

Social Networks And Globalization Culture in the Middle East – With A Focus on Iran

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Abstract: *This paper is an introduction to a new approach in politics and in government as its central point. In this approach, government is considered as a place in which different networks strive to achieve a bigger share of decision making power regarding scarce resources. In this paper, we first define and describe social networks and then discuss the main components of a power analysis approach called “network policy”. In network policy, position is the main principle of action, political power is the subject of conflict, and achievement of more power is the most important goal behind cultural, social and political actions. As a specific method of power analysis, social network approach is a continuation of return to the main theme of politics, i.e. power. In this paper, we propose a primary model for analytical framework of social network and its cultural, social and political dimensions in the Middle East, particularly Iran.*

Keywords: *network analysis, political participation, power, social capital, social network approach*

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I. Introduction

Since the 21st century, virtual social media has always been among the most popular internet-based media according to Alexa rank list. In 2013, social network sites constituted seven out of ten most popular websites worldwide¹. The ever-increasing popularity of social networks is undeniable even in Iran, notwithstanding the constraints placed on virtual space². These media have transformed individual identity, collective action, production methods, media consumption and activism methods compared with what exists in the real world³. Further, it is often argued that social media potentially drive the citizens in society to construct alternative collective identities sometimes bypassing state and market controls⁴. Even the street social movements in Arab countries and in advanced societies are somehow influenced by the hidden power of these media. The strategic impacts of virtual social media and the concept of power tend to change during the course of history. It sometimes refers to the exertion of power, sometimes wealth, sometimes dignity, and sometimes the strength of civil society. In 16th century, Spain was the top power owing to its broad colonies and gold ingots. In 17th century, Netherlands took advantage of international trade and financial resources. In 18th century, France became the top power with reliance on its big population and powerful army. And in 19th century, Britain dominated the world thanks to the industrial revolution and powerful navy⁵. Nowadays, the concept of power refers to a great extent to the strength of social structures and civil institutions, which is somehow associated with the concept of “network society”. In the next paragraphs, we delineate the process of social changes consequent upon the strength and weakness of civil institutions. The recent transformations in the Arab world can be explained first by the status and stability of social structures – albeit in a close interconnection – and then by the manner in which network society is formed⁶.

With the development of social media, information society has today developed into a global community; it is not exclusive to a certain country. Further, the progress of social media may lead to an ambiguous era of possibly negative consequences in the modern world and modern communication media. It seems that social media threaten the social unity on the one hand, and mitigate the threats to the same unity as imposed by other social forces, including mobility and rapid transformation, on the other⁷. Regardless of the nature and types of power, if we take a look at power sources in social, economic and political arenas, we will see that victory in the age of information goes to the governments and nongovernmental actors who can make optimal use of information and can develop it into action. During the recent decades, particularly following software advancements and modern solutions in the field of information and communication, the possibility of power distribution has to a great extent been provided to the movements in the search of power. Here, given the above facts and considering that power and activism are defined in virtual space in a complicated manner, one should ask the following questions: which resources produce power in virtual social networks which are considered as the more fundamental level of power exertion in the global age of information? How are the necessary arrangements made for distribution and emergence of activism? What are the examples of activism in virtual social networks? These are the questions which we attempt to answer in this paper.

II. Cultural Identity

Absolute distinction and similarity are two main components of identity. The word “identity” is derived from Latin and has two main meanings. The first meaning represents absolute similarity and says that this is similar to that. The second meaning represents distinction and assumes compatibility and continuity in the course of time. Identity is a complicated concept and cannot be fully understood, so it denotes some kind of comparativeness. So far, a variety of definitions have been given for it. Psychologists and ideologists define identity as a feeling of personal distinction, continuity and independence⁸

2.1 Cultural Identity

Identity has been explored in various levels and dimensions, including national identity, religious identity, sexual identity and personal identity. Cultural identity is an understanding of oneself which comes from membership – whether formal or informal – in a social group based on transmission and cultivation of knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions and certain living methods among the members⁹.

2.2 National Identity

National identity is the feeling of belonging to a nation. Nationality has specified symbols, traditions, holy places, customs, historical heroes, culture, and land. National identity means the feeling of belonging to a group of people due to the shared cultural and quasi-cultural elements¹⁰.

2.3 Dependence of Social Networks and Cultural Structure of Society

Mehdizadeh & Anbarin¹¹ conducted a study on the relationship between the amount, type and manner of using internet and cultural identity of the youth. With a sample size of 384 young people in the city of Tehran, using survey and questionnaire techniques, they explored the cultural identity based on two dimensions of religious identity and national identity. According to their results, internet significantly influenced cultural identity. The more the use of internet, the weaker cultural identity will be. The results also indicated the type of using internet influenced cultural identity.

Mohammadpour et al.¹² conducted a study under title of “the impact of satellite on cultural identity in Kurdistan province, Iran (case study: Kurdish students of Sanandaj universities)”. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the use of satellite and its contents (particularly news and entertainment) and native cultural identity of the students. Those who had spent more time using the satellite received lower score of local cultural identity. This indicated that people were turning towards new patterns. Moreover, cultural identity scores of students tended to be at medium level, meaning that their identity was neither cohesive nor discrete.

Adlipour¹³, in his Master’s thesis under title of “sociological analysis of the impacts of virtual social networks on social identity of young people in the city of Esfahan”, using survey method with a sample size of 424 people, concluded that the amount of participation in virtual social networks and the amount of use in each connection had a negative impact on family identity of users. The results also indicated that duration of membership and time of use had a negative impact on religious and national identity of users and that the enthusiasm of users for using virtual social networks had a negative impact of their religious identity. In addition, presence in such networks enhanced modern and consumption-oriented identity of the youth.

Patrick et al.¹⁴ conducted a study under the title of “transmission of cultural identity in the age of information and communication technology (case study: Fijian immigrants in Brisbane, Australia)”. In this qualitative research, they concluded that there was a significant relationship between internet and cultural identity and that internet had an ever-increasing impact on cultural identity of the immigrants¹⁵.

Long et al.¹⁶ investigated the impact of internet on the formation of personal identity among Chinese adolescents. According to their results, the use of internet not only affected four dimensions of identity growth but also developed new approaches of understanding identity. Moreover, the use of internet was understood as a method of receiving experiences in cybernetic environment and identity growth was understood as some degree of commitment to specific concept of oneself.

Tyler¹⁷ reported that virtual social networks, accompanied by the influence of western powers, have initiated a movement towards unification of the world, which have led to conflict in the world and have weakened national identities and traditions of different nations. Tyler suggested that through these virtual social networks a considerable number of people worldwide interact with each other and become familiar with alien cultures and beliefs, which threatens national and religious identities of different nations.

As regards the influence and consequences of social networks, there is a significant inverse relationship between the amount of use, duration of membership time, and the amount of user presence in social networks. Also, there is a significant positive relationship between cultural identity of users and how much they consider the contents as real. In other words, the more the amount of use, duration of membership time, and the amount of user presence in social networks, the weaker their cultural identity will be. Also, the more the users consider Facebook contents as

real, the stronger their cultural identity will be. The findings of Mehdizadeh & Anbarin¹⁸, Mohammadpoor et al¹⁹ and Tyler²⁰ suggest that the presence and interaction in the internet and virtual social networks weakens the cultural identity of users. As regards the adverse impacts of social networks on cultural identity dimensions (religious and national identity), the free use of virtual social networks is possibly more common in families with weaker religious identity and beliefs. On the other hand, the more users consider social network contents as real, the stronger their national identity will be. Likewise, Mehdizadeh & Anbarin²¹, Hassanvand et al.,²² Sarokhani & Rezaei Ghaderi²³ concluded that internet and virtual space is an influential factor in national identity of users and those who use modern information and communication technologies tend to have weaker national identity compared with those who do not use these technologies.

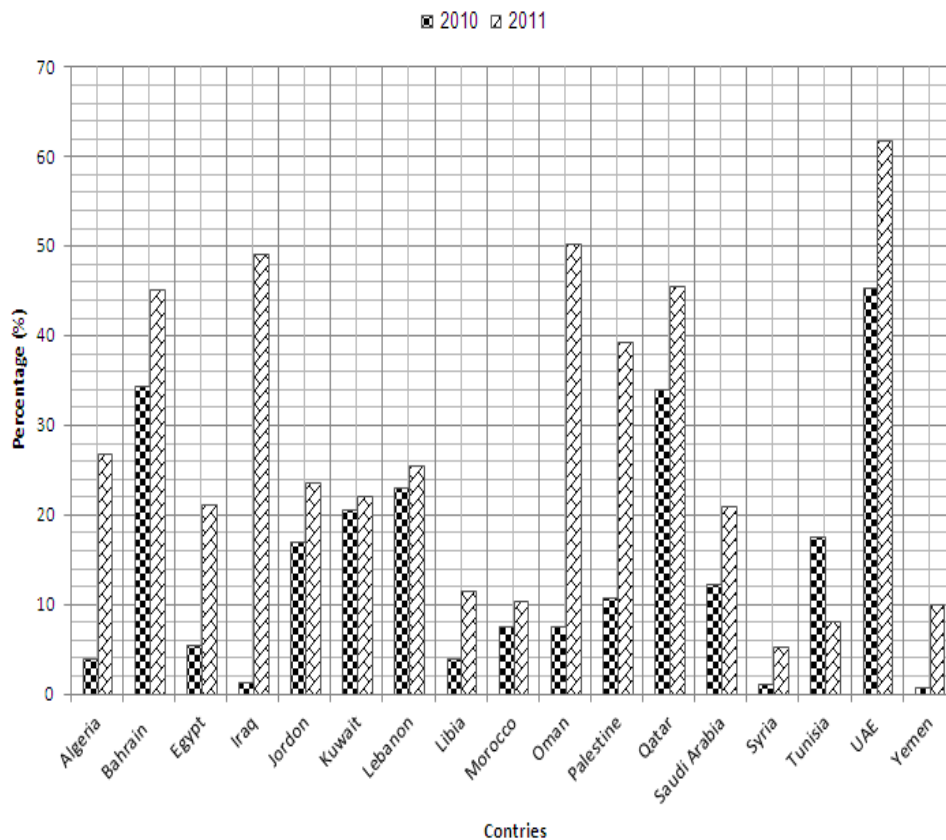


Figure1. Changes in the percentage of members of social networks during 2010-2011 in the Middle East.

III. Social Identity

3.1 Globalization

Perhaps Giddiness’s interpretation of globalization in his book “Beyond Left and Right” best describes this phenomenon: “globalization is not just an economic phenomenon. It should not also be confused with the advent of a global system. Globalization is in fact the transformation of time and location²⁴. In the same vein, Waters discusses the globalization in economic, political and cultural dimensions: “one can expect economics and politics to be globalized as they become cultural. Also, one can expect the amount of globalization to be more in cultural areas than in other areas²⁵.”

Sklair combines these three dimensions to depict a more comprehensive and complicated system, which not only rejects the equality between globalization and capitalism but also denies Neo-Marxist critical frameworks and develops a theory under title of “global system”. From Sklair’s viewpoint, therefore, globalization goes beyond capitalism; it is the increased and broadened relations and actions in a global level which is organized in the framework of global economic, political and cultural dimensions owing to the formation of network space²⁶.

3.2 Social Network and Social Structure of Society

There is a rich tradition in social science research which depicts the performance of individuals and groups within a network of social relations²⁷. While some literature focuses on how individuals use the existing resources in social networks for personal purposes, other literature places the focus on the use of networks for collective purposes, including participation in civil and political groups. Both research traditions deal with different aspects of

social capital. Lin defines this as the resources incorporated in social networks; the resources which are accessible through relations and linkages in social networks²⁸.

Jan E. Leighley²⁹ conducted a study under the title of “Social Interaction and the Impacts Based on Political Participation” to determine if social relations influence the probability of individuals’ participation. He attempted to answer two questions on the impact of social relations on participation. The first question was “do characteristics of social networks (network size, political nature or homogeneity) affect the probability of participation?” The second was “does social interaction affect only participations of social nature or affect other kinds of participation as well?” He concluded that social interaction affects both individual and social participation. Lake and Huckfeldt³⁰ conducted a study titled “Social Capital, Social Networks and Political Participation” and concluded that political social capital (social capital which facilitates political interactions) is produced in interpersonal networks. They suggested that the increased level of political social capital increases the probability of citizens’ participation in political activities. They also emphasized that the production of political social capital is a function of political specialties inside interpersonal network, continuity of political interactions inside the network, and the size of network.

Scott D. McClurg³¹ conducted a study titled “Social Networks and Political Participation: The Role of Social Interaction in the Exploration of Political Participation”. He investigated how interaction in powerful social networks influences the tendency to political participation. He suggested that social interactions provide people with the opportunity to collect political information and allow them to live beyond the constraints of personal resources. This results in public support of political activities. Using the data collected from elections, he represents evidences which demonstrate that the impact of social interaction on participation highly depends on political social networks. Brian D. Mackenzie³² conducted a research under title of “religious social networks, indirect mobilization, and political participation among African-Americans” and investigated the impact of informal political dialogues and discussions among African-Americans present in churches. In his study, Mackenzie emphasized the indirect encouragement to political activities through social networks. Using national data during 1993-1994, he examined the impacts of social discussions on people with and without voting right. Mackenzie found that social relations in churches were far more effective than the clergy’s advices on participation in political activities. He suggested that frequent appearance in church and regular communication with friends and colleagues living in religious neighborhoods were important mechanisms used to supervise and enhance civil norms. But the actions taken by the clergy was found to be less effective due to the lack of continuous communication.

Marko M. Skoric et al.³³ conducted a study under title of “social capital and political participation in Singapore” and investigated the relationship between social capital and political participation. They attempted to determine if social networks were able to pave the way for the revival of political participation. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between social networks and political participation. Ellen Quintelier et al.³⁴ conducted a study under title of “politics in peer group: study on the relationship between network variety and political participation” and investigated the impact of ethnic, cultural and political variety of social networks on political participation among 4235 young people in Belgium. They concluded that variety of social networks affects political participation, which in turn gives rise to various political contacts with others. Movahed et al.³⁵ investigated the relationship between social capital and political participation of women above the age of 18 residing in the city of Shiraz. In this study they employed Pier Bordio’s cultural conflict theory as theoretical framework of the research. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between social capital dimensions and political participation of women.

Bastani et al.³⁶ conducted a study under title of “network social capital and mutual interpersonal trust” and investigated the impact of network social capital and background variables on trust. The results indicated that the increased network social capital enhanced mutual interpersonal trust. In other words, relations, interactions and supportive resources in a network may pave the way for developing and enhancing trust between people. Among network characteristics, mutual intimacy and support were found to be two major factors, with intimacy having more significant role. Among personal variables and network variables, however, the role of network variables, particularly intimacy, linkage and mutual support, was more important. In other words, network characteristics influenced interpersonal trust more than personal characteristics did. Bastani et al.³⁷ investigated the factors influencing voting behavior among 18-29 year-old young people in the city of Mashhad with an emphasis on approach to individual networks analysis. They found that functional characteristics of the networks significantly influenced voting behavior among the youth. The results indicated the role of individual networks on explanation of voting behavior. Housman Tiri³⁸, in his Master’s thesis entitled “Internet social networks and political participation”, investigated the effectiveness of internet social networks on user political participation in the 10th presidential elections in Iran. He concluded that the participation of a large number of people, particularly the youth and adolescents, in the 10th presidential elections was to a great extent influenced by social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

Gil de Zuniga’s³⁹ study titled “Social media, political expression, and political participation: Panel analysis of lagged and concurrent relationships” while finding the effects of social media for social interaction in encouraging political expression and participation processes, found that that even relational uses of social

networking sites may lead people to convey themselves politically, thus putting them on a pathway to participation.

M. Skoric and Qinfeng Zhu⁴⁰ in the study named “Social Media and Offline Political Participation: Uncovering the Paths From Digital to Physical” found that reading independent blogs and getting news about the elections on social networking sites like Facebook were associated with a greater probability of taking part in resident dialogues, volunteering for a political party, and partaking in elections rallies. Katherine Haenschen’s⁴¹ study titled “Social Pressure on Social Media: Using Facebook Status Updates to Increase Voter Turnout” suggests that the digital media offers citizens the potential to generate huge gains in voter participation. The study demonstrated that strengthening the social norms within social networks can increase the participation of voters, through utilizing the technological features of the Facebook platform to communicate these norms. It concluded that there is a substantial increase in the turnout of voters greater than that which is usually produced by face-face methods.

Table 1. Major Definitions of Social Capital

Researcher	Definition of Social Capital	Objective
Lin, N. ⁴²	A combination of potential and actual resources to which one can access by membership in a stable network of relations and which allows for reciprocal services.	Economic capital
Tyler, T. ⁴³	Some aspects of social structure which actors use as a source of benefit.	Human capital
Baldassarri Delia & Mario Diani ⁴⁴	The forces which enhance economic development potentialities in a society by developing social relations and organizational and social patterns. These forces work in micro-analysis, middle analysis and macro-analysis levels.	Economic capital
Freeman L.C. ⁴⁵	Trust, norms and networks which facilitate collaboration and participation for mutual benefits.	Political development and democracy
Zhang, Mingxin ⁴⁶	The norms and informal values shared by group members	Economic development
Castells, Manuel. ⁴⁷	Investment in personal relations and achievement of social linkages which provide access to supportive resources and tools.	Various supportive resources

IV. Political Identity

Before reviewing the literature and setting forth theories of power as presented by humanities scholars and communications theorists, we have to represent theoretical and operational definitions of the important concepts in this paper. As mentioned earlier, due to comprehensiveness of social network users and the effectiveness of activism methods, we only explain this social network.

1. **Power:** In the most general sense, power means the ability to develop or cause the development of certain outcomes with a view to making a different in the world. In social life, power means the ability to do so through social relations. In other words, power refers to the ability to develop or cause the development of certain outcomes through influencing others⁴⁸. This general definition gives a framework for determining some major differences in the concept of power in the area of virtual communications. According to Manuel Castells, power is a relational capacity which enables social actors to influence the decisions made by other social actors through the ways which meet demands, benefits and values of the actors holding the power⁴⁹. Based on his definition of power, Castells enumerates four types of power in networks: 1) networking power; 2) network power; 3) networked power; and 4) network-making power⁵⁰. According to Joseph Nye, power means the ability to influence the behavior of others so that what we want happens. In its specific sense, therefore, power refers to the ability to influence behavior of others in order to achieve the desired outcomes. In this definition, power consists of two components: soft power (values, culture, policy, institutions, setting priorities, and attracting audience) and hard power (military and economic power). According to Nye, virtual space is a soft power tool and soft power is the reference for the development of virtual space⁵¹. Therefore, while the power of virtual social network is of a soft nature, the influence of network, networking and network-making may affect hard power as well.
2. **Actor:** According to Castells, the concept of actor embraces the subjects connected with action such as individual actors, group actors, organizations, institutions, and networks. Even if this function is institutionalized or organized through the past processes, the important point is that all organizations,

institutions and networks somehow denote the function of human actors⁵². Khaniki suggests that the citizens who lack professional journalism skills but join a social network as a social actor or fan and produce content in that network, are actors⁵³. Therefore, actor is now considered as a more effective component than before.

3. **Activism:** Activism refers to a variety of activities in political, economic, social and environmental areas aimed at modification of systems. These activities include a broad range, from sending letters to authorities and media to holding political campaigns, economic boycott, rallies and strike. Some actors attempt to provoke people to change their behaviors rather than imposing pressure on governments to modify the law⁵⁴. Activism also refers to social action capabilities and the ability to employ tools and symbols within the framework of social values and technological mechanisms in order to establish mutual relations. So, the activities pursued by users with reliance on their skills in using internet communication tools in order to communicate and interact with others in line with their objectives are considered activism⁵⁵. Therefore, definition of activism in social media is broader and more diverse than before.
4. **Internet activism:** In “Social Movement Media” encyclopedia, under the section, ‘activism and new media’, Angela J. Aguayo* defines activism as a concept coming from new media which often invite tens of millions of audience to participate and interact in the share contents by using the content produced by users. Activism obtains political, social and cultural ideas through popular social media such as Facebook and Twitter as well as personal weblogs. So, virtual social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, My Space, even weblogs, podcasts, forums and content communities can follow activism methods. This accelerates social movements of people or users of these sites⁵⁶. Therefore, internet activism is some kind of social activism which is reflected in real space as well.

4.1 Network Analysis

Network is an ambiguous term. To better understand what is called “Network Analysis”, we need to briefly review the history of using this term. The term “Network” was first used in the field of industry and technology. Technical networks such as electricity, railway, swage and internet were called network. This term was then used in organizational sociology in the subject of difference between organizations, markets and governments. In this area, the term “network” denoted the existence of an informal harmonious route between human agents⁵⁷. This interpretation means the transition from “Network as a Term” to “Network as a Concept”. In this sense, the concept of network enables us to explain certain phenomena. Network can be defined as a certain kind of relationship which interconnects a certain group of individuals, objects or events⁵⁸.

Network analysis refers to a combination of methods, techniques and tools aimed at analyzing structures and their communicative aspects in a network⁵⁹. Effective communications between actors are depicted as direct or indirect relation between interconnected nodes. Actors may be individuals, organizations, group or any other interconnected units. Thus, SNA may be used to analyze a broad spectrum ranging from individuals, internet pages, families and small groups to large organizations, parties and even nations⁶⁰.

4.2 Network Analysis in Politics

The concept of network in politics, unlike sociology, has no long history. In mid 1970s, students of politics were first to use the term “policy network”. Since then on, the concept of network has been used either to describe the impact of governmental and nongovernmental actors on certain policies or decisions⁶¹ or to refer to a framework of relations between governmental and nongovernmental actors which bureaucrats rely on to adopt proper and efficient policies. Loble & Falton⁶² conceive policy networks as the factors which facilitate the execution of tasks in bureaucracy system. Likewise, Gwen Arnold⁶³ conducted a study on why and how policy networks facilitate general bureaucratic efforts to accept and execute policy initiatives. He believes that an innovation is accepted by bureaucracy when policy network is broad and penetrable with weak relation between members, and that the initiative is executed when policy network is less penetrable and smaller with powerful relation between the members. He suggests that different policy networks must exist in order for an initiative to be accepted and executed. This may be called network pluralism.

Apart from network approach to policy, there are pluralistic and corporatist–elitist approaches which somewhat deal with the role of governmental and nongovernmental actors in policy network. The pluralistic approach places more emphasis on the needs of political decision making system in policy network. Elitist-corporatist approach places more focus on determining role of government in policymaking together with the auxiliary role of the organized groups⁶⁴. The studies on political networks developed and expanded network analysis in politics. The idea of network analysis is seen as a structured analysis that is consistent with the main trend of political knowledge. The nature of concepts such as hegemony, power, penetration and prestige in network analysis

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has been investigated by many scholars. Some researchers analyzed the impact of communication networks among citizens on their political behaviors using network approach. Some researchers⁶⁵ proposed a model for analyzing the relationship between the variety of communication processes among different groups of citizens (e.g. whites, blacks and immigrants) and the occurrence of certain political behaviors. Leighley and Matsubayashi⁶⁶ compared different characteristics of social networks and ethnic and racial groups and found that the difference between different groups gave rise to the difference in social and economic status of the people present in the networks. They analyzed political behaviors of people and founded that these behaviors were influenced by the different in social networks to which they belonged.

According to Cammaerts, social media and networking can be seen as being instrumental in enabling increasing fluid membership and asynchronous participation⁶⁷. This leads to another central question wherein some researchers have tried to explore how interpersonal relations inside the networks form political preferences in the elections or in similar areas. Some researchers suggested that such relations in the networks often enhanced political understanding of people⁶⁸ and that network communications encouraged people to participate in political affairs⁶⁹ and to vote for a specific candidate⁷⁰. The examination of political behavior of Americans in the US national elections in 2000 points that political discussions inside the networks not only increased political awareness of the people but also clarified the distinctions between candidates by setting forth various opinions and ideas, whereby positively affecting political participation among the citizens.

The recent decades have seen a considerable development in network analysis. Network analysis deals with a broad spectrum of subjects including political and cultural identity, potential gaps in public field⁷¹ and their impact on civil networks⁷², the role of social networks in the facilitation⁷³ of investment process⁷⁴, the role of voluntary organizations and public beneficiary groups in policy networks⁷⁵ and many other topics⁷⁶. Network analysis has also entered a broad spectrum of sciences including, social sciences, engineering, psychology, economics, computer, statistics, mathematics and criminology. In this sense, network analysis has transformed the classic boundaries of knowledge. Freeman, for example, enumerates the topics covered by network analysis to be such cases as the study of occupational mobility, the impact of citizenship on individuals, social support, social status, marketing studies and health issues⁷⁷.

4.3 Network Policy

The combination of social capital theory and network analysis, i.e. network approach to social capital, is the context of network policy analysis. Generally, the main lines of network policy analysis can be summarized as follows: specific resources exist inside political networks which include social capital or cumulative capital depending on how people inside the network are distinguished with those outside. These networks strive to achieve more share of decision making power regarding scarce resources of the society (political power), i.e. more share of the government. Therefore, network policy refers to the use of network analysis method in analyzing the government.

V. Examples

A Political Revolution

April 6 Youth Movement was a Facebook group in Egypt which was founded by Ahmad Maher in Spring 2008 in order to support the workers of El-Mahalla El-Kubra industrial estate who had planned for three strikes on April 6⁷⁸.

An International Economic Challenge

On September 17, 2011, a group of American youth held mass protests in Wall Street, the base of New York Bourse, against the impressing economic situations and class differences in the US. Some have compared this movement with public movements in Arab countries, particularly the mass protests in Tahrir Square and 2011 revolution in Egypt. The goal behind Wall Street protests was to eliminate economic inequalities, fight against economic culture of capitalism, and to eliminate the access and influence of corporate brokers and monetary giants in the US government⁷⁹.

An Urban Carnival

Carnival activism is some form of social behavior in both real and virtual spaces. Facebook arrangement for water spray in a Water Park and fireworks in Pardisan park in Tehran are some examples of carnival activism. In this campaign, a group of young Facebook members planned for appearing at water and fire park of Tehran at Friday, July 29, 2011, in order to hold water spray celebration. They attended the park in the specified time and began a carnival movement.

Arab Spring

The Arab spring in 2011 initiated a debate on the role of social media and networks in political campaigns held to change the regimes and prodemocracy movements. Bert Van Nikert, Kiropilai and Maharaj analyzed the

recent events in Tunisia and Egypt from the viewpoint of information war. In the recent movements, international communication technologies were used by both sides⁸⁰.

As stated by Egyptian activists, they use the Facebook to plan the protests, Twitter to make coordination, and Youtube to communicate with the world⁸¹. According to strategic estimation of 2011, the Arab world has long undergone severe public dissatisfactions with the governments. Due to strict suppression by tyrannical regimes, however, people had accepted the situation for a long time. According to Omar Mousa, the Secretary General of Arab Association, Arabs had been frustrated by poverty, unemployment and economic crisis, so it was no strange that Tunisian uprising led to the Arab Spring⁸². Egypt and Tunisia are two examples of successful social revolutions. In these countries, the movements were organized through major social networks such as Twitter and Facebook. That is why the year 2011 was called social networks year. In this year, Tunisians and Egyptians managed to collapse two dictators by using the power of social networks. In the Arab Spring revolutions, Facebook and Twitter accelerated the movements by organizing and planning the protests⁸³.

VI. Conclusion

In transition from term to concept, network analysis has experienced a wonderful process of broadened scope of analysis. Almost all sciences, especially social sciences, have employed network analysis to explore various topics. In politics, though later than other sciences, network analysis in the form of policy network analysis attracted much attention. Network approach to policy has grown in parallel to pluralistic and corporatist approaches. While the role of network communication in political behavior of citizens has later been added to analytical subject in politics, no attention has been paid to the subject of government as the central point of politics. The main theme of network policy analysis is to analyze government as the base of politics. State mining using network perception of social capital and combination of social capital theory and network analysis – network approach to social capital – is the context of network policy analysis. Generally, the main lines of network policy analysis can be summarized as follows: certain resources exist inside political networks which include social capital or cumulative capital depending on how individuals inside the network are distinguished with others outside. These networks strive to achieve more shares of scarce resources (political power, economic wealth and social status). The main theme of conflict is to achieve political power and the place of conflict is governmental domain inside and around the government. While research on social structure has been the central point of network analysis, network policy simultaneously pays attention to structural and cognitive-normative dimensions and focuses on the quality of norms and strategies adopted by political activists in order to achieve more share of political power. Individuals establish networks to acquire a bigger volume of scarce resources in a shorter time by exchanging the social capital inside the networks. In this sense, political activists are intellectual actors who form a set of communications to gain benefits in the future. The more a political network has access to scarce political resources, the broader its activism boundaries and effectiveness will be. If a scarce social resource (economic wealth and social status) is capable of developing into political power, it should be involved in determining the boundaries of political network. As the government allocates the resources and organizes them for certain purposes, political networks strive to occupy more positions in the government. Therefore, state mining should be considered as the center of network policy approach.

Network policy must be able to explain such issues as the position of individual in the government, historical heritage, activism context, and the relationship between government and the society. The primary model of network policy approach may pave the way for further theoretical and applied research so that the political issues are analyzed using the new approach.

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