

# **The Effect of Browsing Social Networking Websites: The Effect of Browsing You tube on the Attitude of Egyptians Towards Those Who Have Different Political Views**

**Hassna Saad**

Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King Abdulaziz University  
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

**Corresponding author:** Hassna Saad, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, E-mail: [dr.hsaad2009@gmail.com](mailto:dr.hsaad2009@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

The communication revolution proved that possessing media technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means having the compelling force in shaping the public opinion regionally and internationally, especially during the political crises in several countries. Social networking sites like YouTube contributed during the Arab Spring events and the subsequent events, such as the 30<sup>th</sup> of June in Egypt, 2013. Hence, the present study aims to find out the frequency of watching YouTube videos that conflict with political inclinations among the Egyptian YouTube browsers. The study also aims to explore the effect of browsing YouTube on the tendencies of the browsers towards those who politically disagree with them. This study, which belongs to the quantitative studies field, uses the survey sampling method. The theoretical framework of this study relies on the theory of cognitive dissonance. The researcher uses the questionnaire tool and holds unstructured scientific interviews with a random sample whose ages vary between 18 and 60 years. The application of the questionnaire's form took a period of two months, starting from April 23<sup>rd</sup> to June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

**Keywords:** YouTube; Cognitive dissonance; Political differences; Controversial issues

## **Introduction**

In an age where social networking websites have become a new compelling force for political changes and movements McGarty, Thomas, Smith, Lala, Bliuc, ( 2013), The

Egyptian revolution of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 came as a changing point in the Egyptian political life. The 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution reshaped the definitions of the Egyptian social, political and economic life with resounding effects that extended regionally and internationally.

Many opinions evolved around the role of social networking websites in the Egyptian revolution. Some opinions glorified such role and considered it to be an essential factor in the revolution's success, regarding it as a means of communication for societal change by providing its users with the opportunity to participate in politics away from the traditional media which was limited to official authorities and sources (Kamel, 2014). Such opinions further argued that social media acted as tool for rallying the Egyptians and covering the events of the revolution , as well as paved the way for political changes in the structure of the Egyptian state which culminated in the breakout of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution (González-Bailón et al., 2013). Other people believe that social networking websites neither created nor incited the revolution. Those people argue that such websites are organizational and communication tools (Barrons, 2012) , rather than effective means in creating democracy. Meanwhile in case of the people of third world countries, the ability of social networking websites to create real democracy even in the virtual world is exaggerated as the people themselves neither determined the meaning of democracy nor agreed upon the mechanisms of its practice. Therefore the people of third world countries use social networking websites to liberate themselves from all the restrictions imposed on publishing news and information, which consequently stirs up conflicts, doubts, lack of trust between citizens, fanaticism and complete rejection of others, all of which ultimately conflicts with the idea of democracy.

This is evident in the fact that the breakout of the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 2013 protests and subsequent events resulted in the division of the Egyptian society on the social, economical and cultural levels. Such division was reflected in the fact that every group used social networking websites to insult and ridicule opposing groups. By observing the opinions of researchers regarding the impact of social networking websites on the practice of democracy, we find several opinions that perceive the selective nature of published news on such websites to actually enhance polarization, or what Sunstein (2007) calls "Echo Chamber" and is described by (Pariser, 2011) as "Filter Bubble". Both researches point out that such websites totally isolate their users from opposing points of view so as to continue propagating similar ideas. Social networking users are more inclined to form politically homogeneous groups that pass out the same ideas and advocate fanaticism in a way that enhances political division around various public issues. This also works on advocating a hypothetical overflow of opinions that are sometimes fanatic and even false. Therefore Dahlberg (2001) had reservations about the idea of e-democracy, where he emphasized that the precise scientific examination of the nature of political communication on the internet shows that it is not

qualified to create democracy at the present moment and that it only reflects the fragmented and divided nature of contemporary societies. YouTube is currently considered to be one of the most important social networking websites on the internet. YouTube managed to create a specific revolution in the communication content and transformed media users into media producers. Statistics indicate that YouTube has over one billion visitors per month with more than 6 billion videos<sup>1</sup>. Such numbers have caught the attention of researchers regarding the impact of the selective browsing of YouTube videos on the political inclinations of its users and both the extent by which users watch videos that conflict with their inclination and the degree to which they believe such videos. Does the popular quote “A picture is worth a thousand words” apply for users who believe such videos even if what they see conflicts with their political opinions? Or does the cognitive dissonance theory by Festinger (1957) apply here whereby users are more inclined to cast doubt on what they see or even deliberately ignore it just to maintain their ideological consistency? Also can such videos play an active role in achieving national reconciliation by providing every party with the opportunity to get acquainted with the ideas and visions of the other party? On the other hand, do the processes of selection, doubt and distortion play a role in the way every group maintains its stereotypical image of the other party, especially since Terblanche (2011) indicates that YouTube and social networking websites play an active role in the Egyptian and Tunisian political affairs.

## **Method**

### **Research questions:**

- 1- What is the frequency of the sample’s browsing of YouTube?
- 2- What are the activities practiced by the sample’s individuals on YouTube?
- 3- What is the frequency of the sample’s activities on YouTube?
- 4- What are the kinds of videos watched by the sample?
- 5- What is the attitude of the sample towards videos of opposing political inclinations? And what are the justifications to such attitude?
- 6- What is the relationship between the content of the video and the sample’s activities on YouTube?
- 7- What is the effect of watching opposing YouTube videos on the attitude of the sample towards their opponents?
- 8- What is the level of the sample’s acceptance to those with opposing political views?
- 9- What is the effect of the sample’s demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, level of education, financial status and occupation on each of the following:

---

<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html> last updated 21-4-2014

a- The frequency of using YouTube

b- The extent of accepting political differences

10- What are the sample's suggestions for overcoming the division of Egyptians?

### **Research hypotheses**

- The presence of a statistically significant relationship between the frequency of being exposed to YouTube and the frequency of watching videos of opposing political inclinations.
- The presence of a statistically significant relationship between the frequency of being exposed to videos of opposing political inclinations and the level of accepting political differences.
- The presence of a statistically significant relationship between the sample's activities on YouTube and the frequency of watching videos of opposing political inclinations.
- The presence of a statistically significant relationship between the sample's attitude towards those who politically disagree with them and casting doubt on the authenticity of videos of opposing political inclinations.
- The presence of a statistically significant relationship between the sample's inclinations towards those who have different political views and ignoring videos of opposing political inclinations.
- The presence of significantly statistical gaps between the frequency of browsing YouTube and the demographic characteristics of the research's sample in terms of: Gender in favor of females. Age in favor of the youth. The level of education in favor of higher education. Occupation in favor of the unemployed.
- The presence of significantly statistical gaps between the sample's demographic characteristics and the sample's attitude towards those who have opposing political views as follows: Gender in favor of females. Age in favor of the elderly. Education in favor of low education level. Occupation in favor of those who work at the army, the police and the judiciary.

***The Theoretical Framework*** The theoretical framework of this study relies on the theory of cognitive dissonance developed by Festinger in (1957). Festinger defined dissonance as the feeling of discomfort experienced by an individual when he/she behaves in a way that conflicts with his/her beliefs (McLeod, 2008).

### **The theory of Cognitive Dissonance is based on three hypotheses (Hall, 1998):**

1. Human beings are sensitive to inconsistency between beliefs and attitudes. When people act in a way that conflicts with their opinions and beliefs, they thereby send a warning

with the dissonance they experience. Dissonance is something that we experience on daily basis and a person takes some steps to lessen the feeling of dissonance.

2. Realizing inconsistency leads to an attempt to lessen the experienced dissonance, meanwhile the degree of dissonance differs according to the importance of the beliefs involved, as well as; the degree of the inconsistency between the attitude and the beliefs. There is also a direct relation between the degree of dissonance and the extent of the desire to resolve or reduce such dissonance.

3. Dissonance can be reduced using one of the following ways:

4. Changing one or more of the elements of cognitive dissonance.

5. Adding new cognitive elements that conform to the already existing knowledge.

6. Reducing the importance of the common elements in the dissonant relationship.

If changing one of the beliefs fails to reduce the dissonance, this might lead to the restoration of dissonance through misunderstanding, rejection, falsifying information or seeking the support of others who share the same beliefs and attempting to convince other people (Awa & Nwuche, 2010).

### **Previous studies**

This research divides previous studies according to three focus points:

**Firstly:** Studies that observed the role of political videos on YouTube.

Various studies were directed towards political videos on YouTube. Some studies went on to analyze YouTube political videos as the case in (Vesnic-Alujevic & Sofie Bauwel's (2014) study which analyzed the videos produced for the electoral campaigns of the participants in the European parliament election in 2009 through 13 political parties. Results of the study revealed the importance of political advertisement on YouTube and the increased interest of European citizens in such kind of social media and the increase in such type of campaigns which depend on videos and YouTube. McGarty et al. (2013) discussed the way by which technology contributes to paving the way for fast societal change and breaking the barriers of oppression and restriction through freedom of expression, sense of belonging and cooperation. The analysis also discussed the role of YouTube and social networking websites in publishing pictures and videos of oppositions in the street and linking the filmed material to the television broadcasting and cell phones in Egypt and Tunisia. Chatfield and Brajawidagda (2013) test the political transparency presented by social media especially YouTube, it also presents the strategic use of YouTube by the new government, whereas the new government prepared and published videos displaying high-level political interviews. The new government also used YouTube to display activities that seek reformation and restructuring in an attempt to establish political transparency for the local government. The researcher

analyzed 250 YouTube videos of those published by the government of Jakarta, such videos were viewed and even liked by 7.8 million citizens. The research concluded by stating that the political desire for political transition and the strategic use of YouTube and social media is the key for governmental transparency, as well as facilitating the access of citizens to reform initiatives. Terblanche (2011) analyzes three cartoon movies that depict the activities of the South African President, Jacob Zuma, and whether such movies contain sarcasm or not. The study found out that YouTube and Social networking websites can be considered as effective tools for channeling the votes of electors, therefore politicians such as President Zuma can no longer hide from their political mistakes. Lev-on (2011) also confirmed that YouTube plays an important role in political campaigns, encourages political participation and increases the level of communication between the people and politicians, especially on the local level. English, Sweetser, & Ancu (2011) focused on the effect of political videos on viewers, results of the study indicated that watching political videos is one of the highest three political activities on the internet. Results of the study also revealed that the source was the highest means in terms of credibility and persuasion for viewers followed by the use of logic and slogans then emotional appeal. Additionally, the study concluded that no relation exists between the means of persuasion or attraction on one hand and the effectiveness and impact of the political news displayed in the videos, or even the tendency towards political cynicism on the other hand. The study recommended people to avoid being swayed away by their emotions or the high numbers of viewers and to actually pay attention to the source of the message or the visual speech. Wall & El Zahed's (2014) study revealed that huge news entities include the short YouTube videos posted by ordinary people within their news content. The study discusses the way by which New York Times entered people's videos that depict the Syrian conflict into its live blog. The analysis revealed the effectiveness, depth and impact of such videos on the events; meanwhile Nanabhay & Farmanfarmanian (2011) confirmed the same idea regarding the Egyptian revolution whereby the mass media used to report the videos produced and shared through social networking websites.

**Secondly:** Studies of the attitude of those who are active on YouTube

By reviewing such studies it becomes clear that there is a qualitative difference in their results. Hess (2009) found that YouTube audience is irresponsive to serious messages that deal with political issues or awareness advertising campaigns. The study also found that the audience is irresponsive to such subjects therefore they are not shared with others, and if a response does exist then it is characterized by being negative which is revealed through the comments posted on such videos, on the other hand, there is a huge response to non-serious artistic pictures. Another study concluded that sharing videos is an important means adopted by people to express their political and religious beliefs, as well as; their affiliations and interests, which thereby creates a new form of identity that is not related to place, indicating a

growing interest in the political videos on YouTube (van Zoonen et al., 2010). The I wall, Sud, and Vis (2012) analyzed the content of the comments posted by those who browse YouTube, the study analyzed the content of 35347 videos in English and concluded that males post more comments than females. The study also found out that religious subjects attract the greatest number of comments while comic subjects attract the lowest number of comments, meanwhile 23% of the comments come as responses to previous comments. Another study attempted to analyze to discover the effectiveness of internet videos on campaigns that deal with controversial issues, all of the results of the study supported the effectiveness of YouTube in expressing opinions, especially in case of controversial issues(Thorson et al., 2010) .Yang, Hsu, and Tan (2010) focused on understanding the motivations of electronic users for sharing videos on YouTube and whether such motivations are affected by gender or not. The study also presented a model based on ATM, a Technology Acceptance Model which supports the social impact theory. By conducting a survey that included 206 men and 135 women who share videos on YouTube, results indicated that the actual ease of using YouTube is an important factor behind the desire for using YouTube to share videos. Results of the study also revealed that the nature of (behaviors) sharing differs from men to women, whereas the motivation for sharing is strongly affected by the benefit and social norms in case of women, meanwhile it is more affected by personal standards in case of men. In 2012, Nycy's study focused on analyzing the comments posted on videos by those who browse YouTube and the reasons behind the intensification of conflict and tension between commentators. By analyzing the comments of 25 videos that deal with controversial subjects, the study concluded that the comments are rather characterized by being negative, hateful and hurtful. The comments on some videos also included racist and sarcastic language, especially in case of the re-production of some videos to the stereotypical images of some characters or groups.

**Thirdly:** Studies that deal with cognitive dissonance

Other studies focused on the dissonance existing between political inclinations and the political behaviors. Lashley (2009) explored the role of media and race in influencing the behavior of voters in the 2008 U.S presidential election. The study used the concept of cognitive dissonance to explain how political strategies are used in an advertising manner to effectively rally candidates. The study found that the media deliberately shows candidates in contradictory positions in order to lessen the confidence of voters in them. Results of the study also confirmed that race, gender and religion are effectively used in media campaigns for presidential elections. Ann Buckmaster& McKenzieb (2009) focused on the cognitive dissonance of Irish students towards the invasion of Iraq and the US intervention in striking Iraq. The study conducted a survey for 150 male and female respondents, the survey included questions concerned with cognitive dissonance, since Ireland was one of the countries that

granted the US forces the right to use its airports for refueling purposes, at the same time when Ireland participated with troops for peacekeeping in the United Nations. Results of the study revealed that 47% of the sample inconsistently answered some questions. Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Meng (2009) measured the effect of the selective exposure to contradictory political information on the political inclinations of the respondents by applying this to 156 individuals. The participants attended two sessions, during the first session they specified the extent of their interest in political news and their political attitudes towards four issues. During the second session participants browsed eight opinions regarding such issues, every two opinions involved conflicting views. Results of the study revealed that those who have specified their inclinations are the most exposed to news and have the most consistent opinions, which indicates their keenness on selective exposure. On the other hand, reading opposing articles was higher in case of those who have higher interests in politics and those who have flexible tendencies. Glasford, Dovidio, and Pratto (2009) explored the role of social identity in reducing the intensity of cognitive imbalance by applying the study on two groups of students at a US university to determine the extent of their agreement on the principle of leaving civilians unharmed. The national identity of the first group was measured and the second group was requested to read a short paragraph that contains examples of the violation of this principle by the US Army. Results of the study revealed that the students who had their identity defined had a lower level of cognitive dissonance after reading the paragraph and vice versa in case of the group of students who did not have their identity specified before reading the paragraph. This indicates the validity of the hypothesis that social identity works on reducing the intensity of cognitive dissonance. Lindsay (2014) attempted to explore the contradiction in the beliefs of some Americans who regard killing as a crime, especially killing children and elderly people, yet the same people commit, allow or even accept the mass murder of Native Americans. Results of the study revealed that most of those who were tested tend to reduce the level of dissonance they experience by simplifying the matter and talking about it in a humorous or sarcastic manner. Other studies focused on the effect of dissonance on the personality and behavior of a person as the case in (Rodriguez & Strange, 2014) which hypothesized that a person might forget some of his/her memories in order to reduce the level of cognitive dissonance. Results of the study revealed that those who chose to lessen the cognitive dissonance using the policy of changing their former beliefs were more likely to forget their memories in order to go with their new stances. On the other hand, those who did not change their former beliefs and relied on the policy of denying the dissonance had more solid memories and were even able to remember such memories. Results of the study prove that cognitive



dissonance distorts memories in order to make them fit the beliefs; it actually fills the gap between the stimulated knowledge and the laws of memories.

Lee and Jeyaraj (2014) supposes that the mechanism of cognitive dissonance acquired by people through their experiences is actually what determines the differences between personalities. The study was applied to 120 participants in Singapore, whereby they were randomly exposed to four situations and either received an independent or deliberate preparation. Results of the study revealed that the situations differed from one person to another which was not based on the cultural pattern. The study suggests that personal interpretation depends on the difference in the mechanism of dealing with the cognitive dissonance resulting from personal experiences. A remarkable study proved the importance of the cognitive dissonance theory in the dynamic of opinion expression, stating that previous studies of opinion expression mainly relied on the assumption of infinite confidence which indicates that individuals can influence the opinions of each another if such opinions are close enough, therefore people develop their opinions using the collective opinions of those around them. However, all of those models and studies miss the inner personal stance of the person himself, despite its importance in opinion expression. The research supposes that a person is aware of the difference between his own inner personal stance and the opinions of those around him; yet here lies the importance of the theory of Cognitive Dissonance which modifies and adjusts the uncomfortable feeling resulting from the contradiction between the personal stance and the opinions of the surrounding people as the result of a series of experiences which revealed the importance of cognitive dissonance policies adopted by people in expressing their opinions (Wang et al., 2013) (Table 1)

**Table 1: Simple Statistics**

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	151	54.9
	Female	124	45.1
Marital status	Unmarried	102	37.1
	Married	173	62.9
Age	18 - below 35	220	80
	35 - below 55	45	16.4
	55+	10	3.6
Education	Below average	3	1.1
	Average	29	10.5

	University student	99	36
	Higher education	125	45.5
	Postgraduate studies (MA, PhD)	19	6.9
Occupation	Employee at public or private sector	87	31.6
	Works at the judiciary, the army or the police	17	6.2
	Self-employed	44	16
	Unemployed	127	46.2
Socio-economic level	High	104	37.8
	Average	136	49.5
	Low	35	12.7
Total		275	100

#### **General comments on previous studies:**

- Previous studies that applied the theory of cognitive dissonance had the fact that they addressed controversial issues in common. YouTube studies indicate the effectiveness of YouTube on the discussion of controversial issues, which indicates the validity of the research's subject of application and the relevance of the theory of cognitive dissonance to topic at hand.
- Results of the studies that address the comments of YouTube users on videos found commenting to be an important means in determining the political identity of participants. In case of controversial issues, results also confirmed the spread of hurtful and sarcastic language in the comments. The current study will attempt to focus on how people with different political opinions view each other and how that affects their acceptance of one another.
- Results of studies that applied the theory of cognitive dissonance revealed the difference in the way audience deal with controversial issues, demonstrating that various factors contribute to reducing cognitive dissonance such as social identity, forgetfulness and personal differences.

This study made use of previous studies that used the mechanism of justifying the use of violence against those have different political opinions. This study made use of previous studies in determining the various changes that can be measured and confirming that the theory is relevant to the subject of the study.

#### **Methodological procedures of the research**

**Research methodology:** The researcher adopted the media survey method using the survey sampling method.

Data-collection tool: The researcher uses a questionnaire tool and holds unstructured scientific interviews with a random sample of Egyptians of different ages. This is to ensure that the respondents understand the questions, have freedom in answering them and to resolve any problems that might occur while applying the form so as to deepen the analytical vision of the results and support the interpretation processes of the phenomenon under consideration. A field survey was designed in light of the researched problem and the objectives of the study, in addition to its hypotheses and questions and in the framework of the theoretical approaches which the study relies on. The questionnaire included (23) questions that adequately cover the objectives of the study, in addition to the questions related to personal information.

**Questionnaire reliability and validity test:**

1- Validity test:

The questionnaire was presented upon a number of judges\*2 in the fields of media and research methodologies in order to ensure its validity for application.

2- Questionnaire reliability:

Fifteen days past the date of the first application, the questionnaire was retested on a sample of 30 individuals with a percentage of 15%, whereby the percentage of reliability was 92%.

**Study sample:** The study sample is composed of 300 forms. The forms were distributed among males and females who live in upscale and poor neighborhoods and whose ages vary between 18 and 60 years. The researcher included various intermediate variables in the sample such as gender, educational systems, affiliation to different political references and professions. 25 forms were invalid as the respondents failed to answer all the questions, hence the final number of analyzed forms is 275.

The study sample belongs to what is defined as multistage sampling. It is a deliberate sample composed of those who browse YouTube either directly through the website or via the videos shared on other social networking websites such as Facebook, and randomly selected residents of the city of Mansoura, the capital of Dakahlia governorate. The application of the questionnaire's form took a period of two months, starting from April 23 to June 23, 2014.

---

<sup>2</sup>The questionnaire was presented upon

- Amal Al-Ghazawy- Media professor at King Abdulaziz University
- SaedNagida- Assistant Professor of Media at King Abdulaziz University
- Rabab Al-Gamal- Assistant Professor of Media at King Abdulaziz University
- Azza Al-Kahky - Assistant Professor of Media at the Umm Al-QuraUniversity
- Mohamed Gharib - Media professor atUmm Al-QuraUniversity

### Statistical data processing

After conducting the field study, the forms were revised, arranged, coded and the data was entered into the computer through SPSS program which is used to process data. The researcher used a number of statistical operations to arrive at the results of the study and test the validity of the hypotheses, such operations include:

- 1- One-way analysis of variance (Anova) to calculate the significance and source differences between groups.
- 2- In case the sample receives a dual rating, such as gender variables: T- test to identify the significance of the differences between the sample's groups in terms of the average score on the study's scales.
- 3- The correlation coefficients between the variables of the study, taking into account the nature of these variables and consequently using relationship meters and appropriate correlation coefficient (Pearson Correlation was used to investigate the relationship between the quantitative variables).
- 4- 2 chi test for the significance of the differences between the percentages.
- 5- Calculating (M) averages and standard deviations (SD) for the research variables.
- 6- Calculating the percentages of all research variables.
- 7- Scales of the study.

Several scales were designed to measure the variables of the research as follows:

- Browsing frequency scale
- Acceptance of the other party scale
- Social economic scale

### Results and discussion

The results of the study show that the number of those who browse YouTube and the browsing frequency are inversely proportional. There is no relationship between gender and the browsing frequency, yet there are statistically significant differences between the browsing frequency and the respondent's age in favor of youth whose ages vary between 18 and below 35. See table (B1). There are also statistically significant differences between the frequency of browsing YouTube and the sample's level of education in favor of those who attained higher education table (2,3).

**Table 2:** The frequency by which the sample browses YouTube

Frequency	K	%
High	76	27.7
Average	89	32.4

Low	110	40
Total	275	100

**Table 3:** The frequency by which the sample browses YouTube

Activities		K	%	Ranking
I interact	Comment	51	18.5	4
	Send video to a friend	82	29.8	2
	I like/unlike	56	20.4	3
	I subscribe to some channels	40	14.5	5
	I discuss its content with those around me	38	13.8	6
	I produce videos	9	3.3	7
	Total interactors	99	36	-
I watch only		176	64	1
Total sample		275	100	

Results indicate that 64% of those who browse YouTube virtually are satisfied to watch only; meanwhile 36% use it as a tool for social interaction according to table (B2). Such results differ from what Hagerty (2008) concluded whereby it revealed that the desire for social interaction is the main motive behind browsing YouTube, this can be traced back to the fact that Hgerty's (2008) study sample was limited to youth only. (Table 4)

**Table 4:** Simple youth

Activities' Frequency	K	%
High	56	20.4
Average	88	32
Low	131	47.6
Total	275	100

shows that almost 52.4% of the sample have either high or average activities meanwhile 47% have low activities, such percentages also indicate that there is an inverse relation between the number and the frequency of the activity. Results indicates that art and entertainment videos

are the most viewed by the sample with a percentage of 73.5%, followed by political videos with a percentage of 55.6%; meanwhile scientific and educational videos received the lowest ranking with a percentage of 31.3% (see table 5)

**Table 5:** The types of videos that the sample is interested in watching

Video types	K	%	Ranking
Political	153	55,6	2
Arts and entertainment	202	73.5	1
Religious	131	47.6	3
Sports	126	45.8	4
News	82	29.8	6
Educational or scientific	86	31.3	5
Other	16	5.8	7
Total	275		

. Such results are consistent with the results of English et al., (2011) which revealed that watching political videos is one of three most significant activities practiced by YouTube users. Such results are also consistent with haridakis & Hanson's (2009) study which revealed that watching art videos comes at the forefront table (D)

**Table 6:** Watching art videos

Approach		K	%	Total	%
I watch it	I watch it but I don't believe it.	41	14.9	147	53.5
	I watch it and search for opposing videos.	106	38.5		
	I watch it and am convinced with its content.	1	0.4		
I ignore it		128	46.5	128	46.5
Total		275	100	275	100

indicates that 53.5% watch videos that conflict with their political inclinations, yet most of the sample do not believe such videos and even search for opposing videos that support their points of view. Such results agree with the strategies adopted by people to lessen dissonance

as pointed out by cognitive dissonance researchers such as (e.g., Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959; Simon & Brehm, 1995). The results also indicate that 46.2% of the sample ignore videos that conflict with their political inclinations which thereby proves the validity of what Sunstein (2007) discussed concerning the way by which selecting news controls social networking websites. The sample's reasons indicate that they stick to their points of view and have desire to change them with a percentage of 78.8%, meanwhile the percentage of those who fear that the content of such videos would affect them is 3.1% (table 7).

**Table 7:** Watching Fear videos

Reasons		K	%	Ranking
Convinced with his/her own point of view	Not to cause myself any confusion	21	16.4	3
	Because I don't believe those who have opposing inclinations.	52	40.6	1
	I feel that watching such videos is a waste of time.	28	21.8	2
Not totally convinced	I'm afraid it would affect me.	4	3.1	4
	Why should I piss myself off	21	16.4	3
Other		2	1.6	5
Total		<sup>3</sup> 128	100	

This actually proves that most of the respondents are convinced with their points of view. Such results conform with the results of Knobloch-Westerwick et al, (2009) which indicates the ultimate belief in the political inclination actually enhances the exposure to media content that supports such inclination. Table (E2)

**Table 8:** The sample's reasons for watching opposing political videos

Reasons	K	%	Ranking
Because I'm not convinced with my own views.	4	2.7	5
To kill time	29	19.7	4
To form a comprehensive view of the subject.	77	52.4	2
To see how the other party thinks.	88	59.9	1

To respond to the rumors told by the other party.	45	30.6	3
Total	147		

shows that “To know how the other party thinks” is the main motive behind watching opposing political videos with a percentage of 59.9%, followed by the desire to form a comprehensive view of the subject with a percentage of 52.4% and to respond to rumors told by the other party with a percentage of 30.6%. Such results confirm the researcher’s discussion regarding the traditional media’s failure to provide audience with all points of view which thereby prompts them to search for other points of view on YouTube. Knobloch-Westerwick et al., (2009) state that those who read articles that conflict with their political views are mainly those who are highly interested in politics and others who have more flexible needs .Data also indicates that the content of the video significantly incites audience to interact whereas 30.5% interact in case of supporting videos; meanwhile 40.8% interact in case of opposing videos (table F).

**Table 9:** Compares the extend of the sample interaction after watching videos that conflict with their political inclinations, and videos that support their political inclinations

Activities <sup>4</sup>		The supporting view		The opposing view	
		K	%	K	%
Interaction	Comment	22	17.1	29	19.7
	Send video to a friend.	20	15.6	21	14.3
	I dislike	13	10.2	16	10.9
	I discuss its content with those around me.	21	16.4	54	36.7
	Total interactive respondents	39	30.5	60	40.8
I only watch		89	69.5	87	59.2
Total Sample		128	100	147	100

The study demonstrates that watching opposing videos increases the level of cognitive dissonance experienced by the audience which prompts them to adopt a certain behavior to

<sup>4</sup> Multiple choice



lessen such dissonance. Such results comply with Thorson, Ekdale, Borah, Namkoong ,& Shah (2010) who declared that the activity of users increases in case of controversial issues. The data revealed from table (G)

**Table 10:** Controversial videos

The impact		K	%	Ranking
Positive	I respect their point of view but I stick to my own view.	79	53.7	1
	My acceptance of the other party increased	11	7.5	4
Negative	My disdain of the other party increased	16	10.9	3
	I am more intrigued by the other party's way of thinking and his/her justifications.	41	27.9	2
Total		147	100	

indicates that watching opposing political videos doesn't impact the respondent's confidence in their point of view yet it causes the respondent to respect the other party's point of view with a percentage of 53.7%. 7.5% indicate that their respect of the other party's point of view increased after watching videos which explained such views; this indicates the success of YouTube videos in bridging the gap between those who politically disagree with a percentage of 61%. The results indicate that 23.6% negatively judge those who politically disagree with them and view them as disbelievers, traitors, dumb or 'sheep' which explains why some Egyptians support the killing and arrest of their opponents. Lindsay's (2013) study indicate that the sample used sarcasm to belittle the humanity of Indians and accept the genocide campaigns practiced against them, on the other hand 49.5% showed respect towards them which affirms the possibility of achieving national reconciliation. See table (H)

**Table 11:** Possibility of achieving national reconciliation

The respondent's perspective		K	%	Ranking	Total	%
Negative	Disbelievers who do not conform to Sharia law.	3	1.1	7	139	50.5
	Bribed Traitors	7	2.5	5		
	They deserve to be burned alive.	6	2.2	6		
	Dumb "sheep"	49	17.8	4		
	They are mistaken	74	26.9	2		

Neutral	They possess freedom of thought.	98	36.6	1	98	35.6
Positive	I respect them	38	13.8	3	38	13.8
Total		275				

.Results indicate a change in the ethical codes of Egyptians. It goes without saying that using offending words conflicts with general morals, yet 33.5% of the sample accept using offending terms, whereby 14.2 absolutely accept its use and 19.3% stated that the matter is subject to the person's logic behind insulting others whereby some people actually deserve being insulted (table I1). Table (I1)

**Table 12:** The sample's opinion regarding the use of offensive words while commenting on opposing YouTube videos

Sample's opinion	K	%	Ranking
People are free to comment however they like.	39	14.2	3
It's unacceptable	183	66.5	1
It depends.	53	19.3	2
Total	275	100	

Such results comply with what Nycyk (2012) concluded regarding how the language used in the comments of controversial videos is mainly offensive, negative and insulting. Results also indicate that 60.7% of the sample somehow accept those who politically disagree with them which thereby indicates the possibility of achieving reconciliation between conflicting factions in Egypt especially since 14.6% highly accept the other (table I2).

Table I2: The sample's willingness to accept those who politically disagree with them

Willingness	K	%
I completely reject them	68	24.7
I somehow accept them	167	60.7
I highly accept them	40	14.6
Total	275	100

According to table (J)

**Table 13:** The sample's tendencies towards the other and (K)

Statement	I agree	%	To some extent	%	No	%	Total	%
Those who politically disagree with me are Egyptians just like me and I respect their	219	79.7	43	15.6	13	4.7	275	100
All Egyptians must cooperate as we are all in the same ship.	232	84.4	29	10.5	14	5.1	275	100
I always add a sarcastic comment when watching opposing videos.	21	7.6	59	21.5	195	70.9	275	100
I believe that my political view is correct and I shall not relinquish that for the other.	69	25.1	114	41.5	92	33.5	275	100
Political reconciliation is important and everyone should take part in it.	163	59.3	76	27.6	36	13.1	275	100
The other party damaged the Egyptian life and should be removed from the country.	68	24.7	96	34.9	111	40.4	275	100
The Egyptian people are not fit for democracy.	57	20.7	115	41.8	103	37.5	275	100
The other faction is fooled and should change his opinions.	92	33.5	134	48.7	49	17.8	275	100
We all pay the price of our division and we should all work on achieving reconciliation.	194	70.5	51	18.5	30	10.9	275	100
I am willing to compromise and meet the other party half way through.	101	36.7	114	41.5	60	21.8	275	100

**Table 14:** The sample's assessment of those who politically disagree with them

Degree of acceptance	K	%
High	165	60
Average	81	29.5
Low	29	10.5
Total	275	100

the results revealed that 60% have a high degree of acceptance towards the other party meanwhile 29.5 moderately accept them and 10.5% have a low degree of acceptance towards the other party. This indicates the possibility of achieving national reconciliation. Suggestions confirm that 64% of the sample believe that justice isn't being served,

meanwhile 34.9% believe that the strict activation of the law is the ideal solution to overcome the Egyptian crisis. 29.1% believe in the importance of giving people their rights. Table (L)

**Table 15:** The sample's vision for overcoming the division of the Egyptian people

Sample's vision for overcoming the problem	K	%
Destroying the other faction	15	5.5
Reconciliation and compromise of both parties	71	25.8
Activating the law strictly	96	34.9
Giving people their rights	80	29.1
Other	12	4.7
Total	275	100

### Results of the analytical study

**Table 16:** The relationship between the frequency of browsing YouTube and the frequency of watching politically opposing videos

Variable	Ms	SD	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
The frequency of being exposed to YouTube	2	1.025	**0.305	0.000
The frequency of watching politically opposing videos.	1.73	0.871		

shows that the correlation between the frequency of being exposed to YouTube and the frequency of watching opposing political videos is (0.305) which is a statistically significant relation at a statistical significant level of (0.000). Such correlation is positive meaning that whenever the frequency of being exposed to YouTube increases, the frequency of watching politically opposing videos increases as well, hence the first hypothesis is accepted. Table (N)

**Table 17:** The frequency of being exposed to politically opposing videos and the level of accepting the political difference

The degree of accepting political difference		I completely reject them	I somewhat accept them	I accept them to a high degree	Total	chi-square value	Degree of freedom	statistical significance level	Contingency Coefficient
The frequency of being exposed to politically opposing videos	An hour or less	9	55	11	75	20.545	6	0.002	0.350
	One - two hours	16	20	5	41				
	Two hours - less than four hours	9	10	7	26				
	More than four hours	3	1	1	5				
Total		37	86	24	147				

- Depending on the level of statistical significance  $\alpha = 0.05$

shows that the observed chi-square value is 20.545 which exceeds the critical value of chi-square which is 0.002 and that is statistically significant at the level of significance ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) hence it becomes clear that a statistical significance exists and therefore the alternative hypothesis is accepted as there is a relation between the variables. The strength of the relation was tested so as to ensure the validity of the results whereby the value of the Contingency Coefficient was 0.350 indicating that the relation between the variables is moderate. The previous data indicates that there is a relation between the frequency of being exposed to politically opposing videos and the level of accepting the political difference, thus the second hypothesis is accepted.

According to table 18

**Table 18:** The relationship between the degree of the sample’s activities on YouTube and the frequency of watching politically opposing videos

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	T-test	Significance level
The sample’s activity on YouTube	1	0.783	42.08	Statistically significant
The frequency of watching politically opposing videos	2.07	0.598		

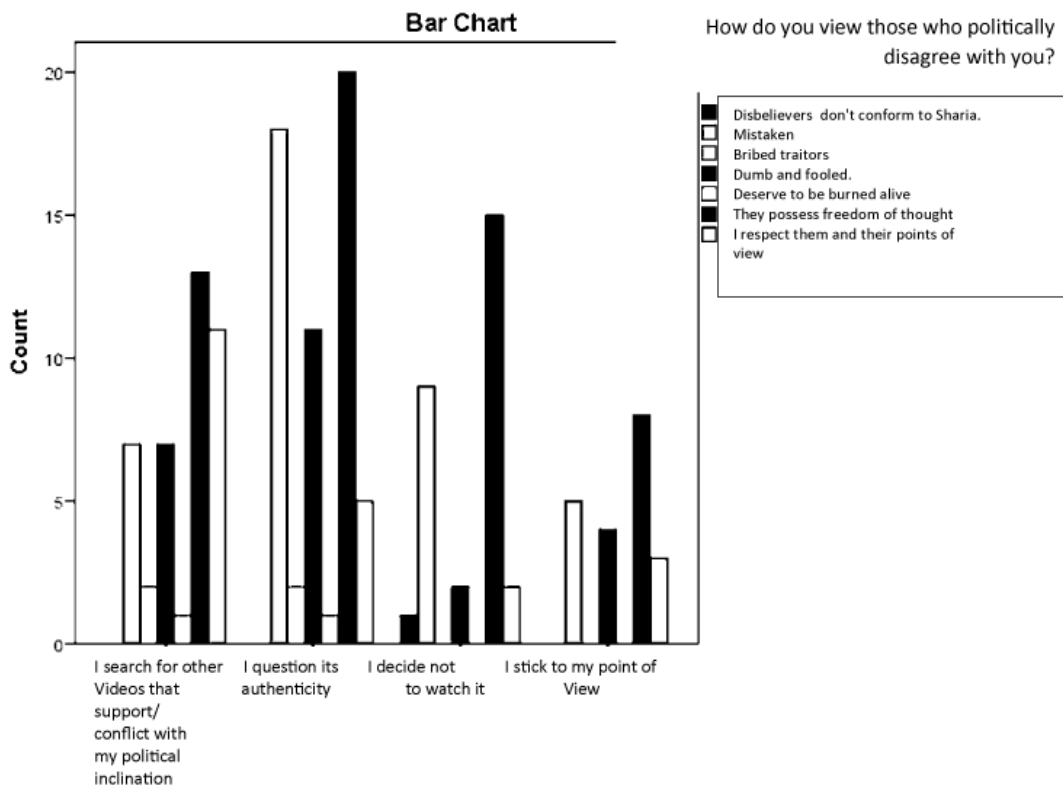
, there is a relationship between the sample’s activities on YouTube and the frequency of being exposed to politically opposing videos, thus the study confirmed the validity of the third hypothesis. Table 19

**Table 19:** Chi-square test examine the relation between the sample’s tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them and questioning the authenticity of the videos which conflict with their political inclinations

Sample’s tendencies towards those who they politically disagree with	I look for supporting videos	I question them	I don’t watch	It weakens my confidence in my point of view	Total	Ch-square value	Degree of freedom	Level of statistic significance	Contingency Coefficient
Mistaken	7	18	9	5	39				
Bribed	2	2	0	0	4				
Dumb	7	11	2	4	24				

of the videos which conflict with their political inclinations	Deserve to be burned alive.	1	1	0	0	2				
	They possess freedom of thought	13	20	15	8	56				
	I respect them	11	5	2	3	21				
Total		41	57	29	20	147				

- The level of statistical significance is calculated at  $\alpha = 0.05$  shows that there is no relationship between the sample's tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them and questioning the authenticity of videos that conflict with their political inclinations. By viewing 1) it becomes noticeable that the percentage of respondents who believe that they possess freedom of thought or that they are mistaken is high, meanwhile those who believe that others are bribed or deserve to be burned alive is low or nonexistent, thus the fourth hypothesis is rejected. Table 20



**Table 20:** Chi-square test to for the sample’s tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them and ignoring videos that conflict with their political inclinations

Sample’s tendencies towards those who politically disagree with		Not to confuse myself.	I don’t believe those who have opposing inclinations.	Why should I piss my self off ?	I feel like it’s a waste of time	I’m afraid it would affect me	Other	Total	Chi-square value	Degree of freedom	Level of statistical significance	Contingency Coefficient
Ignoring videos that conflict with the political inclination.	Disbelievers who do not conform to Sharia law.	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	42.292	30	0.068	0.489
	Mistaken	6	21	1	9	2	3	42				
	Bribed traitors	0	1	3	2	0	0	6				
	Dumb fools	3	9	5	5	0	0	22				
	They deserve to be burned alive	1	2	2	0	0	0	5				



	The posses s freedom of thought	4	17	7	8	0	0	36				
	I respect them and their point of view	6	2	2	3	2	0	15				
Total		20	52	21	28	4	3	128				

- The level of statistical significance is calculated at  $\alpha= 0.05$

shows that the calculated chi-square value is 42.292, that is less than the critical value of chi-square value which is 43.773 at a significance level of 0.068 which is not statistically significant at a significance level of ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ). Therefore, there is no statistical significance; hence the alternative hypothesis is rejected. By observing figure (1) it becomes noticeable that respondents who do not believe the opinions which conflict with their political inclinations view others who politically disagree with them to possess freedom of thought and to be mistaken. It is also clear that the percentage of those who believe others to be bribed traitors or disbelievers is low or even nonexistent. Results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the respondent’s gender or occupation and the sample’s tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them. However there are statistically significant differences between age and level of education on one hand and the sample’s tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them in favor of the youth and those who attained higher education respectively. (Table 21-28)

**Table 21:** The relationship between gender and frequency of browsing YouTube

The frequency of browsing YouTube	Gender	Number	Mean	F-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
	Male	152	2.07	1.105	2	0.333
	Female	123	1.93			
	Total	275	2			

**Table 22:** The relationship between the sample's age and the frequency of browsing YouTube

The frequency of browsing YouTube	Age	Number	Mean	F-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
	18- below 35	220	1.93	2.490	2	0.045
	35- below 55	45	2.29			
	55+	10	2.20			
	Total	275	2			

- Level of Education in favor of higher education.

Table (23)

**Table 23:** The relationship between the level of education and the frequency of browsing YouTube

The frequency of browsing YouTube	Level of education	Number	Mean	F-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
	Below average	3	1.67	3.635	4	0.007
	Average	29	1.62			
	University student	99	2.15			
	Higher education	125	1.89			
	Postgraduate studies (MA, PhD)	19	2.58			

	Total	275	2			
--	-------	-----	---	--	--	--

**Table 24:** The relationship between the sample's occupation and the frequency of browsing YouTube

The frequency of browsing YouTube	Occupation	Number	Mean	F-Value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
	Employee at the public or private sector.	87	1.97	0.994	4	0.011
	Works at the judiciary, the army or the police.	17	2.35			
	Self-employed	44	2.11			
	Unemployed	127	1.94			
	Total	275	2			

Table

**Table 25 :** The relationship between gender and the sample' tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them.

Sample's tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them.	Gender	Number	Mean	F-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
	Male	151	1.87	1.215	2	0.298
	Females	124	1.99			
	Total	275	1.93			

- Age: In favor of the elderly.

**Table 26:** The relationship between the sample's age and their tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them

Sample's tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them	Age	Number	Mean	F-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
	18- below 35	220	2.02	5.015	2	0.007
	35- below 55	45	1.58			
	55+	10	1.60			
	Total	275	2			

**Table 27:** The relationship between the sample's level of education and the sample's tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them

Sample's tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them	Level of education	Number	Mean	F-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
	Below average	3	3	4.416	4	0.002
	Average	29	1.90			
	University student	99	2.08			
	Higher education	125	1.73			
	Postgraduate studies (MA, PhD)	19	2.37			
	Total	275	1.93			

**Table 28:** The sample's tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them

Sample's tendencies towards those who politically disagree with them	Occupation	Number	Mean	F-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
	Employee at the public or private sector.	87	1.87	0.462	4	0.763
	Works at the judiciary, the army or the police.	17	1.88			
	Self-employed	44	1.95			
	Unemployed	127	1.96			
	Total	275	1.93			

## References

1. Awa HO, Nwuche CA (2010) Cognitive consistency in purchase behaviour: Theoretical & empirical analyses. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 2(1), p44-54.
2. Barrons G (2012) 'Suleiman: Mubarak decided to step down# egypt# jan25 OH MY GOD': Examining the use of social media in the 2011 Egyptian revolution. *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, 5(1), 54-67. doi:10.1080/17550912.2012.645669
3. Buckmaster A, McKenzie K (2009) Cognitive Dissonance and Students' Opinions on the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq. *Defence Studies*, 9(1), 118-128
4. Chatfield AT, Brajawidagda U (2013) Political Will and Strategic Use of YouTube to Advancing Government Transparency: An Analysis of Jakarta Government-Generated YouTube Videos. In *Electronic Government*, pp. 26-37. Springer Berlin Heidelberg
5. Dahlberg L (2001) Extending the public sphere through cyberspace: The case of Minnesota E-Democracy. *First Monday*, 6(3)
6. English K, Sweetser K D, Ancu M (2011) YouTube-ification of political talk: An examination of persuasion appeals in viral video. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55 (6), 733-748, 0002764211398090
7. Festinger L (1957) *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. CA: Stanford University Press
8. Festinger L, Carlsmith JM (1959) Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 58(2), 203
9. Glasford DE, Dovidio J F, Pratto F (2009) I continue to feel so good about us: In-group identification and the use of social identity. Enhancing strategies to reduce intragroup dissonance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35(4), 415-427
10. González-Bailón S, Borge-Holthoefer J, Moreno Y (2013) Broadcasters and hidden influentials in online protest diffusion. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 0002764213479371
11. Hagerty SP (2008) An examination of the uses and gratifications of YouTube. Villanova University. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304436165>

12. Hall R (1998) Cognitive dissonance. Retrived from Psychology World Web Site: [http://web.mst.edu/~psyworld/cognitive\\_dissonance.htm](http://web.mst.edu/~psyworld/cognitive_dissonance.htm)
13. Haridakis P, Hanson G (2009) Social interaction and co-viewing with YouTube: Blending mass communication reception and social connection. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53(2), 317-335
14. Hess A (2009) Resistance up in smoke: Analyzing the limitations of deliberation on YouTube. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 26(5), 411-434
15. Kamel SH (2014) Egypt's Ongoing Uprising and the Role of Social Media: Is there Development?. *Information Technology for Development*, 20(1), 78-91. Taylor & Francis doi:10.1080/02681102.2013.840948
16. Knobloch-Westerwick S, Meng J (2009) Looking the other way selective exposure to attitude-consistent and counterattitudinal political information. *Communication Research*, 36(3), 426-448
17. Lashley M (2009) The politics of cognitive dissonance: Spin, the media, and race (and ethnicity) in the 2008 US presidential election. *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 39(4), 364-377
18. Lee JJY, Jeyaraj S (2014) Effects of self-construal differences on cognitive dissonance examined by priming the independent and interdependent self. *SAGE Open*, 4(1), 2158244014521434
19. Lev-On A (2012) YouTube Usage in Low-Visibility Political Campaigns. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*.9 (2). p205-216. doi:10.1080/19331681.2011.645360
20. Lindsay, B. C. (2013). Humor and Dissonance in California's Native American Genocide. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58 (1), 97-123, 0002764213495034
21. McGarty C, Thomas EF, Lala G, Smith LG, Bliuc AM (2013) New technologies, new identities, and the growth of mass opposition in the Arab Spring. *Political Psychology*, 3(6), p725-740. Wiley online Library, doi: 10.1111/pops.12060
22. McLeod S (2008) Cognitive dissonance. *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive-dissonance.html>

23. Nanabhay M, Farmanfarmaian R (2011) From spectacle to spectacular: How physical space, social media and mainstream broadcast amplified the public sphere in Egypt's 'Revolution'. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 16(4), 573-603
24. Nycyk M (2012) Tensions in Enforcing YouTube Community Guidelines: The Challenge of Regulating Users' Flaming Comments. Retrived from [http://www.academia.edu/download/30187109/Thesis\\_2012\\_YouTube\\_Flaming.pdf](http://www.academia.edu/download/30187109/Thesis_2012_YouTube_Flaming.pdf)
25. Pariser E (2011) *The filter bubble: How the new personalized web is changing what we read and how we think*. Penguin, 294 p., ISBN 978-1-594-20300-8
26. Rodriguez DN, Strange D (2014) False memories for dissonance inducing events. *Memory*, 23 (2), 203-212
27. Simon L, Greenberg J, Brehm J (1995) Trivialization: the forgotten mode of dissonance reduction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68(2), 247
28. Sunstein CR (2007) *Republic. com 2.0*. New Jersey, NJ : Princeton University Press, p.p 1-18
29. Terblanche NS (2011) You cannot run or hide from social media—ask a politician. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 11(3), 156-167. Wiley Online Library, DOI: 10.1002/pa.404
30. Thelwall M, Sud P, Vis F (2012) Commenting on YouTube videos: From Guatemalan rock to el big bang. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 63(3), 616-629
31. Thorson K, Ekdale B, Borah P, Namkoong K, Shah C (2010) YouTube and Proposition 8: A case study in video activism. *Information, Communication & Society*, 13(3), 325-349. doi:10.1080/13691180903497060
32. Van Zoonen L, Vis F, Mihelj S (2010) Performing citizenship on YouTube: Activism, satire and online debate around the anti-Islam video Fitna. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 7(4), 249-262. Taylor & Francis Journals, doi: 10.1080/17405904.2010.511831
33. Vesnic-Alujevic L, Van Bauwel S (2014) YouTube: a political advertising tool? A case study of the use of YouTube in the campaign for the European parliament elections 2009. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 13(3), 195-212

34. Wall M, El Zahed S (2014) Embedding content from Syrian citizen journalists: The rise of the collaborative news clip. *Journalism*, 1464884914529213
35. Wang SW, Huang CY, Sun CT (2013) Modeling self-perception agents in an opinion dynamics propagation society. *Simulation*, 90(3), 238-248, 0037549713515029.
36. Yang C, Hsu YC, Tan S (2010) Predicting the determinants of users' intentions for using YouTube to share video: moderating gender effects. *Cyber psychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 13(2), 141-152
37. Youtube (2014a) Statics. Retrieved April 12, 2012 from <http://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html> last updated 21-4-2014