary or less, 19% intermediate versus 44% secondary, 48% university or higher; Twitter: 1% primary or less, 5% intermediate versus 20% secondary, 25% university or higher) (Dennis, Martin, & Hassan, 2019). The content shared on these platforms varies greatly from posting videos and photos, to entertainment and sharing news especially in relation to age. On Facebook, the youngest users (18-24) are less likely than the oldest users (45+) to get or share news (getting news: 61% 18-24 year-olds versus 74% 45+ year-olds; sharing news: 47% 18-24 year-olds versus 54% 45+ year-olds). On Twitter, the youngest users are more likely to share personal photos or videos including ones featuring themselves (personal photos/videos: 33% 18-24 year-olds versus. 14% 45+ year-olds; photos/videos they are in: 18% 18-24 year-olds versus. 10% 45+ year-olds). Instagram is more popular youngsters, and younger Instagram users

are also more likely than their older counterparts to get entertainment content, share personal content, and to keep up with social media influencers on the platform (get entertainment: 50% 18-24 year-olds versus 37% 45+ year-olds; share entertainment: 43% 18-24 year-olds vs. 34% 45+ year-olds; share personal photos or videos: 53% 18-24 year-olds vs. 36% 45+ year-olds; view posts/stories from social media influencers: 34% 18-24 year-olds vs. 22% 45+ year-olds). (Dennis, Martin, & Hassan, 2019). Looking at the statistics provided by the Northwestern University of Qatar, we are able to understand more in depth how social media were used in the Lebanese revolution. Facebook and WhatsApp having similar population and being accessed by different age groups were used to organize and communicate. WhatsApp is becoming the preferred means of communication amongst Lebanese population leading it to be the first choice of platform to organize the protests. Also, Facebook served the same purpose. On the other hand, having a younger population interested in anything posted by influencers, Instagram was used to ‘influence’ and mobilize for the revolution. Young-adults and teenagers who are mostly interested in the content displayed by the multitude of influencers were able to be mobilized through these influencers who displayed a variety of content revolution-related. In addition, Twitter’s more educated population and more news-oriented, made the perfect platform not only to mobilize but also to update the users regarding any new event as well as give them live and updated news. Therefore, all social media platforms served a purpose according to their users and interests of these users, delivering this way a message that appealed to the audience. A recent mobilization for the revolution happened when not all members of the parliament resigned after the Beirut blast. The political groups that were still mobilizing the revolution used pure political content on Twitter (figure 4), yet they used more visual content on Instagram and Facebook (figure 5). The posts by Ana Khatt Ahmar targeted the audience of each platform. More educated and politically oriented

young adults on Twitter want political content, younger generations on Facebook and Instagram prefer videos and pictures as they seem easier to understand.



Figure 4 Ana Khatt Ahmar Instagram post



Figure 5 Ana Khatt Ahmar Twitter post

2.5. Studies on Social Media and Revolutions

As social media became more and more popular and their rise coincided with multiple revolutions especially in the Arab world, many studies have been conducted regarding the link between both phenomena. For instance, the Arab Spring was linked to social media platforms as many theories found that the digital world played an important role in mobilizing that revolution. Another example is the Egyptian revolution that has undoubtedly been mobilized and organized through social media. This section will explore studies that investigated the relationship between social media, the Arab Spring, the Egyptian revolution and the October 17 revolution. Even when it is still recent, studies have not failed to target the relation between social media and the Lebanese revolution.

2.5.1. Social Media and the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring is, without a doubt, one of the main uprisings in the Arab world that caught worldwide attention for various reasons. Most importantly, Arabs wanting to topple regimes and change the pillars on which their countries are based was a first and an unexpected event in most Arab countries (Emmanouilidou, 2020). Moreover, happening around the time when social media were at their peak, (around 2011) many investigated the link between the revolutions and the social media platforms. The most striking example that led to the study of the importance of social media was in the ouster of Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the imminent overthrow of Mubarak. Egyptians following the Tunisians' lead had to overthrow Mubarak (Brown, Guskin, & Mitchell, 2012). Many sources and the multitude of studies have agreed that social media played a crucial role in mobilizing the protests in the Middle East; this is further confirmed on ground as the activist and former Google executive Wael Ghonim revealed, "If you want to liberate a society all you need is the internet" (Emmanouilidou, 2020). The activist gives an important role to the internet in general in spreading word and motivating people, especially youngsters, to stand up for their needs and beliefs. Social media is the fastest tool to spread information, research showed (Brown, Guskin, & Mitchell, 2012). Platforms, most importantly twitter and Facebook have helped Arabs connect to what was happening around them and support their fellow protestors. Also, Arabs in the Diaspora tried to support by spreading news online, making the revolutions more public knowledge and a more widespread phenomenon (Smidi & Shahin, 2017). Social media platforms are referred to in many studies of the Arab Spring as being 'enablers of change' (Smidi & Shahin, 2017). Admitting that they facilitate change and enable a social reform means that one has to acknowledge the important role these platforms play when it comes to revolution; they are motivation outlets, ensure social journalism, help in mobilization and create a widespread web that

has far reaches. Mobilization, communication, coordination and organization that were insured on national level to conduct effective protests, have been able to contagiously spread throughout the Arab world using the same qualities (Smidi & Shahin, 2017). The research conducted by Adam Smidi and Saif Shahin explains greatly the role played by social media in spreading the word about uprisings and motivating people to protest. The findings of this study reveal that social media insured the domino-effect when it comes to the uprisings Countries in the Middle East were one after the other revolting and protesting and trying hard to topple regimes (Smidi & Shahin, 2017).

2.5.2. Social Media and the Egyptian Revolution

The Egyptian revolution, even when being part of the Arab Spring, needs to be explored individually as its link to social media is the strongest and the most flagrant. Indeed, many believed that the Egyptian revolution started online way before the actual protests and the on-ground movements (Emmanouilidou, 2020). The tight dictatorial rule of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt was challenged and overthrown by the 18-days revolution in Egypt that began shortly after the Tunisian uprisings. The government has been exercising for a prolonged time extreme censorship over media as it has been squashing all forms of rebellion and protests (Eltantawi & Wiest, 2011). The dictatorship has been increasing in Egypt especially after 2007 when Mubarak drafted new constitutional amendments giving him an increased grip over the country. In this suffocating air where democracy is far from existent, Egyptians fueled by anger used all the resources available mainly social media (Eltantawi & Wiest, 2011). A study published by Cambridge University and conducted by Killian Clarke and Korhan Kocak explains in depth the role that Facebook and Twitter mainly played in the Egyptian revolution. The study revealed that recruitment and organization of the protest were possible thanks to Facebook. In fact, Facebook helped bring about the protest's significant size, the planning enabled by Facebook helped achieve its broad scope

(Clarke & Kocak, 2018). Also, Twitter played an important role through live updating which facilitated seemingly leaderless protester coordination and movement (Clarke & Kocak, 2018). Furthermore, the study shows that 48% of Egyptian youth received information about the protests through Facebook rather than any other media outlet, Facebook also helped coordinate and implement strategies by using private messages, walls and Facebook groups, Clarke and Kocak explain. It was also observed by the researchers, through the interviews they conducted, that the protests that were happening were at the exact places and times that were specified on Facebook groups showing the influence and the role that social media played in organizing the revolution (Clarke & Kocak, 2018). In addition, the Twitter updates were live and protestors were able to know what was happening at all time insuring this way a live coverage that was not totally possible through other media outlet. The use of Twitter in this way seems to have facilitated horizontal communication between protesters on the day itself, allowing them to synchronize and coordinate their actions in real time, despite being spread out across the city and country. Thus Twitter, although less important overall than Facebook, also seems to have enabled the successful day one protests of January 25, through the mechanism of live updating (Clarke & Kocak, 2018). Therefore, the start of the revolution was not a spontaneous one, rather it has been planned on social media for over 3 years and it has come to fruition and enabled changed during 2011 and the Arab Spring.

2.5.3. Social Media Use in the Middle East – Study by Northwestern University of Qatar

The seven-nation survey conducted by the Northwestern University of Qatar in 2019, gives a great deal of information regarding the attitudes towards social media in the Middle Eastern countries. This study is a yearly tradition that started in 2017. Being conducted every year, it gives

insight into the changing Arab world and the role that social media play in it. Even though the study does not relate social media to the revolution, it is able to explain the growing interests of youngsters in social media and their reliance on these platforms. The study shows a significant rise in the use of smartphones to access news compared to a great decrease in the use of TVs as a news outlet. More specifically, Arab nationals get news on Facebook (42%), WhatsApp (30%), and YouTube (24%) than from any other major social media (Dennis, Martin, & Hassan, 2019). Moreover, according to the study, many Arab nationals trust the news displayed on social media and believe they are credible. In fact, the percentages of nationals in four countries ;Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, and UAE, who get news from social media influencers at least once a day is greater than the percentage who get news from newspapers at least once a day (Dennis, Martin, & Hassan, 2019). The social media platforms used the most are, according to the survey, Facebook and WhatsApp rather than Instagram and Facebook Messenger. On these popular platforms that are being used as a source of news and information, the survey revealed that the majority of the content is either political or artistic (Dennis, Martin, & Hassan, 2019). Therefore, the study tackles different features regarding the use of social media giving important information and insights when it comes to the attitudes towards social media in the Middle East.

2.5.4. Social Media and the Lebanese Revolution

Regardless being a recent event, the October 17 revolution has caught the eye of local and foreign researchers especially wanting to examine the role that social media played in the matter. Lebanese people have always been revolutionary and somehow rebels, yet what was striking was their silence during long years of the ruling of the same political class who has brought nothing but corruption. One research has gathered data from the observation of interviews conducted with demonstrators as well as various media channels including LBC, MTV, Mayadeen, and others

(Kairouz & Dagher, 2020). In their study, Kairouz and Dagher found that social media acted in the first stage of the revolution as an instigator and promoter of the peaceful protests. Yet, with the introduction of violence and the conflicts with governmental forces as well as the failure of the government to understand the people's needs, social media led by example and played an undeniable role in building and mobilizing civil and peaceful demonstrations (Kairouz & Dagher, 2020). Communication that was possible thanks to social media enabled Lebanese citizens to connect and organize demonstrations and protests away from violence. The data gathered by Kairouz and Dagher reflected on the role played by social media and the crucial role the platforms played.

While Kairouz and Dagher was the only study to directly target the role of social media and the October 17 revolution, it did not gather data from Lebanese citizens and did not analyze their opinions. Thus, exploring data gathered by a survey platform in Lebanon *MySay* is important to build grounds for emerging results from this study. The results of the survey revealed many important opinions regarding the revolution especially its relation to social media. Through *MySay* it was possible to know that there was no united demand by the Lebanese protestors and the demands differed from wanting a government of technocrats, to early elections and the dissolution of the sectarianism. Moreover, data reflects the importance of social media in being the news outlet on which people relied the most during the protests; in fact 48.76% of the participants revealed that they were getting live news and the most recent updated events through social media rather than televisions. Nevertheless, the multitude of influencers and people choosing favorites, is believed by many to be the demise of the revolution. Indeed, the *MySay* survey revealed that 31.31% of Lebanese citizens found that the multitude of popular faces and the absence of leadership were a weakness of the October 17 revolution. Hence, the data gathered and the

opinions of the Lebanese population reveal that the social media played an important role even when it was not always positive.

III. Theoretical Framework

Humans are known for their ability to communicate and this is what differentiates them from other living beings. Media of communication have changed throughout the years especially with the advancement of technologies leading to a revolution in communication especially with the introduction of the internet and the opening of the world of social media. Thus, many theories of mass media communication are utilized to understand the audience's attitude towards the

information shared on media platforms and to assess the extent of influence social media platforms have on users (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Two main theories will be explored in order for the thesis to proceed based on these theories.

3.1. Active Audience Theory

In order to understand the implications of the Active Audience Theory, it is mandatory to define its pillars. From its name, in this theory the audience is not considered as mere spectators, rather the audience is formed by active participants who are influenced and have an opinion about what is delivered; the audience is an active entity involved in the communication process (A Dictionary of Media and Communication). The Active Audience Theory sees the audience as ‘prosumers’ meaning a mixture between consumers and producers giving them an active role (Takahashi, 2002). Yet, everyone being a unique individual makes this audience receive the information and process it differently. Active Audience Theory aims to understand the reactions and different means in which an individual receives, analyzes, interprets and reacts to content displayed on social media platforms (Seaman, 1992). Through this theory, it is also possible to understand and investigate the ways in which an individual uses these communication platforms. In light of this theory and its implications, the thesis will delve into the engagement of the Lebanese audience with the content displayed on various social media platforms.

3.2. Uses and Gratifications Theory

Another theory that well-matches with the Active Audience Theory is the Uses and Gratifications. Uses and Gratifications Theory is a popular approach to understanding mass communication. The theory places more focus on the consumer, or audience, instead of the actual

message itself. Uses and Gratifications Theory states what people do with media not what media does with people. (Blumler & Katz,1974). But, does the audience play an active role in choosing and using media? In 1970 Abraham Maslow suggested that Uses and Gratifications Theory was an extension of the Needs and Motivation Theory, and mainly fall in the Social Needs category. This theory explains extensively how people use media for their own needs and satisfaction (Ruggiero, 2000). In his article *Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century*, Thomas Ruggiero (2000) explains why people are in need of mass communication and the main reasons behind its use. He explains the five key reasons of media use, starting with the cognitive need or the need for information, the affective need as the media seems to satisfy one's emotional needs, the personal integrative need which relates directly to self-esteem, the social integrative need which refers to the need of socializing with family and friends and last the tension free need since the media represents at times an escape from the actual world. While exploring in this thesis how media influenced people and gave rise to the October 17 revolution, through the Uses and Gratifications Theory it will possible to understand why people relied and used social media in the first place.

IV. Practical Framework

4.1. Hypotheses and Research Questions

Theories have revealed that social media plays an important role in the life of many as they need it for many purposes. Through the theories discussed, the research will investigate why people use social media platforms and how they perceive the content, in relation to the Active Audience Theory. The Uses and Gratifications theory will help identify why people relied on social media during the revolution. The hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: People use social media to find other people who share their concerns.

Hypothesis 2: People used social media to channel Lebanese's anger towards the revolution and to organize the revolution.

Hypothesis 3: Social media helped people revolt and gave them reassurance that they can make a change.

4.2. Methodology and Data Analysis

This segment will discuss broadly the methodological choice and the examining strategy.

The investigative procedure for information collection is studies and the grounded hypothesis. Moreover, the methodological choice will be coordinating both quantitative and qualitative information. Additionally, the examining strategy is drawn in this area employing a cross-sectional test from Lebanese young-adult population. Also, many interviews will be conducted with prominent social media figures who played important roles on the platforms during the revolution as well as political and public figures who are able to offer insight to the development of the revolution on media platforms. At last, the examining strategies to be accomplished for the quantitative data analysis will be described using SPSS software.

Finally, the survey will be administered through social media platforms especially WhatsApp groups known to have been active for the purpose of the revolution. Thus, the population will be mostly made out of people who participated in the revolution with a minority of people who didn't but are actively using social media.

4.3. Demographics

- 59% of the participants in the survey are Men (273)

- 41% of the participants in the survey are women (190)
- Nationality: Lebanese
- Educational background: Different levels
- Social class: A, B, C

V. Results and Discussion

5.1. Results of the Survey

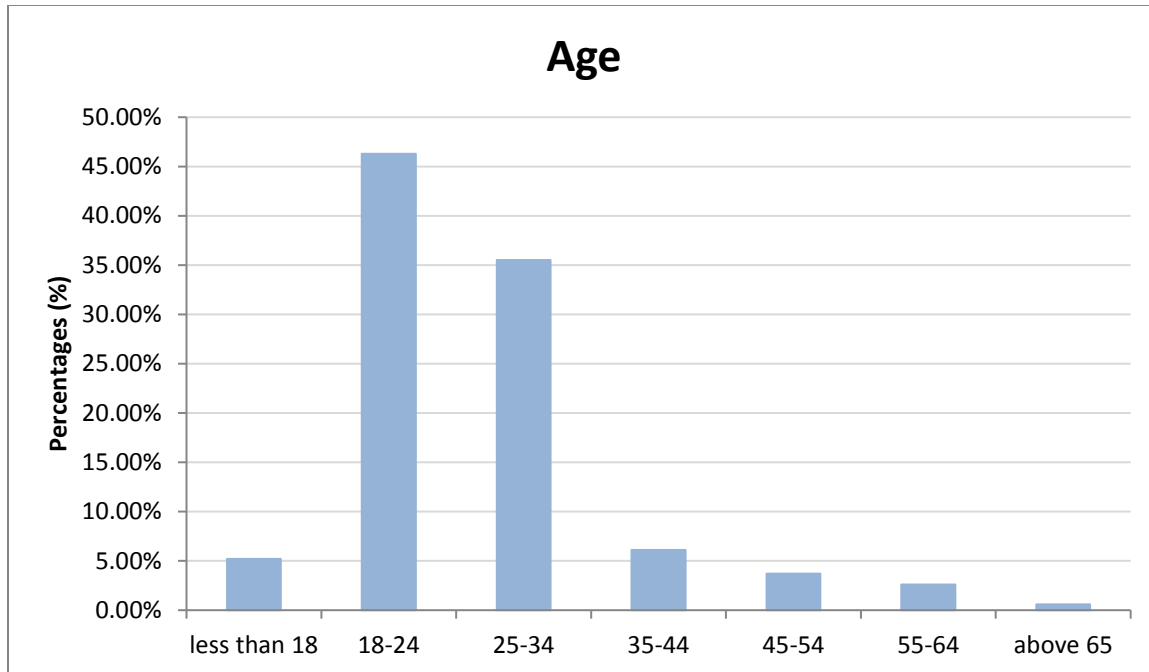


Figure 6 Age of the participants

Among our 463 participants, as expected, the largest number of people who took part in the survey, are aged between 18 and 34. This reflects greatly upon the age group that mostly uses social media platforms and who participated on-ground in the October 17 revolution.

Fortunately, the opinions gathered belonged almost equally to men and women, giving this way a genderless result. It is important to be able to identify the influence of social media on the Lebanese revolution without having the results affected by gender and gender-based opinions that can turn out to be biased.

The participants in the conducted study were not restricted to one area in Lebanon, they were rather dispersed. Yet, the highest number of participants belongs to Mount Lebanon (58.4%).

Most participants use social media platforms if not frequently they still use them sometimes. This large number of users can provide insight into the effects of social media on the revolution seeing that all participants are frequent users.

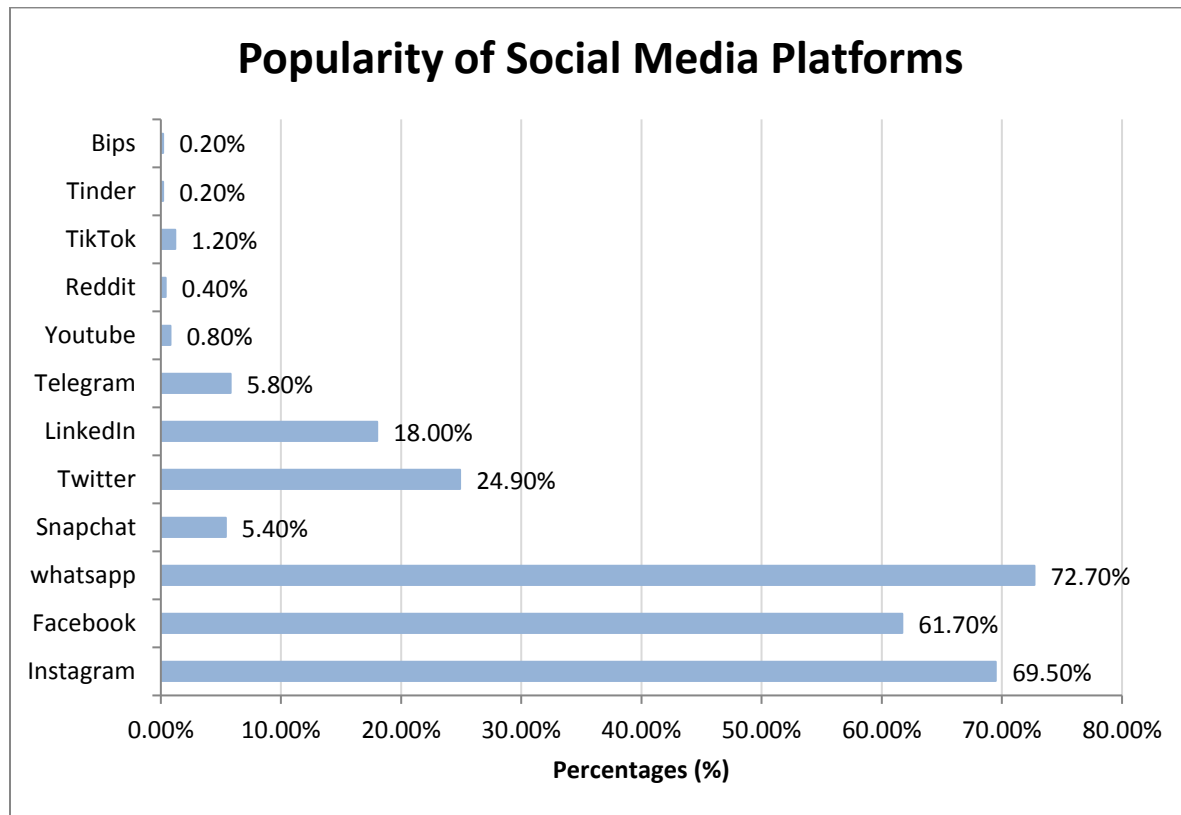


Figure 7 Popular social media platforms

Social media platforms are many and plural. Thus, it was mandatory to investigate which platforms are the most popular amongst the Lebanese population especially youngsters and young adults who constitute the majority of the participants. It is no secret that WhatsApp has gained the most popularity and is one of the favourite platforms among Lebanese people due to it being a cheap means of communication. 72% acknowledged that WhatsApp is their preferred platform. This also takes us back to our topic ‘October 17th revolution’, which originally commenced due to taxes imposed by the Lebanese government over WhatsApp (Ipek, 2020). Moreover, besides

WhatsApp, Instagram (69.5%) and Facebook (61.7%) seem to be greatly popular. Surprisingly, Twitter ranked fourth but with only 24.9% even when the platform gives access to many views especially political ones.

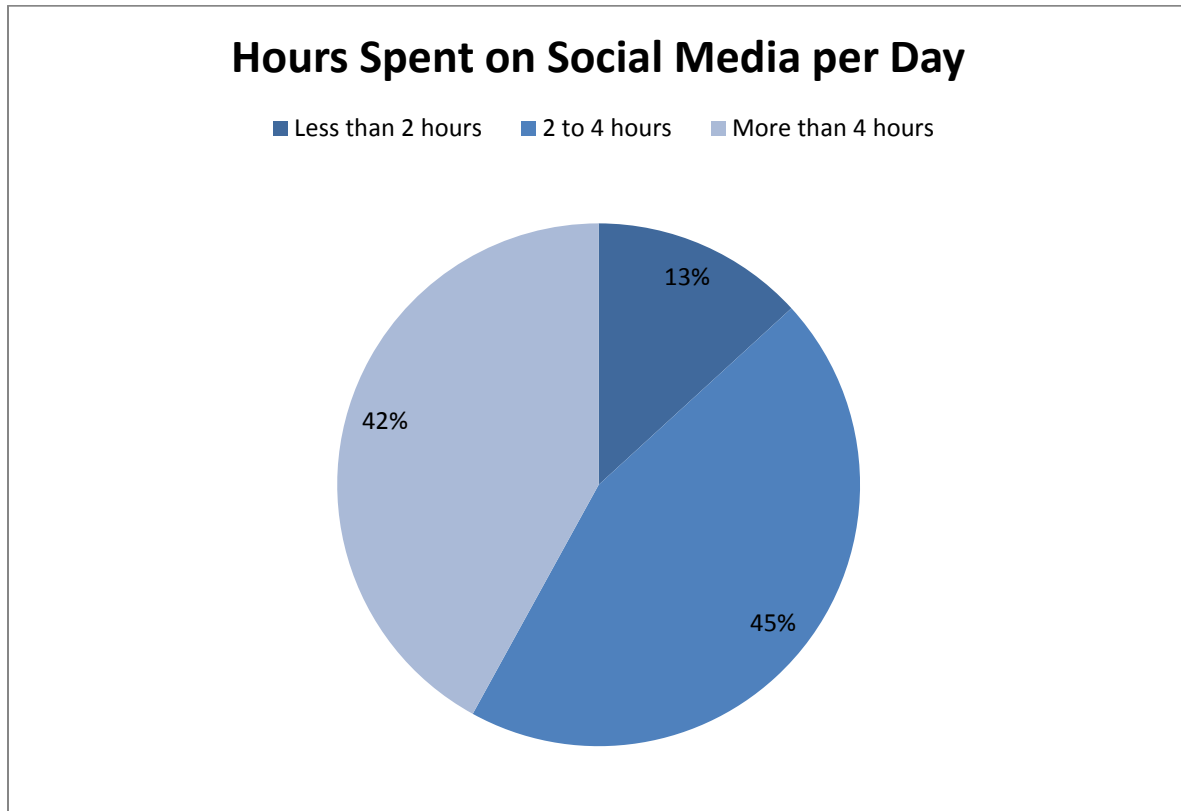


Figure 8 Hours spent on social media per day

The time of exposure to social media is one that is important to investigate. For instance, the longer the time spent scrolling in social media platforms, the bigger the chances to notice influential posts or political ideologies being passed through. The data gathered from the survey revealed that 42% of the participants spend more than 4 hours on social media and 45% spend between 2 to 4 hours. These numbers constitute the majority of the participants and can be generalized over the population due to the diversity of the gathered sample and its large number.

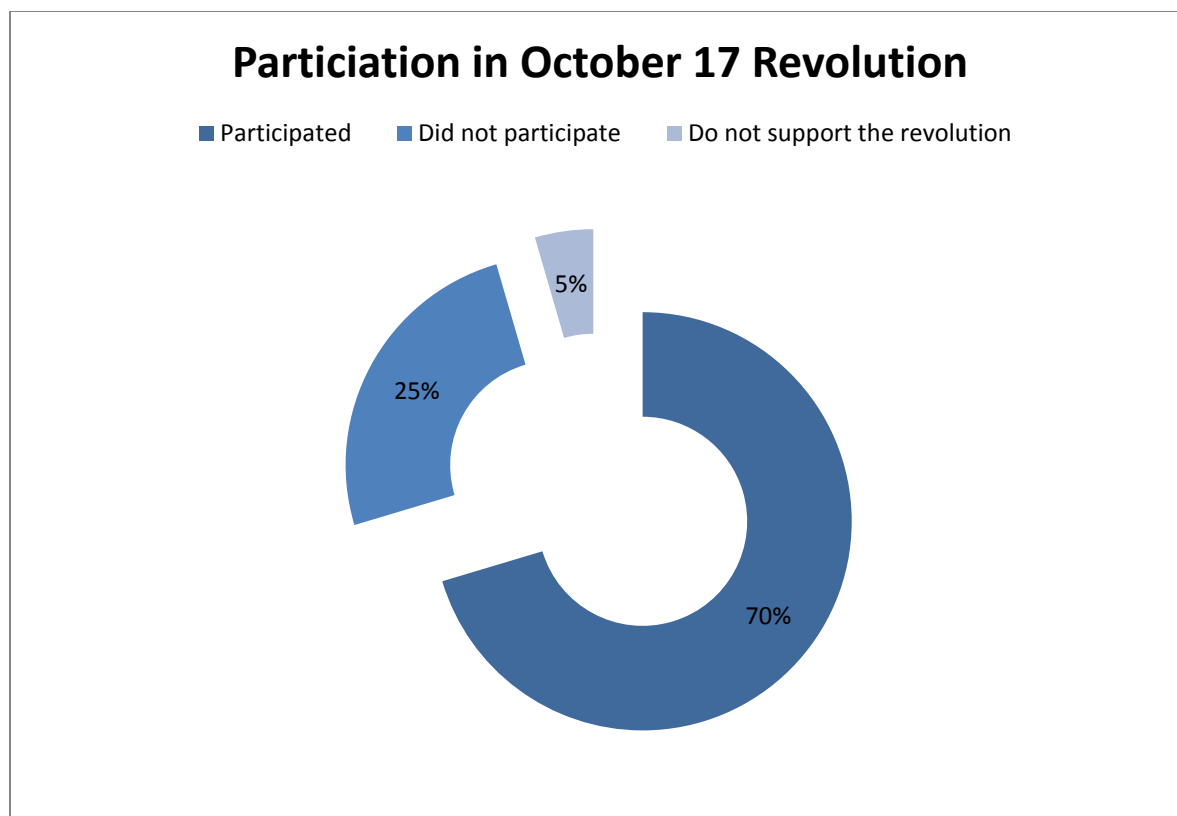


Figure 9 Participation in the October 17 revolution

70% of those who took part in this survey actually participated to the October 17 revolution. This large number can explain greatly the impact of social media over the revolution as this group is the active one that was influenced by different aspects of the revolution

Most of the participants in the research were attending the revolution where it was the most crowded, in Beirut, Zouk, Jal El Dib and Tripoli.

Even when the areas mentioned were the most crowded, not all participants chose the location according to the crowd. Indeed, 49% attended the gathering that is the closed to their area of residence; whereas 19% wanted to be with their friends, thus choosing the location according to where their friends were. Only 11.4% decided to be part of large crowds.

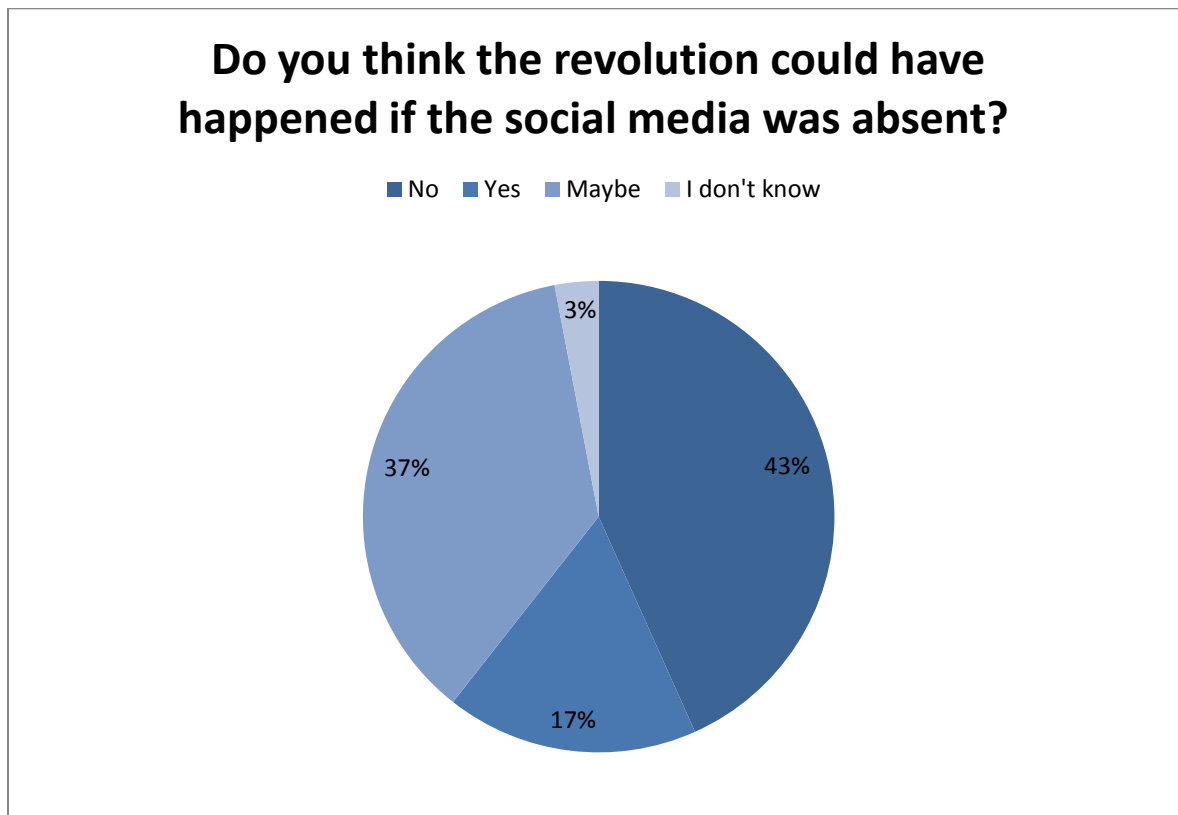


Figure 10 Role of social media in mobilizing the revolution

As the thesis is looking into the effects of social media in mobilizing the October 17 revolution, it was important to ask the people what if they think social media were that important. 43% which is a large portion, firmly denied the probability that the revolution might have taken place with the absence of social media. 37% were not completely sure whether or not the revolution could have been mobilized in a world deprived from social media. The results take us to the Active Audience Theory. For instance, as the Active Audience Theory aims to identify the reactions, analysis and interpretations of everyone who is exposed to social media (Seaman, 1992); the results seem interesting to explore. Those who were sure that the revolution couldn't have happened

without social media validate the fact that many are influenced by the content displayed and take action according to the messages transmitted through these platforms.

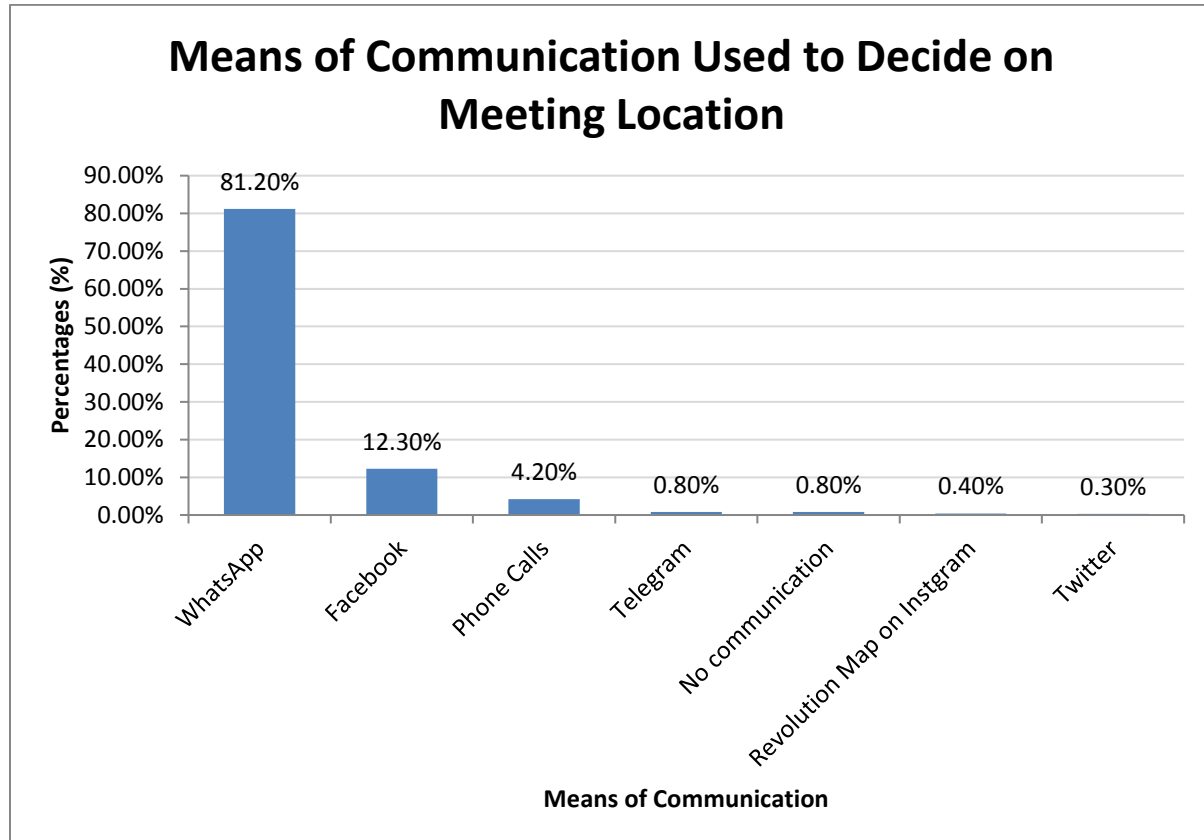


Figure 11 Means of communication used to decide on meeting locations

In order to agree on a meeting location, many communicated through WhatsApp and Facebook, platforms on which many groups were created in order to coordinate for a successful revolution. Those groups mentioned the most important meeting areas, the places where there is the most coverage and invited people to join certain locations.

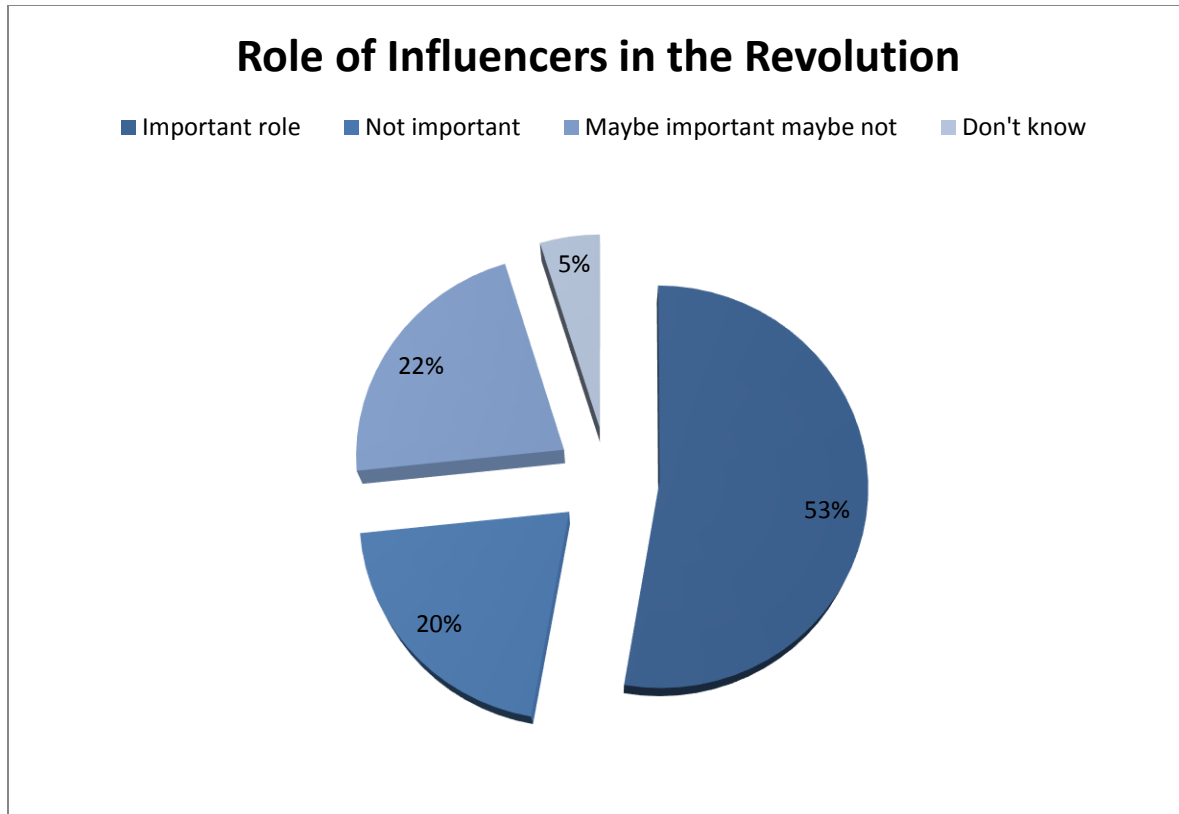


Figure 12 Role of influencers

The phenomenon of influencers is not a new one, yet it is still trending and many people refer to themselves as influencers or people refer to them as being so. Influencers, as the name suggest, tend to 'influence' people with their opinions and requests. Hence, in the survey, participants were asked to rate the importance of the role of influencers in the Lebanese revolution. More than half the participants think that influencers played an important role in mobilizing the revolution. Only 20% thought that the role of these influencers was not important.

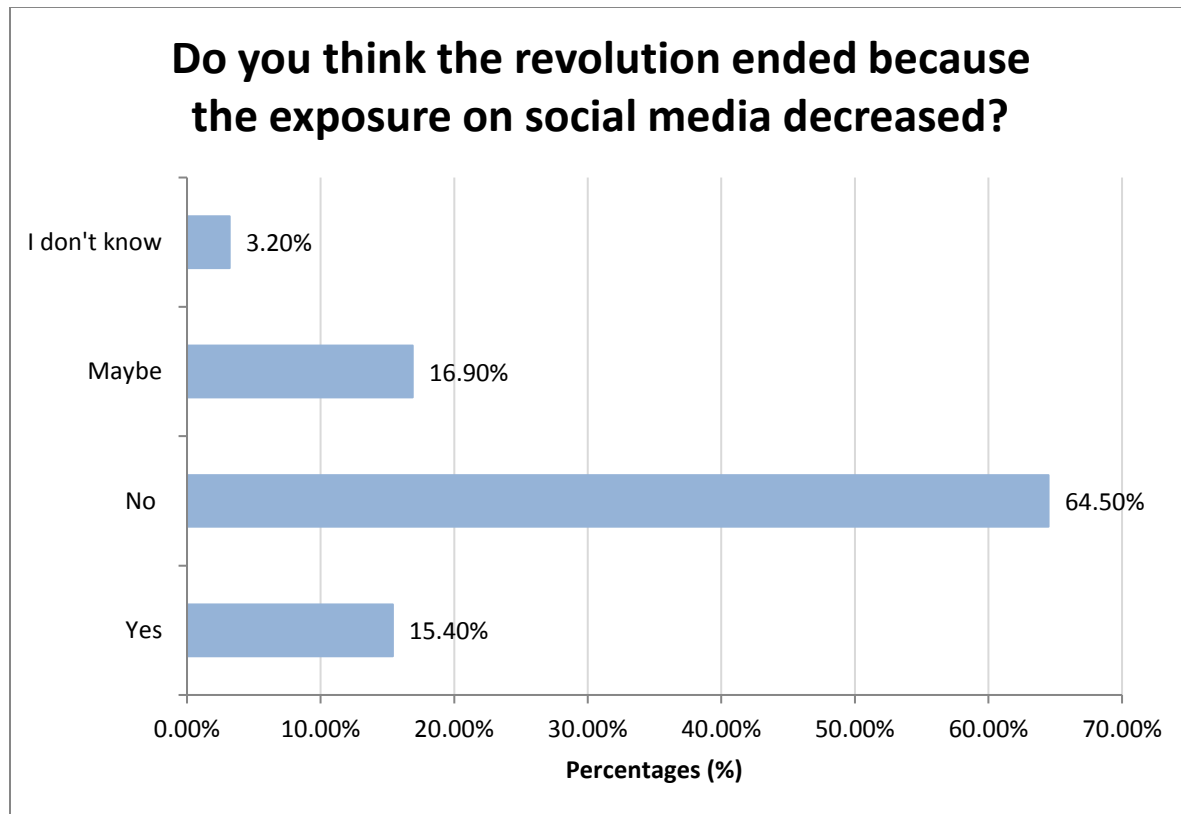


Figure 13 Relation between decreased exposure on social media and the end of protests

The topic of the October 17 revolution as a 'trending' throughout the few months in which the revolution stretched. Yet, the exposure diminished little by little until talks about invading the streets became less recurrent. Participants were asked to share their opinion in whether or not this diminished exposure was the reason behind the revolution coming to an end. 64.5%, which is the majority, believe that the end of the revolution has nothing to do with the decrease of exposure. Whereas 15.4% think it is the main reason behind the revolution ending and 16.9% thought that decrease in exposure may have been one of the reasons that led to the end of the revolution. According to the Uses and Gratification Theory that was explored earlier, people use social media as an escape from the tensions of the real world (Ruggiero, 2000). For instance, the decrease in the exposure over social media might have been the fruit of this escape. In other words, influencers and users of social media platforms may have found the talk about the revolution and the political

and social tension in the Lebanese scene, something way too negative to handle, thus using social media as a tension-free space decreased exposure leading to an inherent decline of the revolution.

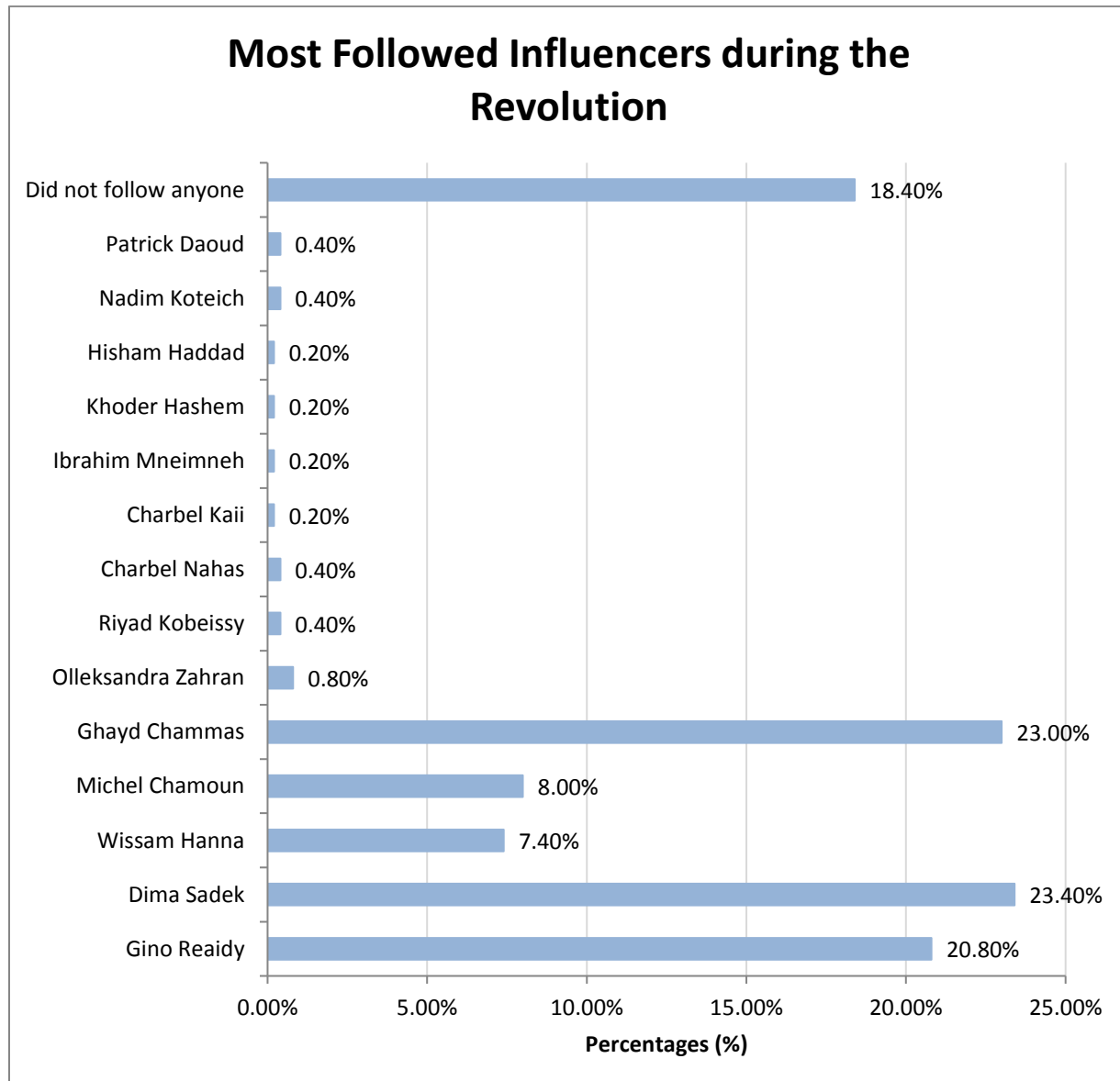


Figure 14 Most popular influencers

Seeing that influencers are popular on the Lebanese scene; participants were asked to enumerate their favourite influencers. Many chose to say that they followed religiously none of the Lebanese influencers (18.4%). Yet, many showed great preference to Gino Reaidy (20.8%), Ghayd

Chammas known as El 3ama (23%), Dima Sadek (23.4%), Michel Chamoun (8%) and Wissam Hanna, who has been oddly considered as an influencer (7.4%). With the variety and multitude of influencers in Lebanon, it is hard to actually enumerate them all or get a unanimous opinion regarding those who are the most popular.

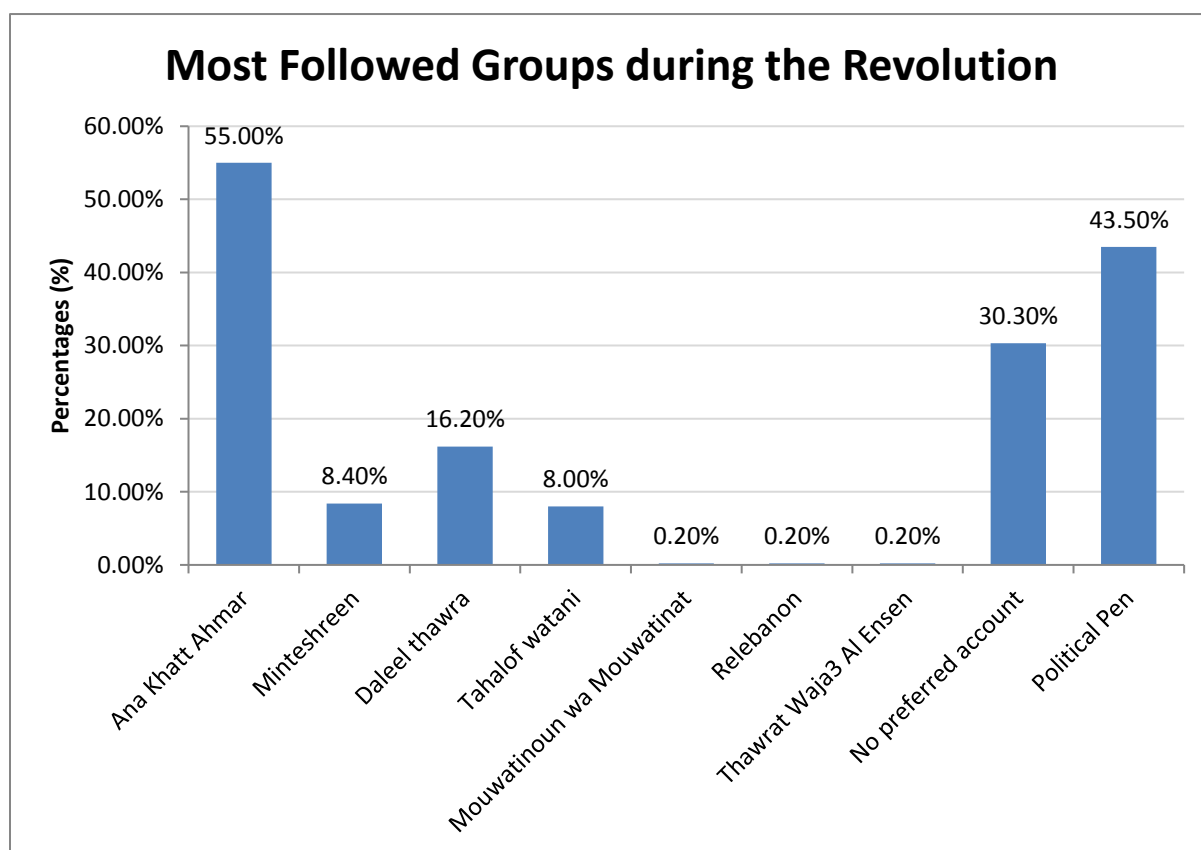


Figure 15 Most popular groups

Regarding the political groups or the pages managed by a group of people, Ana Khatt Ahmar ranked as the most popular platform (55%). Ana Khatt Ahmar platform is known to have been a great influence over young revolutionaries especially with the videos and content they have created exclusively for the purpose of mobilizing the revolution. Political Pen ranked second with 43.5% of the participants' votes. Nevertheless, 30.3% also mentioned not having a preferred platform.

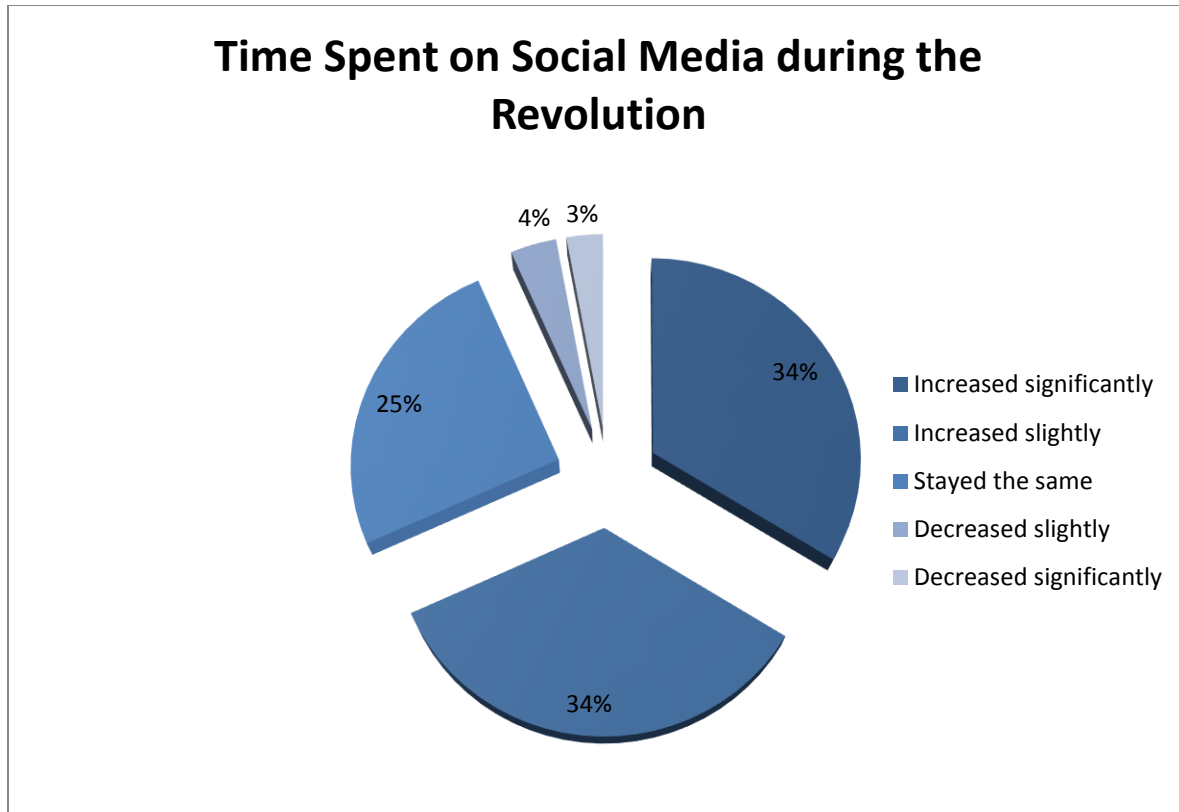


Figure 16 Time spent on social media during the revolution

34% of the participants in the survey stated that their time over social media has increased significantly and 34% mentioned that this time increased slightly. Therefore, the majority of the participants observed an increased exposure to social media platforms. This takes us back again to the Uses and Gratifications Theory that explains how and why people use media (Ruggiero, 2000). The period of the Lebanese revolution was not an easy time for the people especially with the economic regression, the barricaded roads and the cuts in salaries. Therefore, some used social media for information and to know what's going on in the Lebanese scene fulfilling this way the cognitive need, others find in social an escape from reality and a satisfaction for one's personal emotional needs.

5.2. Conclusion

Social media have undeniably played a crucial part in mobilizing the October 17 revolution. Among the 463 participants in the conducted study, most if not all are users of social media and have accounts on various platforms. Therefore, their opinions were valuable to the study as they permitted the investigation of further relationship between social media and the revolution. The results showed a great deal that the mobilization and the start of the revolution were directly linked to social media. The results have proven the tremendous engagement over social media that motivated people to be part of the revolution. Even though many do not follow specific influencers or groups, favoritism was obvious when it comes to multiple pages especially those who provided factual content such as Gino Ready, Ana Khatt Ahmar and Political Pen. In addition to their roles in helping ignite the revolution, those pages kept the revolution alive as long as it did. Furthermore, even when social media seem to be responsible of mobilizing the revolution, participants seem to agree that the end of the revolution was entirely related to the decrease of coverage and discussion around the topic on social media platforms. What also indicates the link between social media and the revolution is the significant increase of time spent on these platforms during the revolution. Instead of using televisions to know more about the news and actualities, people trusted social media more and made it their political and social reference.

5.3. Interviews and Analysis

The data previously obtained was mainly from the civil society and people interested in social media and the Lebanese revolution. Hence, it was of primary importance to get insight from people more involved in the Lebanese political and social scene as they are able to offer more professional data to validate the hypotheses on which this study is based. The five interviewees are people who

participated first-hand in the revolution by either mobilizing through social media or reporting the revolution-related news in their media outlets. The interviewees are communication director and activist Mrs. Hiba Dandachli, journalist Mr. Maher Dana, journalist and director of Radio Orient Dr. Kamal Richa, chief creative officer Mr. Daniel Georr and public figure and co-founder of Ana Khatt Ahmar Mr. Waddah Sadek. The interviews tackled different questions related to the use of social media and the impact of these platforms over the revolution and protests. Even though the questions were various, an overlap in the themes discussed was inevitable. The following sections tackle the multiple themes discussed in the interviews.

5.3.1. Social Media and the Start of the Revolution

While looking at the role that social media played in mobilizing the revolution, we had to look at the very beginning of the revolution and understand whether or not the revolution started due to social media. There was contradicting opinions regarding the start of the revolution. Most importantly, many Dr. Richa, Mr.Sadek and Mr. Dana all agreed that the revolution would have started regardless of the presence of social media and the mobilization that took place on these platforms. Indeed, the three aforementioned interviewees strongly believed that the Lebanese people have had enough with the regressing economy, the decreased quality of life and the political class that has been ruling for over a decade. The difficult reality that the citizens had to live and go through day after day made it essential and inevitable to revolt and protest. On the other hand, according to Mr. Georr and Mrs. Dandachli, social media was the factor that ignited the revolution. Both believe that the revolution, in its early start, began due to taxes over WhatsApp, which is a main social media platform. Moreover, social media played an important role in exciting people to share a common cause and participate in protests that were not politicized but had the sole purpose of making Lebanon better on different levels. Hence, the revolution that was inherent to

every Lebanese transformed into concrete action and protests thanks to social media and the content shared on these platforms.

5.3.2. Sustaining the Revolution

With the contradicting opinions regarding the start of the revolution, the interviews shared a common perspective when it comes to sustaining the revolution. All interviewees except Dr. Kamal Richa believed that it would not have been possible for the protests to continue and last for the long period of time they prospered. Social media played a prime role in helping the revolution prosper for as long as it did. Throughout the 7 months of protests, influencers and political and social groups on social media kept spreading the word about the revolution, providing new content and new reasons to protests and most importantly they gave authority to the people showing them they are heard and making sure that their excitement and anger did not fade. However, Dr. Richa shared a different perspective as he saw the revolution as being independent from social media in all its phases. Richa saw the revolution as being an event from which the Lebanese people could not escape due to political and economic factors. Even the prosperity of the revolution and protests were independent from social media according to Richa, he believed that people's anger pushed them to go to the streets believing that the streets became the only space for them to express their pain and share their anger and concerns.

5.3.3. Social Media, a Space for Unity

Social media in all its platforms represented a space of unity. This affirmation was unanimously agreed upon by all interviewees who each expressed it in a different manner. Dr. Kamal Richa who was generally advocating that social media did not have a direct impact upon the revolution, acknowledges that social media platforms were helpful in creating a space for people to express their anger. Mr. Dana believed that not only those platforms not only united people in their need

to protest, but also in their hate of corruption, I quote ‘Social media created a space for people to share their common hate of corruption’. Dana specified that the Lebanese people have been suffering and social media brought them together to share the pain and anger resulting from the corruption and the economic situation. Furthermore, Sadek believes that social media platforms united people in the way of thinking as he suggests that social media shifted the discourse from one that was politically oriented to one people-oriented. This has helped create a sort of growth and maturity in the revolution but also an opportunity to show a united front to the political officials. Mrs. Dandachli believes, similarly to the other interviewees, that social media created a space that was previously absent for people to speak about corruption as all the facts were displayed and the people were observing and trying to hold accountable Lebanese officials involved in the corruption. Hence, social media platforms became more than news outlets rather a space shared by people having the same struggles and concerns and who hate corruption in all its aspects, it also created a space where people could rant and complain and find people with whom they shared that same frustration.

5.3.4. Social Media and the Organization of the Revolution

When discussing the importance of social media Waddah Sadek specified that the continuous 24-hour presence of social media gave it advantage over other media outlets especially televisions. Looking at the case of *Ana Khatt Ahmar* and other groups that were popular in the time of the revolution, we see that the groups that have organizers belonging to a business background and the private sector, made these pages have more authority and leadership as they were an example of leadership and organization. This gave people an increased confidence in those pages and boosted their credibility making it easier to invite people for protests and organize ‘hotspots’. The

coordination and cooperation between influencers and groups enabled organized protests and large mobilization over the Lebanese territory, explains Mrs. Dandachli. The same opinion was also shared by Mr. Maher Dana who saw that the sustainability of the revolution is the fruit of a good organization that was possible through social media platforms.

5.3.5. Social Media and the End of the Protests

There were different opinions when it comes to whether the revolution ended or protests, also a multitude of opinions that explained the different reasons behind the end of the revolution. Mr. Georr for instance, stated at the very beginning of the interview that ‘social media was the spark that lit the revolution and the reason behind its demise’. First, Georr argued that a while after the revolution started, many accounts on social media acquired large influence since platforms are an open space; yet they led to random and uninformed opinions being displayed all over social media. This lack of organization and the plurality of opinions divided the public. Moreover, at the start of the revolution, influencers and groups were coordinating and strategizing to lead a successful revolution, yet this turned later into a competition of popularity between the diversity of groups and a great lack of coordination and cooperation. In addition, Georr believed that TV channels were complementary to social media, thus when television coverage decreased social media were not enough to mobilize the revolution. Also, seeing that the revolution and the pages on social media lacked long term goals and people focused more on what the Lebanese people didn’t want anymore, the revolution lost popularity and no actual results were palpable. The pandemic has undeniably played a role in ending the revolution. The insight offered by Mr. Georr suggests the end of the revolution. Similarly, Mr. Sadek saw that people set unrealistic hopes in the revolution. Changing a system and removing political influences that have been present for the past three decades, was not possible, and seeing that it didn’t happen people lost hope in the revolution. In

addition, the regression of the economic situations shifted people's priorities; instead of focusing on making the country a better one, they became fully dedicated to living and making sure the attended to their families' needs. The pandemic that also coincided with the revolution made people fear contact and restricted them to their homes. The end of the revolution was hence not the demise of the revolution as many other factors played that part. Mrs. Hiba Dandachli on the other hand and Mr. Dana both believed that the protests were over rather than the revolution itself. Both interviewees share the opinion of Mr. Sadek saying that the end of the protests coincided more with the start of the pandemic and an increased economic regression that shifted people's priorities, yet they believed that the content on social media was still one lighting the revolution within each Lebanese citizen even when protests are not taking place.

5.3.6. The Outcomes of the Revolution

On the Lebanese scene, many opinions clash when it comes to the success or failure of the revolution. Thus, it was mandatory to ask the interviewees where they thought the revolution failed and where it succeeded. Dana believes that the revolution had two main objectives; the mobilization of people in the streets and the creation of mature citizens who know how to speak up when there's corruption. Hence, the revolution failed on one front, yet it did considerable change when it comes to the way people think; it was an eye opener on many fronts. Mrs. Dandachli share the same perspective as Mr. Maher Dana, the activist strongly believed that even though the protests ended, the revolution was fruitful. Lebanese people who used to struggle alone felt a sense of fraternity and equality with their fellow Lebanese and shared their anger and frustration. The revolution, especially social media, permitted people to channel their anger towards change. More importantly, people were always scared to say things as they were, challenge officials and political figures and openly speak about the corruption and the corrupt

government, the revolution permitted the complete freedom of expression in a safe environment. Helping people understand their right to be vocal and express their anger and opinion and changing their mentality by making them believe they are capable of change, were all triumphs that the revolution and the groups on social media were able to achieve. Also, Sadek did not see that the revolution had completely failed. In fact, in Sadek's perspective, the revolution and the content on social media helped raise awareness among the people and made politicians aware that corruption is easily exposed. I quote, 'politicians are not always accepting positions of power as their reputation is quickly tarnished when they commit any mistake thanks to social media.' Hence, Sadek believes that the revolution and the role played by social media in this revolution changed the positions of power in the country.

5.4. Discussion and Result Interpretation

The data collected from the survey helped form an important perspective when it comes to the opinion of social media users and the majority of Lebanese young-adults. It explained the importance of social media from the point of view of users and people who were participating in the protests during the October 17 revolution. On the other hand, the interviews helped understand the role of social media in the mobilization of the revolution from the perspective of professional in politics, communication and people who played an important role on social media platforms. Therefore, it was possible to target each of the three hypotheses previously discussed.

The first hypothesis which is the use of social media to find people with the same concerns was more meticulously discussed in the interviews rather than the survey. The hypothesis relates directly to the Uses and Gratifications theory in which suggests that people use social media for their own needs (Ruggiero, 2000). In fact, the study validates this hypothesis as the interviewees revealed that people used social media to connect with people who share their anger and their pain

and platforms represented a place where people could freely rant and complain about the hardships and injustice this country was subject to. Similar conclusions were made when analyzing the 2011 Egyptian revolution, as an article mentions that social media gives a sense of ‘togetherness’ (Jay, 2016).

Regarding the second hypothesis that tackled also the Uses and Gratifications theory suggested that people used social media to channel their anger and organize the revolution and protests. The survey showed that during the revolution, time spent over social media platforms increased significantly. Moreover, participants admitted following influencers and groups that were speaking solely about the protests. In addition to that, social media platforms were the means of communication used to agree on protest places and organize ‘hotspots’ as validated through the survey. Further, Mr. Daniel Georr, Mr. Waddah Sadek and Mrs. Hiba Dandachli confirmed the coordination on social media that helped mobilize the protests, especially that the three interviewees were active on social media through *Ana Khatt Ahmar* and *Minteshreen*. Hence, it is possible to validate the second theory as people’s anger was used to incite them to join the revolution and the platforms were used to communicate and organize the protests. The use of media to mobilize mass revolutions is not new, in fact the matter has been greatly discussed and media in general was used back in 18th century in the French revolution and turned into social media in the age of digitalization as specified by a 2013 study that discussed the involvement of media in the Egyptian revolution and the Arab Spring (Sturm & Amer, 2013).

The third and last hypothesis discusses the role social media has in helping people revolt and make a change. This hypothesis is in relation to the Active Audience Theory that suggests people not only receive information, they rather analyze it and react to it making them active not passive individuals. The survey helped understand that social media was an important feature and

a game changer in the revolution especially with the multitude of influencers and groups that dedicated their pages to the content motivating people to revolt. The content displayed consisted of facts mainly about the corruption, it also included stories about people who suffer in Lebanon making people sensitive and emotional. The content did not just sadden and anger the people, it fueled them to revolt and protest and sent them to the streets. Also, by giving power to the people, social media changed the narrative and moved the power from the political officials to the people and enabled them to shed light on the corruption and hold accountable the people involved. This validates the third hypothesis. The results are also compatible with other research especially around the relation of social media and the Arab Spring. The researcher Major Brian Mayer argues that ‘This new form of media (social media) played a formative role in the organization of mass uprisings and demonstrations known as the “Arab Spring”’ (Mayer, 2012).

Limitations

Concerning the limitations of studies, there are a few crevices worth specifying in utilizing overviews. Essentially, overviews do not permit sufficient understanding on the authentic setting on the verifiable occasions of the subject. For instance; inclinations are bound to happen, stemming

from the insufficiency of accurateness gotten by the members. At long last, extra confinements such as intentional misreporting of behaviors by respondents to bewilder the study comes about or to cover up improper behavior. Furthermore, political bias is also considered as a limitation especially in the interviews. No matter the objective perspectives that the interviewees provided, political affiliations and political biases need to be taken into consideration.

Conclusion

Now that till date, the revolution has not been able to come with tremendous achievements, the actions that were taken cannot be analyzed to have been effective or not. But what is agreed upon is that the heavy use of social media practices has not only helped but also led in more than one case to the evolution of the revolution. Also, as detailed greatly by the interviewees, changing the Lebanese political scene was not possible, yet the change of mentality and the increase of

power that the Lebanese citizens went through thanks to the content on social media; this itself is considered as a success.

Having focused on the rise of social media in all fields, we know that the latter played essential roles by emerging in political protests mobilization and communication. The extent of power that social media had in mobilizing the revolution and sustaining the protests was reflected in the data gathered from the survey and the interviews. The data also enabled the validation of the hypothesis that formed the pillar of the practical of the research. When it comes to the end of the protests, opinions are conflicting to whether or not the decrease of content on social media was the reason behind it.

The research enables further study about the relationship between social media and social behavior. Further research can detect more the role that social media play in mobilizing protests and social uprisings.

Appendix 1

Survey

1. How old are you?
 - <18
 - 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-64
 - 65+
2. What is your gender?
 - Male

- Female
3. Where do you live?
 - Beirut
 - Mount Lebanon
 - North Lebanon
 - South Lebanon
 - Bekaa
 - Nabatiyeh
 - Baalbeck/Hermel
 - Akkar
 4. Do you use social media platforms?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
 5. Which platforms do you think are best?
 - Instagram
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Snapchat
 - WhatsApp
 - LinkedIn
 - Telegram
 - Other (Please specify):.....
 6. How many hours per day do you spend on social media?
 - Less than 2 hours
 - 2 to 4 hours
 - More than 4 hours
 7. Have you participated in the October 17 revolution?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't support the revolution
 8. Which area in Lebanon did you join mostly during the revolution?
 - Zouk
 - Jal El Dib
 - Beirut
 - Tripoli
 - Other (Please specify):.....

9. On what criteria did you base your choice of choosing specific gatherings?
- The biggest crowd
 - My friends were there
 - Where the attention was focused
 - Nearest to where I live
 - I was invited by people to join them
 - Groups would coordinate and choose the location
10. Do you think the revolution could have happened if the social media was absent?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - I don't know
11. How did you communicate and decide where to meet?
- WhatsApp
 - Telegram
 - Facebook
 - Phone Call
 - Instagram
 - Other (Please specify):.....
12. Do you think influencers played an important role in the revolution?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - I don't know
13. Do you think the revolution ended because the exposure on social media decreased?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - I don't know
14. Which influencers were you following?
- Gino Reaidy
 - Dima Sadek
 - Wissam Hanna
 - Michel Chamoun
 - Ghaid Chammas
 - Other (Please specify):.....
15. Which groups were you following?
- Ana Khatt Ahmar

- Minteshreen
- Daleel Thawra
- Political Pen
- Tahalof Watane
- Other (Please specify):.....

16. Did your time spent over social media increase during the revolution?

- It increased significantly
- It increased slightly
- It stayed the same
- It decreased significantly
- It decreased slightly

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