

# The Impact of Social Media on the Digital Protests in Jordan

**Dr. Mazen Mohammad Al-Fedawi**, Assistant Professor, Middle East University, Amman, Jordan

The aim of this study was to define the role of social media sites in digital protests in Jordan from the perspective of activists. To accomplish this goal, the researcher used the descriptive analytical method on a random sample of (430) activists on social media sites. The data was analyzed by the researcher using the statistical analysis software (SPSS). (74.4 %) of the study sample seeks permanent access to political content through social media, while 66.7 % indicated that social media plays a significant role in providing political information, and that the freedom provided by social networking sites to express opinions and thoughts, as well as the ease of receiving, accessing, and exchanging information with others, are the most important reasons for Jordanians resorting to social networking sites to express their opinions. According to the study, 54.9 % of activists confirmed that (Facebook) is the most commonly used and reliable social networking platform for sharing ideas and opinions, and 95.3 % of the study sample transmits knowledge, opinions and political discussions relating to government decisions are made through social media. And that (73.0 %) of the study survey respondents agree that social media has influenced Jordanian protests in terms of organization and coordination.

**Key words:** *digital protests, social media sites, activists*

## Introduction

Communication is a cornerstone of the social process, and it is the medium by which humans coordinate, sustain, and transform social life, as well as move its forms and meanings from one generation to the next through language, registration, and education. Its bodies and governments understand that contact is the nervous system that links these machines.

Since the Internet established a knowledge space and succeeded in creating virtual groups and crossing it into millions in a remarkable way, interest in social networking and the virtual

world has grown in the new media. It has become very general and commonplace upon hearing it, not only at the level of scientific research, but also a common term among many Internet users (Al-Shehri, 2014), Social media sites are one of the modern media resources, and they are distinguished by many features that are difficult to measure, since new changes and features are added to them on a daily basis, and they are public sites that accept registrants of all styles and specialties, so you can find a doctor, engineer, programmer, instructor, and others (Al-Bayadh, 2012).

As one of the key and significant means in (new media), social media, along with blogs, forums, and other social applications, played an important and fundamental political role in shaping ideas, taking positions, organizing and coordinating demonstrations and revolutions, and promoting massive and organized marches or sit-ins. This occurs when security forces, in all of their forms, obstruct individuals' attempts to engage politically, attend meetings, share their opinions on events and policies taking place in their countries, claim their rights, and improve their living conditions. (Al-Shorfat 2017)

The role of social media increased in all regions of the world, especially in the Arab region, at the beginning of 2011, when youth movements began to organize protest demonstrations and popular uprisings on these networks and sites in order to bring about democratic changes and reforms, as well as to eliminate corruption. Social media platforms have shown their ability to disseminate information and allow for more freedom than conventional media, which is regulated by policies and regulation. (Abdullah, 2018)

Protests started in Jordan in 2011 against a series of government policies, calling for democratic changes and the fight against corruption; subsequent protests occurred intermittently and for a variety of reasons. In 2015, a group of young people protested near the Israeli embassy over ritual ceremonies Israelis carried out at Queen Alia International Airport. Protests against the gas agreement with Israel erupted in 2016, and against the taxes law and the cybercrime law in 2017, overthrowing Hani Mulki's government.

### **Study problem**

In both quantitative and temporal terms, social media plays a significant and important role in shaping protests. (Poell, 2019) showed that new media, especially social media, played an important role in activating and revitalizing digital protests. Protesters were involved with these means, and they led to the general fueling of protests in each of the three comparative countries (Spain, Italy, and Greece), despite their differing influence and direction of that influence.

(Al-Shorfat, 2017) also revealed that social networking sites influenced the scale and spread of Arab revolutions by causing a cultural and political qualitative change among the Arab masses.

Based on the foregoing, the study's problem emerges by answering the mentioned key question: (What is the role of social networking sites in Jordan's digital protests from activists' perspective?). This question is further subdivided into the following sub-questions:

1. To what extent do social media, from the perspective of activists, contribute to educating Jordanians on the political level?
2. What are the reasons and motivations for Jordanians to use social networking sites instead of conventional ways of sharing their views and adopting positions from activists' perspectives?
3. What social media platforms are Jordanians most likely to use to share their opinions, according to activists?
4. What are the most important information and opinions that Jordanians transmit through social media about political and societal issues, according to activists?
5. What is the impact of social media on the Jordanian protests from the activists' point of view?

### **Objectives of the study**

This study aims to achieve the following:

1. Identify the extent social media contribute to educating Jordanians on the political level from the perspective of activists.
2. To identify the reasons and motivations for Jordanians to use social networking sites instead of conventional ways of sharing their views and adopting positions from activists' perspectives.
3. To know what social media platforms are Jordanians most likely to use to share their opinions, according to activists.
4. Identifying the most important information and opinions that Jordanians transmit through social media about political and societal issues, according to activists.
5. Identifying the impact of social media on the Jordanian protests from the activists' point of view.

### **Digital protests on social media**

Protests are described broadly as “a general movement that expresses its rejection of certain situations and desire to change them through a specific vision and demands, which leads a social group to agree to undertake joint action that is characterized by the ability to organize and continuity and includes specific goals, plans, and a specific program of action with the goal of creating change” (Abdel Mawgoud, 2019).

Popular protests are essentially a way of shaping authority, which is legal and valid since it is a representation of the right of free speech, and protests emerge from a deliberate thought that

turns situations and studies them, contributing to the necessity of holding a nonviolent public protest.

The phenomenon of digital protests has arisen with the reversal of conditions and the development of the century, as well as the advent of different technologies and social networks, as defined by certain sources (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014): “A type of operation in which the Internet and digital media are used as the primary channels for mass mobilization and political action.” Activists use the Internet as a way of disseminating information because of its potential to reach a vast cross-border audience quickly. (Ibn Al-Arabi, 2020).

There is a definition of digital protests that stems from the nature of protest behavior, explaining digital protests as: “Various forms of protest spread among different social sects, and tools from the protesters’ innovation are used to express rejection and resist pressures, and by rejectionist policies, electronic protests are defined as a group of individuals which expresses its rejection of the policies and practices of the legislative and executive authority within the political system ”(Marah, 2019).

Digital protests, according to researchers and academics, are participation and engagement with calls for a sit-in and protest, as well as forming political alliances through social media sites (Abdel-Mawgoud, 2019).

This means that the Internet and social media platforms have evolved into a protest platform that encourages marches, represents and intensifies street demonstrations, and allows opponents to oppose government decisions or force them to respond to their demands by pushing them via social media, which is characterized by speed and spread ability. Malkawi (2018)

This implies that the Arab world is experiencing a fundamental and historical transformation shaped by social media, especially in the formation of political systems, as the digital environment has entered people's and societies' lives, resulting in profound transformations in the understanding of human existence in terms of time, place, language, and identity (Aaron, 2018).

Malkawi (2018) explained many of the issues covered in digital protests, the most notable of which are listed below:

- The political protests that started with the Arab Spring on a variety of topics, including elections, corruption in all forms, activist prosecutions, the normalization with Israel, equality, justice, and democracy.
- Economic protests, exemplified by a boycott of several goods in opposition to price increases or tax increases and income tax laws.

- Protests on religious and social problems, such as education, health, a lack of services, poverty, jobs, women, defending the veil and religious television channels, and condemning Freemasonry and extremist ideologies.
- Student protests, which are reflected in protests against universities increasing fees, or protesting against changing curricula and inequality in appointments, and denouncing university violence, which have indeed contributed significantly to changing many decisions, such as stopping of raising university fees or changing certain university policies.

### **Digital protests in Jordan**

Jordan, like other nations, was greatly influenced by the Arab Spring's ramifications, so many demonstrations took place on Jordanian streets in a series of peaceful marches, spreading their demands and expressing their rejection of many of the new decisions, and in doing so, they used social networking sites as a way to rally crowds, which they referred to as "digital mobilization." "Facebook and Twitter are the means that put us together," one of the demonstrators said emphatically. "These websites assisted people in overcoming their deep-seated fear of powerlessness and fear of the future, which could result in arrest for voicing their opinions". (Saadi, 2016).

Jordanians used social networking sites on their own because they are accessible to all, regardless of place of residence, educational level, gender, or any other social consideration, and users felt a great deal of equality, ability to express themselves, and independence. Since it possesses some of the characteristics that contribute to "breaking the barrier of silence among Arab peoples and breaking the monopoly of knowledge and news held by official Arab institutions." (Malkawi, 2018).

The most important digital protests in Jordan can be highlighted as follows:

#### **1- "4th Circle" protests against corruption**

The Jordanian movement returned to the street, protesting their living conditions and the government's approach to handling matters, and the activists decided on social media to assemble near the 4th Circle in Amman, and the demonstrators chanted slogans calling for the corrupt to be held accountable. When it comes to making tough economic choices, The protesters also demanded the achievement of social justice, especially with regard to the high salaries allocated to MPs and ministers, demanding an end to the wages allocated to them and finding a solution to eradicate poverty and unemployment, after a series of unclear economic measures related to the pricing of oil and electricity and the lifting of subsidies on bread and other successive waves of high prices. In addition to files of corruption, and tax evasion estimated in millions (Malkawi, 2018).

Professional Association helped organize this sit-in marked with many hashtags, like # Jordan protest, # Fourth Circle, and others, by which the protesters mean the need for the Jordanian government to hold accountable all the corrupt without exception. on Twitter, # the Fourth Circle ", was to locate the protest direction and location, where hundreds of activists have dealt with and encourage many followers to join, as a result, the direct stemmed from digital protests succeeded in changing Al-Mulki's government, and the appointment of Omar Al-Razzaz, who was accepted by the people based on studied indicators (Fayek, 2019).

The protesters used many digital means through social media to announce their protests and sit-ins, which are as follows (Malkawi, 2018):

- Written or illustrated texts.
- Virtual Links.
- Expressive realistic images.
- Films recorded, dubbed, or produced to express the cause for which they are protesting.
- Emoji, emoticons.
- Live broadcast of events on the ground.

## **2- The Jordanian Campaign to Boycott Telecommunications Companies.**

In September 2020, activists launched a large campaign on Facebook to boycott telecom companies, calling on telecom line subscribers to switch off phones in protest of telecom companies banning call reception service immediately after the end of the monthly subscription. Activists also proposed joining Google and reviewing the communication companies' applications at the lowest rate, which was seen as a way to bring pressure on the companies to reverse their decision, and as a result, the communication companies agreed that they would discuss the issue.

## **3- Jordanian protests against raising the income tax.**

Social media pages were flooded with protests against raising the income tax in Amman, calling for a reform in the applicable law as well as a change in the economic and political strategy. Protesters had gathered outside the prime minister's office, and security forces were stationed densely among them. Participants held banners that read "Down with the Tax Law." Protesters also protested a proposed cybercrime law that would track activists' social media files and threaten to imprison those who disagreed with the government, covering demonstrations and using tear gas canisters to keep protesters from shutting down the streets.

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## Literature review

### **(Poell, 2019), *Social Media, Temporality, and the Legitimacy of Protest***

The aim of this study is to investigate how the emergence of social media affects the temporal relations of protest communication. It takes a relational approach to tracing how temporal regimes are built and transformed through the entanglement of media infrastructures, organizations, and practices. These regimes include specific 'speeds' – the pace at which media content is refreshed – as well as 'temporal orientations' towards the present, past, and future. The results of the study showed that despite the participatory relationships of social media, it was not easy to generate sustainable public interest in digital protests issues, meaning that social media showed a great ability to shorten the time in organizing and participating in protests, and has a significant and important role in influencing protests, both quantitatively and temporally.

### **(Jost et al., 2018), *How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks***

Aimed at reviewing and integrating findings from a number of converging and disparate research programs designed to shed light on the ways in which social media facilitates political protest, and summarizes evidence from a variety of protest movement studies in the United States, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine. The results of the study showed that social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are already working as important tools for exchanging information and coordinating collective action in protest activities, as they spread vital information to coordinate protest activities, such as news related to transportation, turnout, police presence, violence, medical services and legal support, as well as communication platforms. They also have emotional and motivational messages to support and oppose the protest activity; it includes messages that emphasize moral discontent, social identity, group efficacy, concerns about justice, social justice, and deprivation as well as explicit ideological themes.

### **Lee (2018) *the Role of Social Media in Protest Participation: The Case of Candlelight Vigils in South Korea***

Also sought to define the role of social media and the tools that people can use to organize for protest participation. The researcher focused on survey data collected in South Korea during candlelight vigils in 2016 with a particular emphasis on Facebook as a social networking site. Using a survey of 922 people who took part in the protests. According to the findings, the frequency of Facebook use is strongly and positively linked to protest participation, with a percentage of protesters using Facebook on a regular basis (66 %). However, the additional trajectory review reveals no clear effect of Facebook use on protest participation. Instead, Facebook uses a focused facility to consume news and political discourse on the site, which

encourages the sharing of protest, and although accidental exposure to news on Facebook is normal, it has not resulted in further political action, such as the expression of political opinions on Facebook.

### **Treré, Jeppesen, Mattoni 2017 Comparing Digital Protest Media Imaginaries: Anti-austerity Movements in Spain, Italy & Greece**

This study attempted to define the role of new media in digital protests against austerity measures in Spain, Italy, and Greece. To accomplish this objective, researchers used a qualitative approach, conducting 60 semi-structured interviews with activists and producers of independent media who took part in the wave of digital protests in 2011. According to the study's findings, there are three distinct perceptions: In Spain, digital protest media was politically fictional and focused on the economics and political economy of new communication technology from the free culture movement. In Italy, this imagination was technically fragmented, lacking coherence, and it failed to bring together the old and new areas of protest media; Finally in Greece, it was a technical process, conceived with practical goals that reflected the diverse policies and desires of media makers rather than the purely technological or political relationships of digital media formats and platforms. The results also showed that the new media had an important role in activating digital protests, especially through social media, as the protesters were active against these means, and contributed to fueling protests in general in each of the three comparative countries (Spain - Italy - Greece) Although their influence and direction are different.

### **(Denisova, 2017) Democracy, protest and public sphere in Russia after the 2011–2012 anti-government protests: digital media at stake**

The study's objective was to determine the scale of digital media's contribution to Russia's anti-government protests from 2011 to 2012. To accomplish this goal, the researcher used a descriptive approach and content analysis, evaluating the content of a group of social networking sites (Facebook - Twitter) that the protesters used. The study used theoretical and factual data regarding limitations to democracy and the public domain during the protests (2011-2012) and portrays the idea of government management of opposition in Russia during and after the 2011-2012 protests. In addition to researching how Russia's mixed political environment balances limits on freedom of speech with increased state propaganda, as well as how it mediates media harassment and calls for self-censorship. The study found a number of results, the most significant of which are: the existence of a strong and significant effect of social media on the protests that took place in Russia in 2011-2012, with a percentage (81 percent), as the mobilization of Russian protests was facilitated to a large extent by the advent of social networks. Unmonitored Social Media Communication and Mobilization This protest activity can be found everywhere: liberal masses have been able to express and debate their concerns, unite, and organize offline protests online. Despite this critical role, digital media has the ability to divide protesters and thus can be more useful to the government than



resistance. That is, by modern censorship of digital media, formal and informal constraints on criticism and protest policies are tightened.

**(Cmeciu & Coman, 2016) Digital Civic Activism in Romania: Framing anti-Chevron Online Protest Community (Faces)**

The study sought to determine the effect of the internet on protests in Romania in response to Chevron's gas discovery in the Romanian village of Punge. The researchers used the content analysis method to examine protesters' Facebook posts from October 2013 to February 2014.

The study's findings showed that "conflict on land" dominated as a collective context, accompanied by "conflict" and "solidarity." and an evidence of the impact of the Internet and social media on fueling and organizing digital protests and giving them significant momentum in a relatively short period.

**Simoes & Campos, 2016 *Youth, social movements and protest digital networks in a time of crisis***

This study aimed to identify the role that digital media plays in the reference work of community activists who are an important part in recent protests, and the role of social networks and other digital media tools in these protests. A qualitative approach was used by conducting a series of interviews with some influential protesters in the Portuguese protests. The results of the study showed that it is impossible to think about current forms of political and civic mobilization without considering the use of digital tools. Indeed, the Internet is not only increasingly presenting itself as a complementary space for information exchange, communication, and networking, but has also been emphasized as a suitable space for public participation. The use of youth was particularly notable due to their proficiency with a wide variety of digital tools and platforms (77 %), as well as their participation in recent protests in Europe and other parts of the world.

**Lopes, 2014) the Impact of Social Media on Social Movements: The New Opportunity and Mobilizing Structure**

The aim of this research is to determine the effect of social media on protests and public movements. The content analysis approach was used in the content analysis of publications, comments, and tweets on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and electronic forums. Data were gathered from a variety of different sources, mostly from all countries, starting in 2008-2012.

The findings revealed that developing collective organization methods is required for the emergence of social movements, such as the frustrations that motivate people to organize in the first place, and that there is a significant and strong relationship between social media, as

an organizational tool, and the social, economic, and institutional conditions that allow for the emergence of social movements. Although the Facebook model does not show a relationship between Facebook and the protests, the Internet penetration model does demonstrate that social media is a statistically significant indicator of protest activity.

### **Study methodology**

The descriptive and analytical approach was used in this analysis. This approach is based on explaining one of the phenomena in order to determine the causes and the factors that influence it, as well as draw conclusions for generalization. The descriptive approach employs many methods, including: The researcher will use a surveying approach in which the phenomenon will be analysed in general, taking note of all its variables and causes. Considering that the sample to be analysed is representative of the population, such that the findings are therefore representative of the community, and ensuring that the statistics collected are properly interpreted.

### **Data collection methods**

This research relied on two forms of data sources: primary and secondary, as secondary data will be collected through a review and survey of books, references, journals, and previous studies relevant to the field of study in order to establish scientific foundations and theoretical frameworks for them, as well as hypotheses based on theoretical foundations. The sample members' responses to the research questionnaire, which will cover all aspects covered by the theoretical context of the study, will provide the initial details.

### **The study's population and sample**

The study population consisted the activists of Jordan's digital demonstrations against social media sites. The research sample was selected at random and by (450) individuals to whom the questionnaire was distributed electronically, and (430) valid questionnaires were retrieved for statistical analysis with a recovery rate of 95.6 %. formed the actual sample, Table (1) shows the study sample's personal characteristics.

**Table (1) study sample personal characteristics**

Variable		Frequency	Ratio
Sex	Female	194	%45.1
	Male	236	%54.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>430</b>	<b>%100</b>
Age	20 - 29	161	%37.4
	30 - 39	149	%34.6
	40 - 49	82	%19.1
	+50	38	%8.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>430</b>	<b>%100</b>
Marital Statuses	Single	248	%57.7
	Married	182	%42.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>430</b>	<b>%100</b>
Educational level	Secondary And Lower	38	%8.8
	Diploma	34	%7.9
	Bachelor	194	%45.1
	Postgraduate	164	%38.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>430</b>	<b>%100</b>

From the previous table, it becomes clear that most of the sample members are males, as their number reached (236), forming 54.9%, while females constituted 54.1%, and most of the sample members were concentrated within the age group (from 20-29 years) with a rate of 37.4%. %, Followed by the age group from 30-39 years by 34.6%, then the age group 40-49 years at 19.1%, and finally 50+, at 8.8%.

With regard to marital status, the previous table data indicate that most of the sample members were single, as their number reached (248), with a rate of 57.7%, while married people accounted for 42.3%, as for the educational level, most of the sample members were holders of bachelor's degrees. , As their number reached (194), constituting 54.1%, followed by holders of postgraduates at 38.1%, followed by high school or less at 8.8%, and diploma at 7.9%.

### Data analysis results

**Results related to the 1<sup>st</sup> question:** To what extent does social media, from the perspective of activists, contribute to educating Jordanians on the political level?

**Table (2): The most important contents that activists seek to reach through social media sites**

Topic	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	Freq.	Ratio	Freq.	Ratio	Freq.	Ratio
Political Contents	335	%74.4	96	%21.3	19	%4.2
Social Contents	252	%56.0	187	%41.6	11	%2.4
Arab and International Contents.	310	%68.9	135	%30.0	5	%1.1
Religious Contents.	154	%34.2	289	%64.2	7	%1.6
Economic Contents	169	%37.6	267	%59.3	14	%3.1
Sport Contents	205	%45.6	190	%42.2	55	%12.2
Artistic and Cultural Contents	125	%27.8	298	%66.2	27	%6.0
Other	88	%19.6	358	%79.6	4	%0.9

From the previous table, it becomes clear that most of the sample members seek to access political content through social networking sites on a permanent basis. 74.4%, and 21.3% of them confirmed that they sometimes seek political content through social networking sites, while (4.2%) never seek this kind of content.

The table data also indicate that (56.0%) of the study sample seek out social content on a permanent basis, while (41.6%) of them sometimes seek these social contents, and 2.4% do not seek it at all.

With regard to Arab and international content, it is noticed through the data of the previous table that 68.9% of the study sample seek to obtain it permanently through social media, and 30.0% sometimes seek to obtain these contents, while 1.1% never pursue it.

As for religious content, it is noticed that most of the sample members sometimes seek to obtain it through social networking sites, accounting for 64.2% of them, while 34.2% of them always seek to obtain religious content through social networking sites, and 1.6% never seek it through those sites.

The data of the previous table also indicate that 59.3% of the study sample sometimes seek to obtain economic content through social networking sites, 37.6% seek to obtain such content permanently, and 3.1% do not seek at all.

As for sports content, it is noted from the previous table that 45.6% of the study sample always seek to obtain it through social media, 42.2% of sometimes, and 12.2% never seek to obtain these sports content via social media.

It is also noticed from the previous table that most of the sample members sometimes seek to obtain artistic and cultural content through social networking sites (66.2%), while 27.8% always, and 6.0% are never sought after.

**Table 3: social media platforms contribute to political information sharing.**

Answer	Ferq.	Ratio
<b>High</b>	287	%66.7
<b>Medium</b>	89	%20.7
<b>Low</b>	41	%9.5
<b>Never</b>	13	%3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>%100</b>

According to the previous table, the majority of the sample members believe that social media sites contribute to a high degree in providing political information, as their number (287) constituted 66.7 %, and (20.7 % ) of them believe that social media sites contribute to a medium degree in presenting political information, while 9.5 % believe that it does not contribute.

**Table (4): confidence the activist has in political information provided by social media sites.**

Answer	Freq.	Ratio
<b>High</b>	162	%37.7
<b>Medium</b>	178	%41.4
<b>Low</b>	68	%15.8
<b>Never</b>	22	%5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100%</b>

It is evident from the previous table that 41.4% of the study sample trust the political information provided by social media to a medium degree, as their number reached (187), constituting 41.4%, and 37.7% trust political information to a high degree, and 15.8% to a low degree, and 5.1% do not trust them at all.

**Results related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> question:** What are the reasons and motivations for Jordanians to use social networking sites instead of conventional ways of sharing their views and adopting positions from activists' perspectives?

To answer this question, the averages of the responses of the sample members were calculated on a group of paragraphs, where each of the paragraphs was given a score to know the extent of their approval: (- 2.34) Low approval, (2.34 - 3.67) medium approval, (3.67 - 5) high approval. Results were as shown in Table (5).

**Table (5)**
**Reasons for resorting to social media sites to express opinions and adopt positions**

No	Paragraph	SD	AM	Degree
1	The information published on social media is modern and immediate.	3.89	0.75	High
2	Freedom provided by social networking sites to express opinions and ideas.	4.22	0.70	High
3	Ease of obtaining, accessing and exchanging information with others on social media.	3.99	0.86	High
4	Achieving the principle of parity in presenting and expressing views on local issues or events on social media.	3.77	0.90	High
5	The ability to use multiple forms of media to present different opinions and ideas (text, pictures, and video).	3.97	0.92	High
6	The ability to continuously update information and opinions on social media.	3.87	0.77	High
7	Through what is shared on social media, it is possible to become acquainted with all aspects of societal issues.	3.71	1.13	High
8	The development of Internet and social networks has led to rapid presentation of ideas and opinions.	3.82	0.88	High
9	By raising awareness, social media has become a significant tool in planning for change.	3.69	0.87	High
10	Messages through social networking sites can reach an unlimited number of people simultaneously.	3.75	0.91	High
11	Social media is more peaceful than others.	3.77	0.77	High

The table shows that most of the sample members see that there are reasons for their resorting to social networking sites and neglecting traditional methods of expressing their opinions and adopting their positions, as the arithmetic averages of their answers ranged between (3.69 - 4.22), which is a high degree of approval, as paragraph No. (2) (Freedom provided by social networking sites to express opinions and ideas) in the first place, with an average of (4.22), which indicates a high degree of approval, and paragraph No. (9) (By raising awareness, social media has become a significant tool in planning for change) in the last place, with a mean of (3.69), which indicates a high degree of approval as well.

The top five reasons for Jordanians resorting to social networking sites and neglecting traditional methods of expressing their opinions and adopting their positions can be arranged in descending order, as follows:

- The freedom provided by social networking sites to express opinions and ideas, with a mean of (4.22).
- Ease of obtaining, accessing and exchanging information with others on social media, with an average of (3.99).
- The possibility of using multiple forms of media to present different opinions and ideas (text, pictures, and video), with a mean of (3.97).

- The information published on social networking sites is characterized by modernity and immediate, with a mean of (3.89).
- The ability to continuously update information and opinions on social media, with a mean of (3.87).

**Table (6)**  
***Beneficial motives for the use of social media sites***

No	Paragraph	SD	AM	Degree
1	Increase knowledge and keep abreast of the latest local and international developments.	3.89	0.81	High
2	Curiosity about exposure to a new and different media style.	3.86	0.76	High
3	Accessing, viewing, or browsing materials unavailable by other means.	4.12	0.82	High
4	Find conversation and social interaction guidelines.	3.99	0.77	High
5	Get a sense of security.	3.97	0.76	High
6	Advertising of social events.	3.85	0.83	High
7	Enhancing Critical Thinking.	3.68	0.82	High
8	For educational and academic purposes.	3.88	0.77	High
9	Other motives	3.72	0.84	High

Table 6 shows that the majority of the sample members see beneficial motives for their use of social media sites, as the arithmetic averages of their answers ranged between (3.68 - 4.12), indicating a high degree of approval, as paragraph No. (3), which states (Accessing, viewing, or browsing materials not available on other means) came first, with an average of (4.12), indicating a high degree of approval. Paragraph, No. (7), which states: "Enhancing Critical Thinking," came in last, with an arithmetic mean of (3.68), indicating a high level of approval as well.

**Table (7)**  
***Ritual motives for the use of social networking sites***

No	Paragraph	SD	AM	Degree
1	To distinguish from the others.	3.97	0.75	High
2	Escape from reality.	3.85	0.70	High
3	Achieve a position in society.	3.77	0.86	High
4	Entertainment	3.99	0.90	High
5	Take up leisure time.	3.69	0.92	High
6	Internet as a habit.	3.85	0.77	High
7	Because others use it	3.77	1.13	High
8	Other motives	3.72	0.88	High

The table shows that most of the sample members see that there are ritual motives for their use of social networking sites, as the arithmetic averages of their answers ranged between (3.69 - 3.99), which indicates a high degree of approval, as Paragraph No. (4) Which states (entertainment) came, In the first place, with average of (3.99), which indicates a high degree

of approval, Paragraph No. (5) Which states: (Take up leisure time) came in last place, with an average of (3.69), which indicates a high degree of approval as well.

### Results related to 3<sup>rd</sup> question

What social media platforms are Jordanians most likely to use to share their opinions, according to activists?

**Table (8)**  
*responses based on the social media platforms used to share opinions.*

Response	Freq,	Ratio
Twitter	129	%30.0
Facebook	236	%54.9
Whatapp	40	%9.3
YouTube	25	%5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the previous table, it becomes clear that most of the sample members depend on Facebook as one of the social networking sites to express their opinions, as their number reached (236), forming a rate of (54.9%), followed by those who depend on Twitter as a social networking site by (30.0%), and they are followed WhatsApp users, at a rate of (9.3%) and in the last place are those who depend on YouTube, at a rate of (5.8%).

### Results relate to the 4<sup>th</sup> question

What are the most important information and opinions that Jordanians transmit through social media about political and societal issues, according to activists?

**Table (9)**  
*The most important information and political opinions shared by Jordanians through social media\**

Response	Freq.	Ratio
Information and opinions related to government decisions	410	95.3%
Information and opinions related to the parliamentary and elections	361	84.0%
Information and opinions on government appointments	385	89.5%

*\*respondent may give more than an answer*

From the previous table, it becomes clear that (95.3%) of the study sample share information and political opinions related to government decisions through social media, and (89.5%) share information and opinions related to government appointments, and (84.0%) share information and opinions related to elections, parliament and local councils.

**Table (10)**

***The most important societal information and opinions Jordanians share through social media sites \****

<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
Information and opinions related to taxes	411	95.6%
Information and opinions on poverty and unemployment	399	92.8%
Information and opinions related to favoritism and cronyism	295	68.6%
Information and opinions on women's issues	227	52.8%
Information and opinions on domestic crimes	347	80.7%

*\*respondent may give more than an answer*

The data of the previous table indicate that 95.6% of the study sample share information and opinions related to taxes through social media as one of the societal issues, and 92.8% share information and opinions related to poverty and unemployment through social media, and 80.7% share information and opinions related to domestic crimes, and 68.6% transfer information and opinions related to favoritism and cronyism, and 52.8% they share information and opinions related to women's issues.

#### **Results related to the 5<sup>th</sup> question**

What is the impact of social media on the Jordanian protests from the activists' point of view?

**Table (11)**

***The influence of social media on the Jordanian protests in terms of organization and coordination***

<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>Yes</b>	314	73.0%
<b>No</b>	58	%13.5
<b>I don't know</b>	58	%13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>%100</b>

From the previous table, it becomes clear that most of the sample members believe, from their point of view, that social media sites have affected the Jordanian protests in terms of organization and coordination, as their number reached (314) constituted 73.0%, while there are 13.5% who believe that social media did not affect the Jordanian protests in terms of organization and coordination, and 13.5% do not know whether social media has affected those protests or not.

**Table (12)**

***Social media affected the Jordanian protests***

<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
Assisted in the coordination and organization of activities	372	86.5%
Campaigns momentum increased	368	85.6%
Interruptions showed benefits	355	82.6%
Contributed to the speed of response by the street.	415	%96.5
Information leading to the protests was disseminated to a wide range of people.	398	%92.6
Other	120	%27.9

As shown in Table 12, % of the study sample believes that the greatest influence of social media on Jordanian protests is related to its contribution to the pace of response by the street. (92.6 %) believe that social media disseminated information leading to protests to a large segment, while (86.5 %) believe that it helped to coordinate and organize the movements, followed by (85.6 %) who believe that it increased the momentum of the campaigns, and finally (82.6 %) who believe that it showed the benefits of boycotts, while (27.9 %) believe it had an impact in ways that were not listed in the study categories.

**Table (13): The role of social media in discharging government members**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>Yes</b>	240	%55.8
<b>No</b>	138	%32.1
<b>I don't know</b>	52	%12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>%100</b>

According to table 13, (55.8 %) of the study sample believes that social media sites and the digital protests that resulted from them led to the dismissal of governments, whereas only (32.1 %) believe that networking sites did not contribute to the dismissal of governments. and (12.1 %) are unaware of the degree to which these sites contribute.

**Table (14): The extent to which digital protests assisted in improving economic conditions**

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>High</b>	56	%13.0
<b>Medium</b>	95	%22.1
<b>Low</b>	157	%36.5
<b>Never</b>	19	%4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to Table 14, the majority of respondents 36.5 % believe that digital protests through social media have contributed to improving economic conditions to a small degree, 22.1 % believe that the protests have contributed to a moderate degree, and 13.0 % believe it has contributed to a large extent, while 4.4 % believe it has contributed to a large extent.

**Table (15): The extent to which digital protests helped improve public freedom in Jordan.**

Answer	Freq.	Ratio
<b>High</b>	75	%17.4
<b>Medium</b>	152	%35.3
<b>Low</b>	142	%33.0
<b>Never</b>	8	%1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to Table 15, the majority of respondents 35.3% believe that digital protests in Jordan improved public freedoms to a moderate extent, 33.0% believe that these protests helped a little extent in improving public freedoms in Jordan, 17.4% believe that digital protests helped to a large extent in improving public freedoms in Jordan, and 1.9 believe that digital protests did not help at all.

**Table (16)**

**The extent social media sites enhance confidence in the presentation of political ideas**

Answer	Freq.	Ratio
<b>High</b>	115	%26.7
<b>Medium</b>	163	%37.9
<b>Low</b>	96	%22.3
<b>Never</b>	8	%1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 16 shows that the majority of the sample respondents, 37.9 %, believe that social networking sites have increased Jordanians' confidence in proposing political ideas to a moderate degree, 26.7 % believe that social media has greatly increased their confidence in presenting political ideas, and 22.3 % believe that social media sites have increased confidence to a minor degree.

### **Discussing the results of the study**

**First:** Discussing the results relevant to the first question: To what extent social media, from the perspective of activists, contribute to educating Jordanians on the political level??

The results revealed that 74.4 % of the study sample seeks political content through social media on a regular basis, and 21.3 seeks political content through social media sites occasionally.

This indicates that political content is the most common and sought after on social media sites. The researcher relates this result to the fact that political content is what users of social media sites are most interested in, especially when it comes to protests on these sites.

The results also revealed that searching social content via social media came in second place with a rate of 56.0 %, indicating the Jordanian public's interest in those contents that directly affect social conditions.

The results also showed that social networking sites play a significant role in supplying political information, with 66.7 % of the study sample agreeing. The researcher explains this result by indicating that social media users tend to search for the contents of political information as well as pay attention to that information, which allows them to share and distribute it widely.

In general, social media sites contribute to educating Jordanians on the political level from the perspective of activists, and this is confirmed by the study sample respondents, who agreed that the most important content they seek to obtain is primarily political content, and that social media sites contribute significantly in providing political information enhancing political awareness and education.

This result agreed with (Jost et al., 2018), who demonstrated that social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook are already valuable instruments for information sharing and collective action coordination in protest activities, and that social media platforms share emotional and motivating messages to support and oppose protest activity.

**Second:** Discussing the results related to the second question: What are the reasons and motivations for Jordanians to use social networking sites instead of conventional ways of sharing their views and adopting positions from activists' perspectives?

The results revealed that the majority of the selected respondents believe there are reasons for their resorting to social media sites and ignoring conventional methods of expressing their opinions and following their positions, with the majority of them agreeing that the freedom offered by social media sites to express opinions and ideas is the most significant of these reasons, and the convenience of receiving, viewing, and sharing information with others, as well as the ability to view various thoughts and ideas using multiple types of media (text, images, and video), and that the information published on social networking platforms is modern and immediate.

The researcher refers this result to the simplicity and low cost of using the Internet, as well as the ability to freely present views and ideas, which drives Jordanians to use social media sites, especially political positions concerning the relationship between the government and the people.

The researcher also explains this result in terms of social media being one of the better methods than others and less confronting or clashing with government and security services, and that it is possible to gain experience with all aspects of societal problems through social



media sites. Furthermore, social media sites have now become an important element in planning for change through the development of community awareness and public opinion. The researcher also believes that, despite the absence of information from government agencies in many cases, social media sites are at the frontline of publishing news and information, especially on political issues, as well as economic, social, and cultural issues.

The results also showed a number of beneficial and ritual motivations for using social media. The results also revealed that, in the perception of the sample respondents, the most beneficial reason for using social media is the ability to access materials that are not accessible in other media sources, display and browse them easily and openly without fear of surveillance or tracking. In addition to the desire to conduct political and social discussions through social networking sites, increase knowledge and learn about the latest developments at the local, Arab or international level, and this is what social media provides in particular.

The results for ritual motives showed that the most important of these motives are withdrawing from life, enjoying and entertaining, collecting knowledge and news materials, and occupying leisure time.

The researcher discusses how social media sites placed themselves on life as a result of beneficial and ritual motives. On one hand, it is considered a form of media, and on the other, it's a social media, so it has provided a variety of reasons for its use, most of which are either for a certain benefit or for specific rituals.

In this study, the benefits obtained from obtaining information, especially these that cannot be obtained from official sources or traditional methods, and the free share of opinions and ideas across a wide range of geographical regions all over the world were represented in the most important ritual motives of escaping from reality to virtual Internet space, leisure and entertainment.

This result is in agreement with (Denisova, 2017), which found that social media sites play an important role in controlling the public and supplying them with political and economic knowledge and data that governments have not publicly disclosed.

**Third:** Discussing the results related to the third question: What social media platforms are Jordanians most likely to use to share their opinions, according to activists?

The results showed that Facebook is the most used and reliable site for expressing ideas and opinions according to 54.9% of the respondents, followed Twitter 30.0%, WhatsApp, 9.3% and in last place YouTube, at 5.8%.

According to the researcher, some software has been created in order to provide social media services anywhere covered by the Internet, most notably Facebook, as it enables



communication, sharing free messages, images and videos, and staying up to date with the latest news.

Facebook has emerged as a prominent networking phenomenon, attracting a wide segment of society, including the youth, educated and academic elites, as well as political elites. It is also a vital means of expressing oneself, exchanging political ideas and views, and communicating with others, and as the researcher describes, Facebook is a powerful revolutionary tool in Arab communities, transcending boundaries and barriers and spreading its influence to different locations and social sites. The researcher also suggests that social networking sites of all forms (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.) are accessible for the public to share their trends and ideas without surveillance or limitations, and that contact will lead to the formation of supporting, opposing, or neutral opinions. This result is consistent with (Lee, 2018), which stated that Facebook is the most widely used platform for discussing news and political discourse, which encourages protest participation. Although accidental exposure to news on Facebook is common, it did not result in increased political activity, such as the expression of political opinions on Facebook.

**Fourth:** Discussing the results related to the fourth question: What are the most important information and opinions that Jordanians transmit through social media about political and societal issues, according to activists?

The results showed that 95.3% of the study sample shared information and political opinions related to government decisions through social media, 89.5% shared information and opinions related to government appointments, and 84.0% shared information and opinions related to parliamentary and council elections, indicating that the most important political issues that Jordanians address through social media are information and opinions related to government decisions.

The results also showed that 95.6% of the surveyed Jordanians share information and opinions related to taxes through social media as a societal issue, and 92.8% share information and opinions related to poverty and unemployment through social media, while 80.7% exchanged information and opinions related to domestic crimes, and 68.6% shared information and opinions related to favoritism and cronyism, 52.8% transfer information and opinions related to women's issues.

The researcher attributes this result to the fact that governmental decisions of all kinds and trends affect citizens in the first place, as they may be related to economic or societal aspects, and also affect the citizens' livelihood and level of well-being, therefore they are essential for them.



The results showed that 73% of the study sample believed that social media sites affected the Jordanian protests in terms of organization and coordination, while 13.5% believed that social media sites did not affect the Jordanian protests in terms of organization and coordination.

The results also showed that 96.5% of the study sample believed that the greatest impact of social media sites in the Jordanian protests was in its contribution to the speed of response by the street, while 92.6% believed that social media sites disseminated information leading to the protests to a wide range of people.

The researcher explains this result that Facebook (as one of the social networking sites) enjoys the speed of publishing government decisions and commenting on them by the public, which forms a means of pressure on the government to amend or change its decisions, and it also allows individuals to enter groups that suit their ideas and interests and interact with them.

The results also showed that 55.8% of the study sample believed that digital protests resulted from social networking sites contributed to the dismissal of governments. The researcher explains this result in that the public has special priorities and accounts that it works on through mobilization on social media sites, and it may happen that the government's priorities conflict with the public's priorities, which sometimes leads to the government's retreat from implementing some plans, changing its priorities, or even resigning as a result of public pressure, in certain cases, it did not address topics or concerns to the public in an acceptable manner or process.

The results also showed 36.5% who believe - from their point of view - that the digital protests through social media have contributed to improving economic conditions to a small degree, while 13.0% of the study sample believe that the digital protests through social media have contributed in that manner to a very large degree.

The researcher attributes this result to the difficult economic conditions that Jordan is going through and its limited resources, and therefore the popular or societal influence through digital protests will not be effective to a large extent, which makes the impact low.

The results also showed that 35.3% of the study sample believed that the digital protests in Jordan improved public freedom to a moderate degree, 33.0% believed that these protests helped to a low degree in improving freedom in Jordan, and 17.4% believed that the digital protests helped to a high degree in improving public freedom in Jordan, 1.9% also indicated that it did not help in improving public freedom at all. Regarding this particular result, we argue that digital protests through social networking sites do not always improve economic conditions or even public freedom, nevertheless they are an important space for dialogue on political issues and an important means for freely presenting opinions and ideas, as well as



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following up others opinions and managing discussion, which contributes to improving the economic conditions or levels of freedom to a medium or even a low degree in the long run.

The results of the current study are in agreement with (Marah, 2019), that Facebook allowed intensive news circulation at 75%, and this practice reinforced the decentralization of the word, and also enhanced the public's contribution to political participation since the Arab Spring Revolutions, and that social media has suddenly and quickly intensified political debate and work to mobilize and organize protesters at a high level (62%). The results of the current study are in agreement with (Marah, 2019), that Facebook allowed intensive news circulation at 75%, and this practice reinforced the decentralization of the word, and also enhanced the public's contribution to political participation since the Arab Spring Revolutions, and that social media has suddenly and quickly intensified political debate and work to mobilize and organize protesters at a high level (62%). The results also agreed with (Al-Shorfat, 2017), which stated that social media sites were a suitable place for the Arab masses to discuss their political issues, away from security prosecutions, as well as (Poell, 2019), which showed that social media has shown a great ability to shorten the time in organizing protests and participating in them, and that social media has a large and important role in influencing the protests in terms of quantitative and temporal terms.

Finally, the result was in agreement with (Tréré, Jeppesen & Mattoni, 2017), study's, which showed that new media had an important role in activating digital protests, especially through social media, as protesters were active on these platforms, and also contributed to fueling the protests in general in each of the three comparative countries (Spain - Italy - Greece) despite their different influence and direction of that influence.

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