Analysis of New Social Movements in the Middle East
(Case Study: Egyptian revolution of 2011)

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Abstract

The emergence of new social movements in the Middle East with the aim of reforming or changing the established system and with different characteristics from traditional and classical movements is one of the topics that has attracted the attention of sociologists and social researchers. In this study, using a descriptive-analytical method, based on Ted Robert Greer's theory of "relative deprivation", an attempt has been made to investigate the emergence of new social movements in the Middle East and to examine whether another factor was involved in the emergence of this phenomenon or not. In order to facilitate the process of research and show real evidence, the Egyptian revolution will be discussed as a case study. Thus we organize the present article in the framework of the following questions: "Does the theory of 'relative deprivation' have the ability to explain new social movements in the Middle East, such as the Egyptian revolution?" And "What factors besides this theory can enhance the ability to explain these movements?" The results obtained from the analysis of the January Revolution in Egypt and the role of social media Revolution indicate that although the developments of Islamic societies are rooted in the dissatisfaction of the people of these countries with the situation of their society, however, the role of "mass media" in motivating and organizing people to participate in the main streets and squares of the city cannot be ignored. In fact, the "relative deprivation" of Egyptian society during the rule of Hosni Mubarak has acted as a motivating factor of people and social media and networks such as Facebook have played the role of catalyst.

Keywords

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Introduction

The study of social movements and the attempt to explain the causes and reasons for their emergence have always been of interest to sociologists and social researchers. Studies in this field have led researchers to provide relatively similar criteria for the identification of social movements, and therefore movements with these criteria were called social movements, and other movements and protest movements were excluded from the social movements. In the age of communication, with the development of the media and the change in the tastes of the participants in the movement, new social movements emerged that are in some respects were markedly different from the classical and traditional movements. The emergence of new social movements did not stop only in the field of Western societies and in the late twentieth and early 21st century, it also entered the field of Islamic societies.

Numerous theories have been proposed to explain emerging movements. One such view was put forward by Ted Robert Gere and called "relative deprivation." According to this theory, "relative deprivation" is the result of the difference between value expectations or demands and value capabilities. Value claims include goods that people consider themselves worthy of them and related to both their present and future conditions, and when this difference is negative, society is partially deprived and, if this situation persists, public aggression occurs.

This theory alone is not able to explain the events in the Middle East and especially the Egyptian revolution, and the authors believe that the mass media have played a major role in highlighting this relative deprivation and in some way catalyze the development of these movements.

1. Conceptual and theoretical framework

1-1. New social movement

Unlike American thinkers who are critique of the "structural-functional approach", and as result introduce three approaches including; "Collective Behavior", "Resource Mobilization" and "Political Process", European thinkers have criticized the Marxist (structural-functional) approach, and choose the approach of new social movements to explain emerging social movements. The approach of new social movements has chosen an "identity-oriented" perspective instead of a "strategy-oriented" one (Behrouzlak, 2001: 115). A new social movement with an emphasis on the element of culture is defined as follows: "The new social movement is a public actor formed by individuals who define themselves in the light of the public interest and they are defined as a public identity" (Porta and Diani, 1999: 11).

In their book, Introduction to Social Movements, Della Porta and Mario Diani outline four key features of the new social movement:

1. Informal interactive network: It is considered as a non-interactive network between different individuals and groups or organizations. Such networks provide the rotation of the basic sources of action (information, experience, expertise, and material resources) as broader semantic systems.

2. Common beliefs and solidarity: Creating a collective identity requires the existence of common beliefs and perceptions.

3. Conflict-based collective action: This means that actors are involved in a social movement seeking to oppose a social phenomenon, whether at the systemic or non-systemic level.

4. Application of protest: New social movements always use various forms of protest instead of participating in voting and presenting views in the normal process.

In addition to the mentioned points, although there may be different parties and currents within the social movement, Porta and Diani emphasize the non-organizational nature of new social movements(Behrozelk, 2001: 115).

New social movements have a certain set of other salient features that distinguish them from previous movements. in fact, these characteristics are the distinguishing features of most of the social movements that have emerged in the last four decades in advanced industrial capitalist societies. According to Keith Nash, the following characteristics distinguish new social movements from their classical counterparts in terms of orientation, organization, and type. Based on this view, new social movements are different from other social movements as they have the following characteristics:

1. Non-instrumental: It means that they do not represent the direct interests of specific social groups, but express universal and often objectionable interests and concerns about the moral situation (Nash, 2003: 131).

2. Tendency to "civil society" instead of "government": The direction of these new movements is mainly focused on civil society rather than the government and therefore most of their concerns, activities, and actions are intended to expand the functional areas of civil society in environmental and cultural Entertainment, institutions, public opinion, and other sectors. (Nozari and Ghorbani, 2004: 52).

3. Relying on social media (Nash, 2003: 132).

4. Interest in "public goods": goods such as air quality, traffic reduction that cannot be assign (devoted) to one social class (Mohammadi, 2006: 37).

5. Non-ideological and discourse-oriented nature

6. Lack of a single leader: In such movements, there is no single and charismatic leader.

7. Transclass: New movements do not have a special and unique class base.

1-2. The theory of "relative deprivation"

The theory of "relative deprivation" that is proposed by Ted Robert Gere points to the idea that feelings of dissatisfaction and deprivation are related to the point of interest of the reference. In fact, the feeling of relative deprivation arises when the demands become legitimate expectations and these demands are blocked by society. Relative deprivation is generally considered as the main variable in explaining social movements and is also used to describe the effort to bring about social change that inspires social movements (Krahn and Harrison, 1992: 195). In fact, social movements arise from the collective feeling of relative deprivation (Marrison, 1971: 675).

According to Gere, "relative deprivation" is the result of the difference between value expectations or demands from value capabilities. Value claims include goods that people think that they are worthy of them and refer to both their current and future conditions. first, preserving the existing life and second, expecting to access and achieve something more or even expecting to have the same level of facilities in the future are considered as priorities (Gere, 1998: 70).

Ted Robert Gere lists three patterns of imbalance and the resulting deprivation as follows:

A) Declining Deprivation: Declining deprivation occurs when the value expectations of a group remain relatively constant, but it is thought that the value ability decreases relatively and the expectations increase instead. In this case, the value status of society as a whole may fall due to reduced production of material goods, reduced capacity of political elites to maintain order and security, or crisis resolution. Decreased value capabilities may also be due to conflict between members of one or more segments of society over scarce values.

B) aspirational or ambitious deprivation: In this situation, value aspirations and expectations may indicate a demand that is greater than values, which has already been somewhat present.

C) Upward Deprivation: The upward deprivation model is derived from the Davis model in which long-term and more or less continuous improvement in people's values raises expectations about the continuation of this improvement. Economic pressure in a growing economy can also have

the same effect, even the design of a new ideology in a society that faces structural inflexibility can have the same effect (Moradi, 2005: 83).

To create a sense of relative deprivation in the society, the following two necessary and sufficient conditions must be met:

1. Perception of inequality: The existence of real and objective inequality in society is less important for the emergence of a sense of relative deprivation in society than the mental perception and mental evaluation of inequality; Because as long as people are not aware of inequality, they will not be upset about it; But above all other factors the perception of inequality is a function of two factors: power and the ability to understand and the possibility (capability) of perception (possibility (capability) of observation, possibility (capability) of obtaining information).

2. Assessing Inequality: The feeling of relative deprivation arises when people compare themselves to others. Man compares his situation to a situation that is close to his (Rafipour, 1998: 83).

2. Mass media and new social movements

A media refers to any means of communication that carries or mediates a message. Telephone, radio, television, audio, and things like this, are all considered as intermediaries for transmitting messages (Ghodsi, 2011: 76).

Important media coordinates can be summarized as follows:

1. Inclusiveness: An important feature of media is their inclusiveness.
2. Availability: Another feature of media is their ubiquity or in other words their availability. All types of media, whether they are audio, visual, or written are now available around the world, and even radio or television can be accessed in the farthest corners of the globe.
3. Attractiveness: Attractiveness and the ability to attract audiences is an important feature of other media.
4. create role models: The media, by presenting specific social norms in a positive and negative way, insinuate to people that the behavior presented in the media is appropriate social behavior. Thus, the media creates harmony in individuals by presenting behavior that persuades people to accept it as appropriate social behavior, (Moghaddam far, 2011: 5). The media used by a wide range of audiences are referred to as "mass media", for example, the Internet and social networks. In summary, it can be stated that various types of media, especially mass media, are used by new social movements, and these movements use these media to achieve the goals of the movement and to motivate and the people, as well as to organize the protesters.

3. Analysis of the Egyptian People's Revolution

Regarding the theory of relative deprivation and the reason for the emergence of movements in Egypt, it can be said that the deprivations and failures in various areas of society led to the opposition (defiance) of the Egyptian people against the regime of Hosni Mubarak. In general, with the disintegration of the Ottoman Caliphate, the Arab nationalist elites saw themselves faced with two tasks: first, to liberate themselves from European domination and gain independence, and second, to present an ideological plan for the establishment of the rule of law. With the fulfillment of such demands, the economic and social problems deepened and the severity of the crisis increased, which can be described as follows:

1. Identity Crisis: Despite the Arab, Turkish and Persian ethnicities in the Islamic world, the Arab world witnessed a dispersion (dispersal) in the level of identity however with a strong reliance on Arabism, Gamal Abdel Nasser largely restored the unity of identity to Egyptian society and the Arab world, but with his death, the Arab world fell back into the abyss of anonymity and unrest.

2. Crisis of legitimacy: This crisis is born of a crisis of identity, but it has a different nature. In fact, the failure of the ruling elites in the political, economic, and social spheres (fields) calls into question their legitimacy.

3. Corruption and repression in the elite government: The legitimacy of political systems are strengthened and weakened by the performance of leaders. Arab leaders had a weak base of legitimacy and lacked the initial political capital necessary to maintain effective and constructive policies of stable public order.

4. Social Class Conflict: Government corruption led to the unequal distribution of wealth and a bold increase in the inter-class gap. Indeed, the major gap between rich and poor is one of the most important political aspects of the Arab crisis. Unfavorable (bad) economic and social conditions make it impossible for people to tolerate the conditions (Jafari and Ramezani, 2014: 48).

Since the theory of "relative deprivation" relies more on the principle of "economy", we will pay more attention to the economic situation of the Egyptian people.

Economically, however, statistics from 1981-2010 show that Egypt has experienced high GDP growth compared to other countries, especially during the economic crisis, due to economic reforms (Korotayev and Zinkina). , 2011: 141-142) and was even praised by international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, but the resulting growth was not balanced and the gap between rich and poor was

wide. For example, between 2000 and 2010, the share of national wealth received by the richest 10 percent increased from 25 percent to 28 percent.

According to the Gallup study, the prosperity of the Egyptian economy has fallen in succession, from 29% in 2005 to 25% in 2007; and then it reduced from 13% in 2008 to 2009 to 12% in 2010. One reason for this was the use of GDP by the state-affiliated social base, which was embodied in the form of government corruption. In fact, the level of government corruption was unprecedented in the history of Egypt, as the global statistics confirmed. In this regard, the Guardian newspaper published a report in 2011, estimating the wealth of the Mubarak family at $ 70 billion while more than 40% of Egyptians lived on less than $ 2 a day and about 20% of the Egyptian population lived below the poverty line at the time (Eltantawy and Wiest, 2011: 1211).

In addition, with the entry of Egypt into the transition period, we are witnessing significant growth in education and academic progress; This issue was very effective in increasing the awareness and intellectual maturity of the people. Insofar as the ruling political system, assuming that they have a correct understanding of the current situation, had to move away from the traditional mentality and abandoned methods in order to secure national interests. Accordingly, the rising level of unemployment, especially among the youth, which was 24.8 percent at the time (Ansani and Daniele, 2012: 9), led to an intensify in dissatisfaction with the ruling system.

According to Ted Robert Greer, anger that arises from failure makes people more prone to aggression (more aggressive). If these failures continue in the long run, the likelihood of aggression is very high. In this regard, it can be said that the demands of the Egyptian people have been blocked by the regime of Hosni Mubarak for many years, and this has strengthened the feeling of relative deprivation and aggression among the people of the society.

In the political sphere, the lack of freedom for the people to participate and participate in important matters such as elections, in addition to the corruption of the ruling class, gradually provided the ground for dissatisfaction among the people. In the economic field, high inflation and unemployment, as mentioned before, had put a large part of the Egyptian people in a tight spot. In fact, the Egyptian people feel deprivation in the various spheres of society, and gradually, as the necessary conditions are provided, they join the ranks (fronts) of the revolutionary struggle and eventually cause the collapse of Hosni Mubarak regime.

According to the theory of "relative deprivation" of Ted Robert Greer, the lack of attention to the demands of the Egyptian people in various

spheres of society, on the one hand, the authoritarian nature of the Mubarak regime, which did not allow the Egyptian people to participate and operate in various fields, especially politics. Feelings of failure among the Egyptian people, especially the youth, have increased and the ground for opposition to the ruling system has been provided. Along with these factors, the expansion of communication ways through the media and mass media such as the Internet played a major role in raising awareness among Egyptian people, organizing people, and ultimately the emergence of protests and opposition against the regime of Hosni Mubarak.

The Egyptian revolution and the wave of protests in the country began with a rallying call on January 25 on Facebook. These demonstrations took place at the invitation of the "Youth of April 6" magazine (Niakooi, 2011: 253). In fact, during the Egyptian revolution, people took full advantage of social networks such as Facebook, posted their opinions on it, and shared photos of the protests.

Based on what has been said, it must be acknowledged that in the Egyptian revolution, the mass media played a significant role in highlighting the deprivations of the Egyptian people and the corruption of the government. In 2011, during anti-government movements, more than 20 million people in Egypt used the Internet and 42 million had mobile phones. These figures showed the potential of these media in the public mobilization, which was well put into practice and used by the Egyptian people's social movement against the government of Hosni Mubarak.

Al-Jazeera was one of the first media starts to criticize the Egyptian regime and police, and its influence echo across (through) the Arab world, leading to the publicization of criticism of the regime. In fact, one of the important factors in the growth of the social movement in Egypt is the independent media, including television, satellite, and independent networks media that shows the protests and struggles. By crossing the government's red line, these media outlets expanded the level of freedom of expression in Egypt to some extent.

Although the "April 6 Youth" movement is cited as the start of Egypt's cyber activities, this success came after years of effort to build a cyber community. Most of Egypt's domestic bloggers wrote in English for a global audience. Many of them were arrested and imprisoned many times; But these activities paved the way for the creation of later cyber movements (Jafari and Ramezani, 2014: 51).

In 2010, the creation of the "We are all Khalid Saeed" Facebook page took Egyptian cyber activity to a new level. Khalid Saeed, a 28-year-old Egyptian man, was tortured to death in Alexandria by two police

officers. According to eyewitnesses, despite Khalid Saeed's requests, the police continued to torture him, which eventually led to his death (Giglio, 2011: 15). Within hours of this unfortunate incident, some activists created a Facebook page, "We are all Khalid Saeed." This page became a symbol of the Egyptian youth. Eventually, this virtual movement stepped into the realm of reality, and the streets of Egypt were filled with angry people over the government's action. One of the tricks and tactics of cyber activists was to take photos and videos of the abuse of security forces and publish them on websites and mobile phones.

US officials believe that Twitter has played such an important role in making the voices of the Egyptian people heard that some call the Egyptian revolution a is "Twitter revolution." They believe that this social network, with the cooperation of the internet giant Google, has made it possible to share audio files via voice email. Simons, a virtual network information company, analyzes the number of Egyptian Twitter users by providing statistics based on keywords and spatial information. The results of the Sismos assessment show that there are 52 million Twitter users (Sysmos.com).

Despite all the debates about the influence and major role of social media in the new social movements, especially the Egyptian revolution, however, the reasons for these events cannot be attributed to the media alone. These media were merely catalysts that accelerated the emergence of new social movements in the Middle East, and even caught the world's attention when they reflected what was happening on the ground and in the streets.

Conclusion

The theory of "relative deprivation" and the view of Ted Robert Gere points to the idea that when deprivation and popular dissatisfaction exist in a society, and the expectations and demands based on that deprivation take on a legitimate status, but the supreme power in society instead of responding or persuading the audience try to suppress the mentioned demands. In fact, the feeling of relative deprivation arises when the demands become legitimate expectations and these demands are blocked by society. This suppression of legitimate expectations and demands, in the long run, leads to failure and ultimately aggression. This theory falls under the larger theory of social movement. These social movements take place in order to bring about social change. The social movements that have emerged since the 1960s have characteristics that distinguish them from classical social movements. One of the prominent features of modern social movements is the role and

prominent presence of the media in them. Due to their special characteristics, the media provide facilities and conditions for movements that facilitate communication and enable movements to progress faster. In the new social movements in the Middle East, especially the social movement in Egypt, we can first say that the deprivations and dissatisfaction that existed in Egyptian society was the first spark for the emergence of these movements. Due to the failure in meeting with the legitimate demands and expectations such as political freedom, political participation, and other things that people consider themselves worthy of them, the feeling of relative deprivation increased among the Egyptian people, accordingly the necessary mental and spiritual conditions for opposition and protest was created among people. In this regard, the existence of media such as the Internet and social networks has given a new shape to these movements by expanding the possibility of communication, creating a common social identity, maintaining anonymity, and improving the security of activists.

Considering the mentioned though, in the study, it should be noted that the theory of "relative deprivation" of Ted Robert Gere, together with the catalytic factor of "mass media" has the ability to explain new social movements in the Middle East in the 21st century and can be used to explain the Tunisian Bahrain and Yemen revolution that is expected to be investigated in the future.

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