

Exploring the Impact of Transnational Civil Society on the Egyptian Uprising: Has the Transnational Engagement Been a Success Story?

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Abstract

Revolutions, civil wars and uprisings and minor protests occurred in the entire region of the Middle East in 2010 and 2011, and these events across the Middle East are known today as the Arab Spring. The main idea of this thesis is to see whether there was any effective transnational engagement in the Egyptian uprisings. This thesis argues that there can be an impact of transnational civil society (TCS) on the social upheavals that occurred in the Arab Spring, particularly in Egypt, because Egypt was a place where TCS, including NGOs and think-tanks existed even during Mubarak's time, and Egypt was the main support/financial aid recipient from the U.S.A. This topic is also important simply because this issue is fresh and new and not much research has thus far been carried on this. In order to answer my question, I conducted interviews with national and transnational NGOs in Egypt. Based on the interviews, this thesis shows that transnational organizations were present in Egypt via social media, Internet, and their level of involvement in the uprisings was somewhat effective.

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List of Abbreviations

1. CTUWS – Center for Trade Union and Workers’ Services
2. IGO – International governmental organization
3. INGO – International non-governmental organization
4. NDI – National Democratic Institute
5. NGO – Non-governmental organization
6. NPO – Non-profit organizations
7. NSM – New Social Movement
8. TCS – Transnational Civil Society
9. TNGO – Transnational Non-governmental organizations

Introduction

The late 2010 and early 2011 events that surrounded almost the entire Middle East shocked the world. Civilian and social uprisings, civil wars, civil uprising and minor protests occurred across the region. The heart of these social movements and uprisings was the Tunisian one, which started in December 2010, spreading later to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and further down to the east and south. The wave of these social uprisings started to be called the 'Arab Spring'. Mostly youngsters or the middle class population started these uprisings. They were unorganized, but when looking at it from outside it seemed like they have occurred with some external or internal help.¹

Today, civil society groups are in the center of global attention, and it is also possible to find any types of international governmental or non-governmental organizations (IGO and NGO) in any corner of the world. However, there have been many cases when countries or governments, mostly authoritarian ones, were cautious with the presence of civil society groups on their territory. One such recent example is the case of Egypt and its accusation of forty three people, both Western and Egyptian, who apparently, according to the Egyptian government, funded NGOs in Egypt to start the revolution in January 2011.² It seems that the government was and is afraid of NGOs and their possible influence on the Egyptian uprisings, even though these organizations have been in Egypt for quite a long time. So, were these civil society groups the main causes of the uprisings?

¹ *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East: Egypt Victorious?* International Crisis Group, Middle East/North Africa Report N101, 24 Feb 2011, iii-1.

² *Egypt 'to put on trial foreign NGO workers'*, BBC News, 5 February 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16896018>.

There could be many reasons as to why these social upheavals occurred in the Middle East, including the poverty, unemployment which ordinary citizens could not bear anymore, human rights violations and democratic ideas, which inspired people to rise. Civil society development is considered to be part of democracy support by scholars, for example Carothers, and the civil society organizations themselves, therefore this thesis aims at carrying out a research on the impact of transnational civil society (TCS) on the Egyptian uprisings and how it could influence the society, which is the main question. There are also sub-questions which will help to answer the main one: what is the connection between TCS and social uprisings? How successful were these TCS groups in the Egyptian uprising? This issue is important because the transnational civil society is a widespread concept, and some authors, like Thomas Carothers for example, ask whether these TCSs are useful, and whether we need them.

This project concentrates on a single case, the social upheaval in Egypt, because it is a recent and fresh case and not much has been done on this; it is also a successful one in terms of being able to overthrow the regime of Hosni Mubarak. The event started as a peaceful social protest against the regime of Mubarak even though the government kept using all sorts of force to suppress the upheavals. Egypt was also a place where TCS, including NGOs and think-tanks existed even during Mubarak's time. This is the reason I chose Egypt as a case for this thesis, in order to see whether there was any effective transnational engagement in the Egyptian uprisings.

Socioeconomic issues are considered to be the main reasons that caused most of the uprisings in the Middle East,³ but the turn of these upheavals depended on who

³ Council of Ministries, *16.3 Million Egyptians live Under the Poverty Line*, El Masry El Youm Newspaper, December 2010.

actually started these uprisings; Tunisian revolution, for example, started with the efforts of working and middle class; in Libya revolution started with the foreign military assistance. In Egypt, pro-democratic Western-educated youth rose first, and only after Mubarak's statements of not resigning, did working class join in.⁴

In order to find answers to my research questions, I conducted interviews with local national and transnational NGOs, young writer in Egypt to be able to find out the level of impact of TCS networks on the social uprisings in Egypt.

Literature Review

This thesis will focus on the link between TCS and social movements, TCS's impact on social upheavals, and on the success of transnational engagement in the upheavals. There is some literature on transnational civil society, but very few researchers have tried to look at the TCS as capable of influencing social uprisings, and certainly only a few have tried to cover TCS in Egypt. In this section I will review sources that have looked at civil society or transnational civil society in general.

Ann Florini is a scholar who has done a significant research on TCS. In her book *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, Florini (2000) talks about the importance of transnational networks in the global arena. She mentions that the already existing literature about TCS does not really provide sufficient information on whether it is an effective tool that is capable of making global changes. The author also points out that previous analysts have looked at specific civil groups and compared their works; other scholars have examined transnational groups one at a time. According to me and

⁴ Sarma Hriday, "The Arab Spring: The Initiating Event for a New Arab World Order", *e-International Relations*, June 2011, <http://www.e-ir.info/2011/06/30/the-arab-spring-the-initiating-event-for-a-new-arab-world-order/>.

Florini, only a few authors actually looked at the significance of TCS groups and at what they should really do and this gap should be filled with further research.⁵ So, in my research I will try to focus on the role and impact of TCS on social upheavals and society itself.

Florini concentrates on the following questions: how powerful are TCS, how sincere are they and how much of a role can they play on a global scale? Her book provides a comparison of six different cases in order to find out how powerful TCSs are and whether TCSs are needed and how influential their influences are. One chapter of her book is dedicated to Chetan Kumar's work on Zapatistas uprising in Mexico. He argues that "a growing number of domestic struggles for democracy are attracting the attention of civil society groups abroad," and that these transnational campaigns decided to directly target the government and to democratize it.⁶ So, since I am looking at the way that civil society can influence the society they reside or work in, I do agree with Kumar's argument that fight for democracy always attracts civil society groups, and local or domestic problems, especially problems related to democracy, attract the majority of international organizations.

Florini handles the information gathered from all six different stories, and tries to see the link between them and she succeeds in it. One of the lessons learned as a result of analyzing these stories, as Florini argues, is that there is no clear-cut transnational civil society agenda, and that is why TCS groups cannot influence the governments or corporations to stick to their demands. The gap that Florini leaves out is how civil society

⁵ Ann Florini, ed, *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, Japan Center for International Exchange, Tokyo, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., 2000, 4.

⁶ Kumar Chetan, *Transnational Networks and Campaigns for Democracy*, 2000. In Ann, Florini, ed, *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, 115-142.

can actually influence the society and whether they actually have a mobilizing power and the research I intend on conducting will fill that gap by conducting interviews with NGOs, social activists to examine the role of TCS on people, on social movements.

Another work on civil society called *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion* is edited by Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers (2000). The main space is dedicated to civil society groups, their aid and democracy promotion in various countries, and how democracy promotion is in the interests of the United States. Methodology is based on case studies, written by civil society analysts from the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe, which brings variety to understanding of the TCS groups' role on democracy in those parts of the world. In this book, civil society is perceived as something useful to democracy in the eyes of donors and recipients, according to many theorists on democracy, therefore promotion of civil society, and active participation of citizens in government/public affairs are needed for democracy – building.⁷

All the chapters of the *Funding Virtue*, in one way or the other, describe socio-economic development of countries across the globe, and talk about the impact that civil society had on democratic promotion. Carothers and Ottaway also note that most civil society aid providers are Americans, and point out that although it is argued but that the main focus of Americans on civil society is because they believe that it is possible to promote democracy through civil society, even though the U.S. tried to promote democracy in many countries by economic development or by supporting political parties

⁷ Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, eds., *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, Washington D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000, 4.

against extremes.⁸ It is well known that the U.S. has supported authoritarian rulers in many countries, including Egypt, so the idea that civil society assistance comes natural to Americans and this natural notion mostly comes from domestic experience is very much debatable, because many west-European countries are also among the ones to support TCS networks inside and outside of their countries.

Carothers and Ottaway state that NGOs and civil society groups do political work, and according to them the U.S. supports the idea of civil society, but provides this support to only those groups of civil society whose leaders are ‘sympathetic’ to the policies of the U.S. in the Middle East, and Egypt was among the first top countries that received a lot of support from America.⁹ So, this means that the promotion of its own interests is in the interests of the U.S., and by supporting TCS groups whose agenda works in their favor, American government gets what it needs and wants. In my research I want to look at whether there was any engagement of transnational organizations on the Egyptian upheavals in changing authoritarian regime of Mubarak, because as it is already known the U.S.A. has been supporting Egypt since 1979 treaty between Egypt and Israel.¹⁰

The book is based on findings from the different cases that show that the role of NGOs is questioned. There are two chapters on civil society in Egypt and South Africa, and by comparing these two cases, for example, it is clear that understandings and the role of NGOs in these countries vary. Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayyid, in the chapter on *A Clash of Values: U.S. Civil Society Aid and Islam in Egypt*, argues that professional

⁸ Ibid, 4-7.

⁹ Carothers and Ottaway, “Toward Civil Society Realism,” in *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, edited by Ottaway and Carothers, 296.

¹⁰ Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayyid, “Civil Society in Egypt”, in *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, edited by Ottaway and Carothers, 52-53.

organizations in Egypt play a crucial role in political liberalization, even though the U.S. does not recognize these organizations as civil society group.¹¹ In South Africa, according to Landsberg, not NGOs, but social movements brought the apartheid.¹² One of the issues which scholars debate is the civil society's influence on political society. Studies show that people join political society, where they engage in politics and create their own political parties, trying, for example, to win election, and people join civil society, in which they create organizations, try to educate citizens about their rights, etc. Carothers and Ottaway bring the arguments from Michael Foley and Bob Edwards, who think that "social movements and other explicitly political groups effectively play the pro-democratic role that civil society is thought to perform."¹³ This is an interesting statement because just recently social movements occurred in Egypt and the upheavals are continuing till today, and if democracy is being measured by social movements, then civil society groups have some kind of influence on the social upheavals, and one part of my research focuses on this issue, which Carothers and Ottaway do not discuss in depth.

Another author who contributes to the literature on transnational activism is Sidney Tarrow (2005) with his book *The New Transnational Activism*. The author begins his book with the story of an immigrant who escaped to the U.S. in 1920s. Later on, that immigrant began sending remittances home, and soon went back home with a lot of money to build a hospital, therefore to help his society develop.¹⁴ By telling this story, Tarrow makes a point of the fact that anyone can be considered an activist, and it

¹¹ Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayyid, *A Clash of Values: U.S. Civil Society Aid and Islam in Egypt*, in Carothers and Ottaway, *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, Washington D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000, 49-52.

¹² Christopher Landsberg, *Voicing the Voiceless: Foreign Political Aid to Civil Society in South Africa*, in Carothers and Ottaway, *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, 115-127.

¹³ Michael Foley and Bob Edwards, *The Paradox of Civil Society*, Journal of Democracy, Vol 7, No. 3, 1996, 11

¹⁴ Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005, 1

becomes transnational when the work is done from outside the country. The main idea of the book lies in that individuals who become active transnationally are usually supported by domestic networks and organizations; they go abroad, creating connections between their state and international politics, and come back with new experiences and new types of actions for their own country. The author concentrates on the questions like: how actors are influenced by the growth and spread of transnational activism, and whether this spread of transnational activism and its link between non-governmental actors and their states create some type of unity between local and international contention. He argues that transnational activism is connected to the globalization, which prevents some activists from acting freely and also, that the ability of transnational activism to effect international politics provides activists with resources and opportunities for collective action.¹⁵ The increase of internationalism sometimes can threaten activism and sometimes creates new possibilities for it.¹⁶ The author, by drawing his conclusions from many sources and examples of events, argues that transnational activism will always have its impact on the domestic policies of any country, and that it is “like a series of waves that lap on an international beach, retreating repeatedly into domestic seas but leaving incremental changes on the shore.”¹⁷ Tarrow’s research is quite similar to mine; he points out that resources for collective actions are found when transnational actors affect international politics, but Tarrow does not pay an attention to the success of transnational networks or the way they influence the society, and my research will try to address these questions.

¹⁵ Ibid, 4

¹⁶ Ibid, 10

¹⁷ Ibid, 219

In contrast to Sidney Tarrow, Jackie Smith (2005) argues that the activeness of transnational networks varies from country to country, and that state and its policies are essential in this case. A less-developed country has lesser chances of getting involved with INGOs, for example, France has over 3,000 INGOs, when Turkmenistan has only about 15 organizations.¹⁸ In his article, Smith also talks about globalization, saying that no matter how rich or poor the country is, it is still tries to be active in a transnational arena; by wanting to change local situation of a certain country, social movements activists refer to activists beyond their borders, and therefore the notion of civil society becomes transnational and then global. Smith also points out that participation in transnational associations has its costs and benefits and economic, social and political factors influence this participation; in comparison of the U.S.A. and Somalia, for instance, the last one is less open politically and more repressed.¹⁹ All this information is relevant to my research, and I agree with Smith in many cases, even though he leaves out information on the level of transnational influence, which my research will focus on.

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998), in *Activists Beyond Borders*, mainly talk about NGOs that are involved in environment, women's rights and human rights issues because these the main areas of concentration for most organizations.²⁰ Social, economic or political conditions create an opportunity for TCS actors to become more involved in domestic issues. This book mostly is about the origins, limits, and effectiveness of transnational networks in the areas listed above, while Keck and Sikkink

¹⁸ Jackie Smith, *The Uneven Geography of Global Civil Society: National and Global Influences on Transnational Association*, The University of North Carolina Press, Social Forces Volume 84, No. 2, Dec 2005, 622.

¹⁹ Ibid, 622-631.

²⁰ Keck Margaret and Sikkink Kathryn, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, NY, Cornell University Press, 1998, x-xii.

also bring the debates of other scholars about the significance of transnational networks, stating that these organizations are only after their own benefits.²¹ This book is important because it covers the transnational advocacy networks in international politics, their origins and the actual work they do, and it will be a good reference while conducting interviews because it will give me a background on transnational organizations, even though Keck and Sikkink do not talk about the role or impact that TCS have on local NGOs, which my research can concentrate on.

Kumi Naidoo (2010) is another author who concentrated on the power of ordinary citizens in his book called *Boiling Point: Can citizen action save the world?*²² Civil society is not created out of nothing and nobody; simple people create them based on real problems. Florini and other civil society and social movement scholars discuss TCSs and how they are active in global issues having influence on domestic policies, and many of them also argue about reasons people join these transnational networks, and Naidoo in his book concentrates on the time when citizen themselves should start showing their power and energy, underlining the importance of citizens in being more and more active in their society.

Naidoo also talks about the challenges that civil society is faced today. He advises to rethink the saying, “think globally, act locally,” into “think locally, act globally,”²³ this basically shows the importance of citizens and that only ordinary people can make changes, also via civil society networks. Naidoo’s book is like an inspirational guide for ordinary men and women, for civil society and its organizations to be more active locally

²¹ Ibid, 39-45.

²² Kumi Naidoo, *Boiling Point: Can citizen action save the world? Development dialogue*, No. 54, July 2010, 15

²³ Ibid, 16.

and globally, make changes, believing that only ordinary citizens can challenge their government and face or solve the problems within their society. The author leaves out the questions when people actually get engaged in civil societies, and how they should do it, should it be with some external help, which I will try to answer in this thesis.

This was a brief review of literature which had some references on civil society, TCS, social movements, and the importance of TCS nowadays. They are all relevant to my research sources but none of them mention the possible impact of TCS on social movements/upheavals and the link between these two notions and whether transnational engagement is a success story or a failure, and definitely no research has been carried on Egypt and its TCS, therefore in my thesis I will look at these questions. The next section covers methodology used in this project.

Methodology

The main goal of this thesis project is to find out the impact of the TCS on the Egyptian upheaval of 2011, or to see to what extent this involvement was successful. Various groups of civil society, especially NGOs, have had their impact on major global problems, on issues like a ban on nuclear testing, corruption; they have been significantly successful in being a moderator between two conflicting sides, people and their state, etc., and therefore, in my research, I want to find out to what extent TCS groups can influence the uprisings.

One case, the Egyptian upheaval of 2011, was chosen for this research for a few reasons. Since the signing of Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the attention of the United States towards Egypt increased, and lot of funds commenced to pour into their economy,

tourism, and therefore the presence of various NGOs and IGOs increased. Egypt is also the country which has been successful in overthrowing the regime, and on the 24th or 25th of May 2012²⁴ they had presidential elections with over twenty candidates, so it is fair to say that Egypt is the most successful one among the other Arab Spring countries, which shows that there might have been possible external help.

Qualitative research is selected for this project. Interviews were a better choice because content analysis of the news coverage, for example, could be biased, which could have influenced the results. I used qualitative research method in this research project in order to better understand the nature and behavior of citizens in Egypt. By conducting interviews with local national and transnational NGOs, and a young writer in Egypt, I could get first-hand primary sources to answer my research question and it helped to deepen my knowledge in understanding the level of TCS engagement in the uprisings. Interviewee felt much comfortable in answering questions because of semi-structured method of interviews; interviews provided me with a large amount of information and details helped to understand the general opinion and views of people.

Interviews had flexible number of questions.²⁵ These were topical interviews: I had an initial topic and looked for chronology of events.²⁶ NGOs, activists are considered as one of the significant elements of the civil society, and that is why I chose them for the interviews. I chose interviewees through my friends who are involved with the NGOs, youth movement organizations; through them I could find a way from one organization to another one, or to a young writer. In total interviewed eight national NGOs, two

²⁴ Egypt News- *Presidential Elections*, May 2012, <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/egypt/index.html>.

²⁵ See Appendix V for example.

²⁶ Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2nd ed., 2005.

transnational organizations, and one young writer-activist. The language of the interviews was English. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and a half in average, but sometimes interviewees would go on and talk about the current situation, exceeding the time a little bit. I was allowed to take notes only, not because interviewees were afraid but because they simply did not feel comfortable with the voice recorder or camcorder. In the following section I will give the content of the thesis chapters.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter commences with providing a theoretical framework on the concept of transnational civil society, concentrating on the connection between TCS and social uprisings. The second chapter discusses the socio-economic conditions in Egypt that led to the uprisings of 2011, giving a general background on them, up to the point when Hosni Mubarak passed his seat to the military. In the last part of the second chapter, I concentrate on the existence of civil society in Egypt. The last section talks about transnational civil society methods and activities in Egypt, making a connection between the national and transnational civil society. The third chapter summarizes the results of the interviews conducted with national and transnational NGOs and a young Egyptian writer in Egypt in April 2012, and based on those interviews I conclude with my analysis about the role and impact of TCS on the Egyptian uprisings.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

1.1. Concept of Transnational Civil Society

Drawing upon the existing literature and the academic debate on transnational civil society, this chapter is dedicated to constructing a framework about how we can conceptualize ‘transnational civil society’ (TCS), how it is formed and how it is influenced and influences its surroundings. Today the world is becoming more integrated and transnational: it is possible to travel to any country in the world, work or study there, and the impact of civil society groups is growing as well. Transnational networks are made of “extra-governmental associations of people from multiple national backgrounds, who dedicate themselves to monitoring and reforming the institutions that exercise power within national domains,”²⁷ and the concept of TCS has been used by many Western scholars, and there are different interpretations to this notion.

There is no clear and straightforward definition of this concept. Scholars and authors have suggested some definitions to this term, most of which bring the concept of TCS to “uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values,” or non-governmental and non-profit organizations.²⁸ Ann Florini, for instance, describes TCS as “self-organized advocacy groups that undertake voluntary collective action across

²⁷ June Nash, *Transnational Civil Society*, 2007. In Nugent David and Vincent Joan, eds., *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 437.

²⁸ London School of Economics and Political Science Center for Civil Society, *What is Civil Society?* 2006; also Jan Aart Scholte, *Global Civil Society: Changing the World?* (Coventry: Center for the Study of Globalization and Regionalization, University of Warwick, 1999, pp. 2-3) in Davies, *The Rise and Fall of Transnational Civil Society: The Evolution of International Non-governmental organizations since 1839*, Center for International Politics, London, 2008, 3.

state borders in pursuit of what they deem the wider public interest.”²⁹ In her book *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, Florini talks a lot about how powerful TCSs are, and how much of a role they play in affecting the world problems, and about their roles and aims. According to Florini, transnational civil society is distinguished by being non-governmental or profit-seeking, going across state borders and taking different forms. Civil society is referred to as a ‘third force’ or a third system of actors, including citizens grouping voluntarily for no profit or profit-seeking actors.³⁰ The role of TCS is understood, but today scholars are still facing difficulties in differentiating privately organized groups from state ones.³¹ According to Gramscian School of international relations, like Robert Cox for example, it is impossible for civil society to be independent from state, and scholars, like Higgott, Underhill, and Bieler have tried to find out how true that statement is, but with no success.³² These were the definitions of TCS according to other scholars, but in my understanding transnational civil society are non-governmental and non-state actors that work locally on domestic problems and have connections abroad with ‘mother’ organization.

So, what are transnational civil society groups good for? Florini, for instance, states that cross-border networks are mostly good at bringing attention to the neglected issues by presenting agendas on specific issues to national governments, international organizations and various corporations. The question of corruption was kept unnoticed in

²⁹ Ann Florini, ed., *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, Japan Center for International Exchange, Washington D.C., Tokyo, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000, 3.

³⁰ Ibid, 7.

³¹ Richard Higgott, Geoffrey Underhill and Andreas Bieler, *Non-State Actors and Authority in the Global System*. New York: Routledge, 2000, 6.

³² David Levy and Daniel Egan, *Corporate Political Action in the Global Polity: National and Transnational Strategies in the Climate Change Negotiations*, in Higgott, Underhill, and Bieler, 2000, 138-155.

many countries, until Transparency International came into existence and began its fight against corruption. These transnational network groups pressure governments and international corporations, attend discussions, influence the agreements and results of these discussions, and very little would have been accomplished if it was not for civil society groups.³³ Another issue that Thomas Risse looks at is human rights, and he argues that human rights activists influenced the decisions of Indonesian president Suharto to leave the country peacefully and helped the Cold War to end through Helsinki effect.³⁴ As it can be seen on the examples, the role of TCS has a significant place in global arena.

Recent studies have also shown that people trust information they get from NGOs, for instance, than the government itself. These non-governmental institutions get more moral support from the public itself.³⁵ Authority is viewed as something that has influence over the success of transnational activism, and transnational activists gain this authority from several sources, like moral influence and political legitimacy.³⁶ Transnational networks look for and find important and visible issues that trouble or create problems to citizens, and then include them in their agendas. Keck and Sikkink put forward a few goals of TCS groups: get specific issues, be it domestic or international, on the international agenda, influence international actors to change their positions and behaviors. These transnational actors affect interests of international actors as well as the

³³ Ann Florini, ed., *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, 211-212.

³⁴ Thomas Risse, *The Power of Norms versus the Norms of Power: Transnational Civil Society and Human Rights*, 2000. In Florini, ed, *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, 177-211.

³⁵ Trust Barometer, Edelman, <http://trust.edelman.com/trusts/trust-in-institutions-2/ngos-remain-most-trusted/>; see also Joseph Nye, *In Government We Don't Trust*, Foreign Policy 108, 1997; Pippa Norris, ed., *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. In Florini, *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, 219-220.

³⁶ Haas, Introduction, *Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination*, International Organization 46, 1992, in Richard Price, *Transnational Civil Society and Advocacy in World Politics*, World Politics, Volume 55, No.4, 2003, 587.

environment in which they operate.³⁷ As it is clear from the discussions above, TCS brings the domestic or global issues to the surface, and tries to bring much attention to them from international organizations if it cannot deal with them itself.

Some scholars, Carothers and Ottaway for instance, argue that TCS can actually influence the state and its society, and they underline the idea that there is a clear relationship between civil society and democracy.³⁸ There are many who work with the concept of ‘transnational’ civil society, trying to look at the factors that shape the meaning and definition of this notion. Robert Putnam in his *Making Democracy Work* argues that civil society cures the illnesses that affect advanced democracy.³⁹ The understanding of civil society and the way it behaves under certain circumstances has been central in the works of Thomas Carothers, for example. In the book *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, Carothers and Marina Ottaway discuss the ways civil society is perceived by democracy support donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or nonstate actors, how “active civil society is central to a thriving democracy is a classical one,” and how organized groups influence governments.⁴⁰ At the same time, Carothers states that it is possible for democracy to live without civil society group, bringing examples of France, Japan and Spain which have very few civil society groups even though they elect their officials democratically.⁴¹ I believe that this is a valid

³⁷ Margaret Keck, Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988, 25.

³⁸ Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway, eds., *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., 2000, 295-299.

³⁹ Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civil Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1993, 76-81.

⁴⁰ Carothers Thomas and Marina Ottaway, *Toward Civil Society Realism*, 2000. In Carothers and Ottaway, ed., *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, 293-310.

⁴¹ Thomas Carothers, Civil Society, *Foreign Policy* 117 (winter 1999-2000), 18-29, in Florini Ann, ed., *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, 219.

argument, because on the practice it is seen that underdeveloped or developing countries have either few civil society actors, or do not have them at all.

So, under what condition TCS get involved? Examples of the situations, listed above, in which TCS usually get involved show that there should be a domestic or local problem in order for civil society groups to exist. Comparing dam projects in India, the United States, China and Lesotho, Sanjeev Khagram found that the strength of civil society had played an essential role in building dams in those countries where civil society was present.⁴² So, based on all examples on corruption, human rights, building dams, TCS organize groups to face these issues, and it seems that these organizations are needed indeed in any country, not only developing or underdeveloped ones.

Another question that many authors argue about is whether transnational civil society groups are useful or not, and if there is something not useful within these groups, what can be done to alleviate it. Ann Florini brings an example of Neo-Nazi hate groups, which are considered to be TCS, and which do not promote anything good for the society, arguing that, “once coalitions move from broad goals to specific campaigns with specific strategies and tactics, it can become much less clear what interest is actually being represented.”⁴³ These transnational civil actors claim to represent people and speak from people’s opinions. There are also three claims that these transnational networks use in justifying their actions and involvement in domestic and international issues: knowledge (they work for a long period of time gathering information on specific issue, like Amnesty International that has detailed information on human rights issues in many

⁴² Khagram Sanjeev, *Toward Democratic Governance for Sustainable Development: Transnational Civil Society Organizing Around Big Dams*, 2000. In Ann Florini, *The Third Force*, 177-211.

⁴³ Ann Florini, *The Third Force; The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, 231.

countries), government approval and representatives.⁴⁴ So, ordinary people trust these organizations, and one of the main reasons for that is that they know many things about little things within the country they work in.

Transnational activist succeed, but sometimes they fail, and a lot of work has been done in understanding of TCS's influence on a global problems by looking at various issues. In his work *Moral Victories: How Activists Provoke Multilateral Action*, Burgerman argues that in order for human rights groups to succeed in certain agreements, they need existence of international norms and domestic groups that have connections with transnational activists, and elites' involvement in the control of armed forces.⁴⁵ I agree with Burgerman's statement on the need of international norms in solving or succeeding in agreements, but would disagree with the fact that domestic groups have to have connections with transnational actors, because I believe local organizations with the help of international norms and rules, can pressure their government in certain issues. Some other countries, as Mekata mentions, use transnational civil society in their benefits, and are concerned about their reputation, bringing the example of Japan in banning land mines, therefore bringing its reputation up on international level.⁴⁶ This can probably show that TCS would succeed in an environment in which it is less needed, and maybe that with restricted sources and time, TCS groups can actually produce some results. According to Ottaway and Landsberg, transnational civil actors succeed or at least build trust especially when they try to focus on specific issues, more concrete grievances that concentrate on democracy promotion programs as a whole that donors ask them to do;

⁴⁴ Ibid, 235.

⁴⁵ Susan Burgerman, *Moral Victories: How Activists Provoke Multilateral Action*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001, 4-5.

⁴⁶ Mekata Motoko, *Building Partnerships toward a Common Goal: Experiences of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines*, 2000. In Florini, *The Third Force*, 143.

donors fund these organizations, but it is hard to speak to society from donors' perspectives (sometimes donors can be biased) and it is difficult to get more support locally.⁴⁷ So, in conclusion, I think transnational civil society actors are non-state and non-profit actors that are needed in any country in order to bring any socio-economic or socio-political issues to the domestic or international attention, and most of the time local NGOs work independently but sometimes they have transnational links. After having conceptualized what we mean by transnational civil society, let us scrutinize its links with social movements.

1.2. Link between Transnational Civil Society and Social Uprisings

This section will concentrate on social movements which lead into social uprisings and transnational activism, and mainly looking at how transnational civil society groups are designed or thought to be effective and influential in social movements, in provoking uprisings, and the following questions will help us through understanding the main question of this section: what are social movements? Who starts them? How are they influenced? Again, as in the case of transnational civil society, there is no clear-cut definition for the concept of social movements. When I hear this concept, I think of a gathering of people, who are dissatisfied with some issues either at a local level or state level, marching together, going on hunger strikes, and demanding their rights. Blumer gave the following definition to social movements: "Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in

⁴⁷ Marina Ottaway, *Social Movements, Professionalism of Reform*, 77-85, and Landsberg, *Voicing the Voiceless: Foreign Political Aid to Civil Society in South Africa*, 105-127, in Carothers and Ottaway, *Funding Virtue*.

a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new system of living...”⁴⁸ I agree with Blumer that people, who are engaged in social movements, have common values and interests, and also unite if they are not happy or ‘dissatisfied’ with something in life and want to make some changes.

Zald and McCarthy talk about the theory of *resource mobilization*, and that it derives from the idea of social movements, and according to it social movements are caused by dissatisfaction or grievances. At the same time, according to resource mobilization theorists, grievances are not enough for the mobilization and protest, but available resources and opportunities are more important.⁴⁹ So, according to Zald and McCarthy people will mobilize if they are unhappy and have the resources and possibilities in hands. Another scholars, like Klandermans and Oberschall, point out that in a process of mobilization the costs and benefits of participation are important, and Olson, with his logic of collective action, confirms that people do not participate in any sorts of action or protests even if it is in their interests, and basically people will participate in movements if they have selective incentives.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Herbert Blumer, *Elementary Collective Groupings*. In Lee, A.M. (ed.) *Principles of Sociology*: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1969, 99.

⁴⁹ Zald M.N.; McCarthy, J.D., *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*. Selected Essays, 1987, Brunswick: *Transaction Books*, and Jenkins J.C., *Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements*, *Annual Review of Sociology* 9, 1983, 527-553. In Bert Klandermans, *New Social Movements and Resource Mobilization: The European and the American Approach Revisited*. In Rucht Dieter, ed., *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the U.S.A.*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1991, 24.

⁵⁰ Bert Klandermans, *Mobilization and Participation: Social Psychological Expansions of Resource Mobilization Theory*, *American Sociological Review* 49, 1984, 583-600; Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1973; Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action. Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965. In Dieter Rucht, ed., *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the U.S.A*, 25.

Pichardo Nelson writes about the New Social Movement (NSM), which he distinguishes from old movements, trying to give an explanation to the rise of social movements. These new social movements break away from traditional capitalistic values, and stick more to the relationship with nature, body, work, etc.⁵¹ Another authors, Klandermans, argues that resource mobilization and NSM should go hand and hand in order to explain movements, because resource mobilization focuses on items that generate resources, and NSM looks at items that generate grievances, so they complete each other,⁵² and I agree with this idea of looking at items that generate resources and items that generate grievances, which later can help in finding the link between TCS and social movements.

Some transnational activists also contributed to the literature on social movements along with transnational activism. For instance, Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink distinguish transnational networks, advocacy campaigns, and social movements, stating that these concepts have transnational contacts and mobilization of people.⁵³ Here I ask: are TCS groups revolutionary in character, and can they have any influence on state and its people? TCS indeed is able to challenge the government, and many scholars argue that TCS groups are revolutionary in nature, especially when they try to bring democracy and transparency to an authoritarian government.⁵⁴ Johnson argues that one of the main goals

⁵¹ Olofsoon, *After the working-class movement? An essay on what's 'new' and what's 'social' in the new social movements*, Acta 31, 1988, 15-34. In Nelson Pichardo, *New Social Movements: A Critical Review*, Annual Reviews Inc., 1997, 412.

⁵² Bert Klandermans, *New Social Movements and Resource Mobilization: The European and the American Approach Revisited*. In Dieter Rucht, ed., *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the U.S.A.*, 1991, 38.

⁵³ Sanjeev Khagram, James Riker, Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, 7.

⁵⁴ Chetan Kumar, *Transnational Networks and Campaigns for Democracy*. In Florini, *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, 116-118.

of TCS is not to replace governments but to influence their decision-making and make them adopt certain policies,⁵⁵ which seems to be a valid argument.

Another scholar, June Nash points out that civil society groups were created because of a shift in “capitalist accumulation practices on a global scale,”⁵⁶ and Gledhill describes a set of policies of neoliberalism, including open markets and free trade, which influences people with low income in underdeveloped or developing countries; as a result, the gap between poor and rich increases.⁵⁷ Poverty, corruption of political parties, and many other issues cause people to look out for civil society groups, and as Nash also points out, most of the time wage labors, peasants or other low-income groups join these movements; these people turn to transnational civil society out of losing hope that their government can do something for a better change of their situation.⁵⁸

According to Nash, transnational civil society can indeed represent the interests of people, by becoming mediators in any situation, including social movements, conflicts and bloody wars. He brings the example of the Zapatista’s youth movement (consisting of young men and women who were tired of poverty), against the Mexican government, and how TCS was on the side of revolutionaries, by publishing the activities of armed forces, by monitoring the government’s behavior, sometimes by participating in protests themselves, and by attracting attention of other countries to this issue.⁵⁹ In such cases, people see support of NGOs, international press, and this probably inspires them more, even though these people risk their lives. As Smith points out, international transnational

⁵⁵ Johnson Rebecca, *Advocates and Activists: Conflicting Approaches on Nonproliferation and the Test Ban Treaty*, in Ann Florini, *The Third Force*, 2000, 77

⁵⁶ June Nash, *Transnational Civil Society*, in David Nugent and Joan Vincent, eds., *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, 437.

⁵⁷ Ibid, Gledhill, 1998. In June Nash, *Transnational Civil Society*, 437.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 438.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 439-446.

nongovernmental organizations (TNGOs) create “opportunities for collective action to a host of social actors,” which brings us to transnational social movements.⁶⁰ Social movements are supported by the global television, emails, phones that give the rise for collective action. Today, national governments are unable to hide any information from its own citizens⁶¹, communication, traveling abroad, inability to control global economy⁶², and eventually inequalities that globalized economy creates – all this brings transnational civil society and social movements closer to each other, and that is how the bond is formed.⁶³ Transnational movements consist of individuals, networks, organizations; Florini describes it as “a loose agglomeration of unelected activists.”⁶⁴ Concluding this chapter, and drawing upon the discussions between Florini, Carothers, and many other scholars who have contributed to the idea of TCS, its level of involvement in global issues, I suggest that there is a connection between transnational civil society and local non-state actors and social movements. Bringing international attention to the local issues gives hopes, resources for people to mobilize. Socio-economic issues certainly also have its influence on the way citizens react. TCS and social movements are all about the ordinary men and women, and the national and transnational groups have all the capability in order to bring people together in any situation.

⁶⁰ Smith Jackie, *Organizing Global Action*, Peace Review 6, 1994, 419-26, in Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, 181.

⁶¹ Ibid, 181, Tilly Charles, *Prisoners of the State*, Center for Studies of Social Change, Working Paper, No. 129, NY: New York School for Social Research, 1991.

⁶² Ibid, 181, Rosenau James, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

⁶³ Ibid, 182, Martha Finnemore, *Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism*, International Organization 47, 1996, 565-598.

⁶⁴ Ann Florini, *Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, 2000, 3. In Srilatha Batliwala, *Grassroots Movements as Transnational Actors: Implication for Global Civil Society*, International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, Vol. 13, No. 4, December 2002, 395.

Chapter 2: Socio-economic situation of Egypt and Transnational Civil Society

In this chapter I will give some background about the socio-economic environment of Egypt that led into a social upheaval, presenting general information on the Egyptian uprisings as well. I will also summarize the role of civil society and the activities of transnational civil society in Egypt in their efforts of politicizing the poor socio-economic condition of Egyptians.

2.1. Egypt's socio-economic situation before the uprisings of 2011

Compared to other Middle Eastern and North African countries, Egypt has the highest population figures, about eighty million people. The economy in Egypt, unlike the newer post – Soviet countries is private and market driven. Despite the previous Mubarak's government's efforts to stabilize the economy by reducing inflation rate, reducing the budget deficit and accelerating the economic growth, the Egyptian economy took a nosedive in the latter half of 1990s. According to the data from Markus Loewe, between 2005 and 2008, Egypt did experience short bursts of economic growth, but these were all due to the global economic boom from the record high price of the barrel of oil, the increased revenue from the Suez Canal and the tourist services. But this was undermined by the fact that the distribution of income had worsened, there was a serious drop in industrial output, and the real wages could not keep up with the high rate of

inflation and extreme employment.⁶⁵ The level of unemployment reached 9.6% by December 2010, because of the loans of the International Monetary Fund and heavy privatizations.⁶⁶

According to many scholars, and one of the is Dabrowski, Egypt is a lower middle income country and at least 25% of its population lives below the national poverty line, and human development index is also low. Egypt has faced many social and economic problems over the past few years. A few issues leading to these problems can be identified, such as poor education, high rates of illiteracy especially among the female population.⁶⁷ As for Loewe, in Egypt the factors that have led to rampant poverty can be identified quite definitively. Lack of physical, human and social assets was a major contributor to poverty. Uneven distribution of human assets such as education, especially among the sexes, social assets such as political and social influence, among the rich and poor led to difficulties in employment. A low return on assets and labor is another important factor. The economic spurt during the early 90s did not result from growth in productivity, “it came from capital intensive industries with windfall gains.”⁶⁸ There was absolutely no boost for the local masses. The worsening distribution of wages among the different classes of people also was a contributing factor. Another factor can be identified as “vulnerability to social risks such as unemployment, work disability, illness, death of the main provider, land loss, drought and livestock epidemics.”⁶⁹ The lack of a system

⁶⁵ Markus Loewe, *New avenues to be opened for social protection in the Arab world: the case of Egypt*, International Journal of Social Welfare, Blackwell Publishing, 2004, 13: 3-4.

⁶⁶ United Nations Development Programme, (2010), Egypt Human Development Report 2010 – *Youth in Egypt Building our Future*, UNDP, Cairo

⁶⁷ Marek Dabrowski, *Egypt: Political Transition vs. Economic Challenges?* CASE Networks E-briefs, June 2011, No. 07/2011, 1.

⁶⁸ Markus, Loewe, *New avenues to be opened for social protection in the Arab world: the case of Egypt*, 5-7.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 7.

that aided the general population during such social calamities further dropped the average income.

When it comes to healthcare, then it can be noted that citizens were covered by law by a social insurance scheme, but in reality only half the population was insured. The diminishing social support among friends, relatives and neighbors coupled with a drop in the *zakat* rate has also contributed recently to the increase in poverty.⁷⁰ Lack of basic healthcare was not a problem, but the distribution method was. Only a few regions in Egypt were given access to the health care system, where the remote and commercially unimportant regions were neglected. The private medical healthcare system catered only to the rich and politically influential whereas the lower class was left to fend for themselves in the poorly equipped and managed public healthcare system. Subsidies on basic essential food items were only limited to bread, tea, sugar and cooking oil. Subsidies on other essentials like gas, water, electricity were lost through inefficiencies caused by corruption in the administration, thus keeping cost high.⁷¹ So, it is important to note all this because these are the leading factors of not stable and uninspiring socio-economic conditions of Egyptians, which worsened in the last few years of Mubarak's regime, and which affected people in terms of being more cautious to the situation around them and later possibly encouraged them in rising against the regime.

⁷⁰ Markus Loewe, *New avenues to be opened for social protection in the Arab world: the case of Egypt*, 7-14.

⁷¹ Marek Dabrowski, *Egypt: Political Transition vs. Economic Challenges?* 2-3.

2.2. Civil Society in Egypt and politicization of socio-economic problems

This section discusses politicization of socio-economic problems, and civil society in the Arab world, focusing on the Egyptian civil society groups and the main idea here is to discuss the history of civil society in Egypt versus the issues.

There has been a slight change in the economy of the country from 2003 till 2007, but this economic growth was not sufficient to face the socio-economic challenges of Egypt. This ineffectiveness was based on political life of the country, because only the ruling elites could benefit from economic reforms, and opposition did not have a say in the decision-making process, mostly because parliament did not have authority. As the result many lower-middle class Egyptian met with severe difficulties.⁷² Ottaway argued that “politically, Egypt has become a one-dimensional society where there is no true alternative to the present ruling establishment,”⁷³ so the Egyptian regime was putting a lot of pressure on political space. Political corruption, poor institutional activity, unemployment were among the most instant problems.

The uprisings of January 25th 2011 were not the first uprisings that Egypt had. There have been social movements in previous years, and one of them is *April 6* movement, when thousands of young Egyptians organized protests with the help of Facebook. During these demonstrations people were protesting high food prices, and this same youth later established a non-member group called April 6. Trade unions and

⁷² Maria Cristina Paciello, *Egypt: Changes and Challenges of Political Transition*, MEDPRO Technical Report No.4/May 2011, 7.

⁷³ Ibid, Ottaway, *Egypt: From Semi-Authoritarianism to One-Dimensionality*, Web Commentary, 25th Feb 2010. In Maria Cristina Paciello, *Egypt: Changes and Challenges of Political Transition*, 10.

professional organizations also had an impact in those social movements.⁷⁴ Poor socio-economic conditions and political recession influenced people, especially the youth of Egypt, and according to some, like Ashraf Khalil for instance, the brutal murder of Khaled Said (ordinary young Egyptian man) by the police politicized Egyptians.⁷⁵

Many scholars have been doing a research on political life of the Arab world, especially Egypt because of its ties with Israel and the U.S. According to some scholars, the Arab world is the only part of the world that does not have democracies, which explains the lack of TCS, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, or active social media. Larry Diamond, for instance, argues that the main reason for a lack of democracy in the region is not due to religion or culture, but maybe due to weak economic development, even though he considers this argument to be very weak as well when comparing the development of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, for example, but in the end he still sticks to the idea of involvement of political economy and recommends to analyze the political structures of Arab countries.⁷⁶ After all sorts of debates among scholars about the Middle East not being able to have a democracy, uprisings occurred across the Middle East, which surprised everyone, and now scholars are debating about the reasons for these uprisings, where some argue about the role of the West, particularly the U.S. being involved in these uprisings, others discuss the future of the region, and whether democracy will come to this region, and what steps to take in this path.

⁷⁴ Nabil Fahmy, *The Politics of Egypt-State Society Relationship*, London: New Fetter Lane, 2002.

⁷⁵ Ibid, Ashraf Khalil, Dispatches From Tahrir: Inside Egypt's revolution and the last days of Mubarak, 3.3.2011, http://www.rollingstoneme.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=94; also The "We Are All Khaled Saieed" Facebook page became one of the main gathering points for the organizers of the protests that forces Mubarak to step down. In Maria Cristina Paciello, *Egypt: Changes and Challenges of Political Transition*, 10-11

⁷⁶ Larry Diamond, *Why are there no Arab Democracies?* Journal of Democracy, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 2010, 94-103.

Egyptians have been facing socio-economic and socio-political issues; poverty, unemployment, corruption were preventing Egypt from developing, and it was obvious that Mubarak's regime could not address any of these issues. Technology influenced people in Egypt and their participation in public spheres; it opened up possibilities for activists to organize, meet, and put their demand forward. Civil society in Egypt has been involved in creating new opportunities for people to participate in public affairs and demands.⁷⁷

While looking at the reasons and causes of the Egyptian uprisings, many scholars in the West talk about the possible role of civil society and democracy promotion programs in the Middle East, also mentioning that civil society cannot exist in the Middle East because there is no democracy and authoritarian government prevents their existence, but in reality civil society groups were always there in many Arabic countries even if with limited activity, Egypt being among the leading ones.⁷⁸ One of the examples is the Center for Trade Union and Workers' Services (CTUWS), which after many attempts of establishing its NGO, registered itself as a civil company with its legal office, even though Mubarak's government did not let this organization to work freely. CTUWS was created as a result of workers' riots in 2006 and 2007 in Egypt through the idea of creating the autonomous national trade union.⁷⁹ So, this shows that even though civil society was not that active and faced challenges, but they still existed in Egypt.

⁷⁷ David Singerman, *Restoring the Family to Civil Society: Lessons from Egypt*, *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 2,1, 32-52.

⁷⁸ Augustus Richard Norton, ed., *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Vol. I and II, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995, 1996 in Carothers and Ottaway, *Funding Virtue: The Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*, 21.

⁷⁹ Joel Beinin and Hossam El-Hamalawy, *Strikes in Egypt Spread from Center of Gravity*, Middle East Research and Information Project, May 9 2007.

There is a variety of transnational and national organizations in the Arab world: some organizations are state-controlled, some of them are set by the government and operate in the West, for example – agricultural cooperatives.⁸⁰ Political parties in Egypt were weakened by Mubarak and his government.⁸¹ In the 1980s and 1990s, moderate Islamists put Mubarak's regime under pressure many times, even though they did not have their own organization or an actual official group. Mubarak's regime was very harsh on IGOs, NGOs, Islamist activists, mostly because only with stability in Egypt would the peaceful relations with Israel continue, and as it is indicated, according to Brouwer, after Israel Egypt is the second largest, civil society assistance recipient from the U.S. Islamists organizations were not happy with this situation, and violence was the only option to fight the regime. In the 1990s, for instance, Islamists attacked and killed many politicians, even tourists, in order to frighten the state.⁸²

The National Democratic Party was the only party to take over all other opposition parties. Muslim Brotherhood, one of the opposing forces, could neither register to neither become a party nor run in the elections; even the Egyptian military did not have a say in the decision who could and who could not compete in elections.⁸³ Through free print media political and social actors tried to have some political influence, because television and radio were controlled by the government. With limited resources and chances, civil society groups kept working in Egypt during Mubarak's time, and Islamist groups had their own share on keeping the government cautious.

⁸⁰ Brouwer Imco, *Weak Democracy and Civil Society Promotion: The cases of Egypt and Palestine*, 22, in Carothers and Ottaway, *Funding Virtue*, 24.

⁸¹ Maye Kassem, *Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

⁸² Ibid, 25.

⁸³ Ibid, 23-24.

As it is already mentioned, the Egyptian government, especially during Mubarak's time, had control over the mass media: foreign publications, like Cairo Times and the Middle East Times, are also subject to censorship.⁸⁴ Television system began in Egypt in 1960s. Egypt had film industry as well as well-financed radio. It was also censored. It is interesting to note that Egypt, in comparison to other Middle Eastern countries, put no restrictions on the Internet access. Hosni Mubarak himself attracted Internet investors from the U.S. Internet connection was achieved in 1993. The next year, Egypt permitted some NGOs, government agencies, professionals to have a free Internet access, and even though Internet was not censored in Egypt at that time, the authoritarian government made it clear what is and what is not an appropriate Internet using. In 2001, scholars pointed out that Egypt did not consider Internet as a threat to its authoritarian regime.⁸⁵

Social media continued to grow till 2011; facebook and twitter had many followers in the Middle East, and this region contributed the largest number of followers of facebook and twitter.⁸⁶ So, it is possible to say that social media was present in Egypt for a long time, which opened up the possibilities of people in communicating with the outside world, and since TCS could not enter Egypt otherwise, they had to use non-traditional methods such as Internet, television, social media. All in all, socio-economic and socio-political events in Egypt were among the pressing issues. Social movements occurred in Egypt before the 2011 uprisings, and civil society organizations are believed

⁸⁴ "Many of the officially foreign publication sold in Egypt are published exclusively for the Egyptian market but are printed in Cyprus because they cannot obtain a domestic license. See "Egypt: A Sign of the Times" Global News Wire, February 1, 2001" in Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, *Open Networks: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule, Closed Regimes*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., 2003, 120- 121.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 122-123.

⁸⁶ *Civil Movements: The Impact of Facebook and Twitter*, Arab Social Media Report, Vol 1, No. 2, May 2011, <http://www.dsg.ae/portals/0/ASMR2.pdf>, 2.

to establish some space for public participation and therefore are believed in creating opportunities for changes. The next part of the chapter will discuss methods of transnational civil society in Egypt, and its connection with the national civil society.

2.3. Transnational Civil Society activities in Egypt

As national civil society, transnational ones were established in Egypt approximately at the same time. According to Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayyid, civil society groups existed in Egypt much before Israel signed peace treaty of 1979 with Egypt in the presence of the U.S., and only after that did America begin to send economic assistance to Egypt, and since then various organizations, labor unions, human rights groups, organizations that provide civic education have been established.⁸⁷

In 1999, the NGO Service Center was created with the help of the U.S. in order to assist civil society groups in Egypt, and its main goal was “to increase the participation of citizens and NGOs in public decision making.” The U.S. supported institutions like Ford Foundations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and many other organizations.⁸⁸ Again, it shows that informally and indirectly the West, especially the United States, have been active in this part of the world, by establishing branches of its international organizations.

Despite all the restrictions, a transnational Arab public sphere was formed due to development of public opinion and transnational communications in the Arab world.

⁸⁷ Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayyid, “Civil Society in Egypt”, in Carothers and Ottaway, *Funding the Virtue.*, 52-53.

⁸⁸ See Brochure of the NGO Service Center (Cairo: The NGO Service Center, 1999) in Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayyid, 59.

Broadcasting station like al-Jazeera began to spread newspapers online after 2003. Technology and Internet, electronic mails helped people in the Middle East to overcome control and censorship. Even though existence of technology, internet, etc., cannot really show that democracy is present in the region, at least it has its own influence on reshaping the Arab politics and its political identity.⁸⁹

Before discussing TCS methods that scholars and journalists look at as reasons for the Egyptian uprisings of 2011, here is a brief background on these uprisings.

The first signs of unrest against the Mubarak regime were visible when the Egyptian people marched against the atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinians in 2000 and 2002, and again in 2003 against the US operations in Iraq, portraying their frustration with the regime's alignment with the US and Israeli governments. In 2003 Egyptians gathered into Tahrir square and marched towards the British and US embassies protesting against Mubarak once again. In 2008 there were more demonstrations against the regime "in the form of violent clashes in response to the rising food prices and the heavy handed police tactics."⁹⁰

The November 2010 elections were also widely boycotted as being rigged and the results completely falsified. On 25th of January 2011, various youth groups organized a protest rally for their dignity and freedom, creating a facebook page. The number of protesters that turned up was staggering, and for the first time, the number of protesters outnumbered the police. Braving the tear gas they marched forward, gathering more people as they continued through Cairo. There were peaceful protests in Alexandria, Aswan and Suez area and the Nile Delta as well. On Jan 28th, another protest was

⁸⁹ Marc Lynch, *Beyond the Arab Street: Iraq and the Arab Public Sphere*, Politics & Society, 2003, 31: 56.

⁹⁰ "Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious?" *Middle East/North Africa Report*, International Crisis Group, No.101, 24 February 2011, 1.

organized, naming that Friday as ‘day of Anger’, but the government resorted to cutting off the internet and phone services. This hardly thwarted the protesters, who congregated after the Friday prayers and carried out the protests. Mubarak appeared on public television for the first time since the protest began and promised to disband the cabinet members and work towards speedily reforming the situation of the poor and take the necessary steps towards democracy.⁹¹

The protesters continued to mass into Tahrir square, demanding Mubarak to step down, which he did not respond at all. The protesters by now had occupied the city center and with the local police disbanded, the Army rolled in. Although their intentions were unclear, they were given a hero’s welcome. They were now the country’s effective authority. “On February 1st, a ‘million man march’, injected life into the protests as did the military’s declaration, the preceding day, that it supported the protesters’ “legitimate demands” and would not use force against the people. However, when pro-Mubarak demonstrators took to the streets there was complete chaos. Mubarak then gave his second speech, when he said that he would not run for the 2011 elections and would step down. This calmed the protesters to a certain extent.⁹²

The state media then resorted to stepping up its campaign against the protesters. They then claimed that the protests were mainly due to foreign meddling by US, Iran and Israel with an intention to destabilize Egypt. Despite the xenophobia and the internal fighting, the protesters continued to occupy Tahrir square, suffering multiple casualties, which only strengthened their resolve. On February 3rd a committee of ‘wise men’ was set up which included diplomats, journalists, intellectuals, Egypt’s richest businessmen

⁹¹ Ibid, 2-3.

⁹² Ibid, 7-10.

and other prominent figures to put forth a proposition to Mubarak, which he rejected. The occupancy of the famous square continued and on February 10th, Mubarak announced that he would transfer some of his powers to the vice president and that he intended to reform six amendments of the constitution. The military was the only mediator between Mubarak and the crowd, and on February 11th Mubarak's power was transferred to the military, and he stepped down,⁹³ so this is how Hosni Mubarak's time ended.

Today, journalists talk about the success of social media in the uprisings of 2011, and that if it was not for the media, Internet, and facebook, Egyptians would never have gathered on the streets and would never have accomplished anything they have gotten today. People talk about the "Facebook Revolution" which assisted Tunisians and Egyptians in their fight.⁹⁴ It is known that before the January 25th, Egyptians created facebook page and this is how the news of gathering in Tahrir square got spread.

Marwan Bishara writes that Egyptians have been using all sorts of social media tools much before the social upheavals; in the survey, about 60% of people confirmed that they had email addresses, had access to computers, and he writes "the Arab Youth increasingly comprise a modern, transnational tribe that bypasses borders, religions and social strata... Thanks to the information revolution and its twin byproducts 'new media' and 'social media', Arab youth have developed their own social and cultural codes and jargon."⁹⁵ Bishara also talks about bloggers, mentioning that during and after the uprisings of 2011 bloggers were seen as political actors, and state was afraid of them. The

⁹³ See Reuters, 10 February 2011, in *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious?* Middle East/North Africa Report, International Crisis Group, No.101, 24 February 2011, 11-13.

⁹⁴ E.B. Boyd, *How Social Media Accelerated the Uprising in Egypt*, 01.31.2011, <http://www.fastcompany.com/1722492/how-social-media-accelerated-the-uprising-in-egypt>

⁹⁵ Marwan Bishara, *The miracle generation*, February 12th 2012, al-Jazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/02/201221115445887473.html>

main goals of bloggers and ‘citizen-journalists’ (protesters with smart phone, cameras, laptops) were to fight censorship, and expand public debate.⁹⁶ Bishara writes on this matter, stating that social media helped the social uprisings just by making it happen faster but no more than that, whereas other journalists consider social media to be the key player in the uprisings.

Before the uprisings began, Egyptians used phones and internet to spread the word about it, but according to the Arab Social Media Report, Internet blackouts happened in Egypt from January 28th till February 2nd,⁹⁷ so it was people who continued their fights on the streets. The growth and development of satellite TV channels, like Al-Arabiya, Al-Jazeera brought changes to the Arab world: the flow of news and information from the Western world could easily get to the Middle East via these transnational news networks, and the problems and issues of the Arab world could easily reach the Western media as well, and as a result, this helped the civil society in the Arab countries become active, especially in the late 2003. Al-Hail, for example, also argues that with the growth of satellite broadcasting enabled the Arab world to be aware of civil society.⁹⁸ So, civil society awareness grows with the establishment and spread of satellite television network in the Arab world.

In the last ten or eleven years, the civil society in Egypt led by youth has increased rapidly, and the number of NGOs, student clubs, association brought significant changes to the youth organizations, and one of such examples could be the Youth

⁹⁶ Ibid, Bishara.

⁹⁷ *Civil Movements: The Impact of Facebook and Twitter*, Arab Social Media Report, Vol 1, No. 2, May 2011, <http://www.dsg.ae/portals/0/ASMR2.pdf>, 3.

⁹⁸ Al-Hail, *Civil Society in the Arab World: The Role of Transnational Broadcasting. The age of New Media: The Role of Al-Jazeera Satellite T in Developing Aspects of Civil Society in Qatar*. TBS Archives, Issue 4, Spring, 2000, <http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Spring00/Articles4/Al-Hail/al-hail.html>, 4.

Association for Population and Development. This youth uses media as a tool of expressing itself and passing on their messages. Lack of funds is the main challenge of these youth-led organizations, but at least they are able to get attention of international activists.⁹⁹ International organizations have been attracted to the Arab world for a long time. The United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV), for example, has been in Egypt since 1988, and the UN has been promoting volunteerism development through this UNV programme.¹⁰⁰ Media coverage has been working in favor of national non-state actors, because this is one of the ways of attracting international attention while making their problems heard worldwide.

According to the Worldwide NGO Directory, Egypt has more than 100 international organizations, and probably more than 15,000 local non-state organizations (the actual number is not known since many NGOs had to go through a long process of registration in order to be able to perform civil work in Egypt).¹⁰¹ Organizations like Arab Organization for Human Rights, Development and Institutionalization Support Center, Al-Jazeera Association for Community Development and many other transnational organizations have been working in Egypt. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Egypt has been active in the country only since the social uprisings, and until the end of 2012, this organization will concentrate on the following items: monitoring effective political participation, transparency and accountability, promotion of human rights, social justice, and local development.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Ehaab Abdou, Young Egyptians: An Untapped Resource, in Egypt Human Development Report 2012, 8, <http://www.undp.org.eg/Portals/0/EHDR%202010/NHDR%202010%20english.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Leticia Tronsoco, UNV/Egypt, Youth, Volunteerism and Development in Egypt, 16.

¹⁰¹ WANGO, Worldwide NGO Directory, North Africa: Egypt, <http://www.wango.org/resources.aspx?section=ngodir&sub=list&newsearch=1®ionID=15&col=8AC2E8>

¹⁰² UNDP, Egypt, <http://www.undp.org.eg/>.

So, according to some scholars and journalists, Egyptians have been using all sorts of media for a long time, and the knowledge about civil society came from the spread of satellite television. According to others, social media have had a little impact on the Egyptian uprisings. It is also important to note that national NGOs looked for transnational ones in order to attract attention to their problems and issues from the outside world. So, the main question of this thesis is whether there has been any transnational involvement on the uprisings in Egypt, and the next chapter will discuss the results and analysis of the interviews with national and transnational non-profit organizations conducted in Egypt, and based on that I will try to answer this question.

Chapter 3: The impact of TCS on social upheavals Results and Analysis

In this section of the thesis I will focus on the information gained from the interviews conducted with both national and transnational NGOs, and a young artist in Egypt in order to investigate whether there was an effective TCS involvement in the Egyptian uprisings. If there has been TCS involvement, I am also interested in finding out how the TCS involvement was effective, and was it a success story? In the previous chapter I talked about civil society and TCS's methods in Egypt, showing that national and transnational civil society actors had already been present in Egypt before the uprisings of 2011.

3.1. Results of the interviews

I conducted in-person interviews with NGOs and a young writer-activist were conducted in Egypt. In total, eight national NGO members, two transnational organization members, and one young writer were interviewed. Among the national NGOs there were the ones related to human rights, socialist youth organizations, organizations related to women rights and promotion of cultural exchange, for example One Word Foundation, Union of Egyptian Socialist Youth, Socialist Youth Organization – Eltagamoa, Andalus Itas, and others. Their main activities have been daily meetings discussing social issues, preparing reports and policy briefs, organizing seminars on human rights, women empowerment policies, democracy and many other topics. I have been taking notes while conducting interviews, and when analyzing the answers, I was

looking at the key words which were repeated often. In the interviews, after getting general information about interviewees, their activities before and after the protests of January 2011, about the problems they were and are facing and their general understanding and opinions on TCS, I concentrated on specific questions to understand the main question of the thesis.

First question: how many civil society organizations existed in Egypt before and after the uprisings, and do they have links with the local ones? In the interviews with national NGOs, it was clear from the answers that there were approximately 18,000 national and about 100 transnational organizations before the uprisings of 2011. The number is not exact because it was difficult for many organizations to get registered and get permission to act or perform any type of civil work during Mubarak's time. After the social upheavals, the number of national organizations increased, and the number of TCS is unknown till today; official number is not available.¹⁰³ "Since 1993, only some of TCS organizations have had some connection with the local civil society groups, and TCS that had any links with the local ones were mostly because they needed to understand the local culture, their ideas and opinions about certain issues related to economics or politics; these TCS had links with the national ones because their main missions were mostly to help the youth, especially the poor, to develop socially and intellectually," as a member of ASMAE organization, Abdel Hamid Said pointed out.¹⁰⁴

Second question: what kind of difficulties have national and transnational civil society groups faced so far? There were three main challenges that all types of civil

¹⁰³ Maged Sorour, One World Foundation, (2012, April 21). Personal Interview.

¹⁰⁴ Abdel Hamid Said, Association Soeur Emmanuelle (French TCS - ASMAE), (2012, April 23). Personal Interviews

society have faced in Egypt¹⁰⁵. One of these difficulties was to get permission to register and work free of government pressure, and this issue was tougher during Hosni Mubarak regime.¹⁰⁶ Another challenge transnational and national actors have had is the lack of knowledge about civil society and its work, and due to this, interaction and communication with people was difficult. In his interview, Ahmed Belal mentioned that it was difficult to actually gather people for their meetings, trainings, and seminars, because people simply did not have any idea about socialism, for example.¹⁰⁷ One more challenge that influenced the civil society and its actions in Egypt were the rumors about them being Western spies that were spread by the government itself, and due to this there was mistrust towards them among the people, which therefore prevented them from joining many organizations.¹⁰⁸ (See *table 1*, Appendix I)

Third question: do TCS organizations think they have been influential in the Egyptian uprisings of 2011? By bringing an example of his transnational organization, Abdel Hamid Said argued that they never had anything to do with politics and did they get involved in any demonstrations as representatives of this organization. Another representative of one of the transnational church-based organizations *Caritas*, which deals with poverty, discrimination, and intolerance, Yehia Refaat also pointed out that they never went out to the streets during the Egyptian upheavals, and that the sole mission of their organization was and is to help the poor.¹⁰⁹ The fact that these

¹⁰⁵ See Table 1

¹⁰⁶ This was true for all organizations, just citing a few: Nazra Foundation, One World Foundation, Women and Memory, etc. (2012, April 21-22). Personal interviews

¹⁰⁷ Ahmed Belal, Union of Egyptian Socialist Youth, (2012, April 21). Personal interview

¹⁰⁸ Ahmed Maher, April 6 Movement (2012, April 22). Personal Interview

¹⁰⁹ Abdel Hamid Said, Yehia Refaat (2012, April 23). Personal Interviews

representatives of transnational organizations believe that they did nothing for the uprisings of 2011 was also supported by other national organizations.

Fourth question: do national civil society organizations think they have been influential in the Egyptian uprisings? According to national civil society groups, like Khalid Tallima's *Socialist Youth organization – Eltagamoa* and many others, they had an influence on the uprisings; they made changes in people's minds before the social uprisings by preparing seminars and trainings on various topics on dignity, poverty, democracy and other issues that made people understand their rights and that they should demand them; these national organizations would prepare posters and graffiti paintings on the walls around their cities mocking president or the military or simply showing current life of Egyptians. During these protests youngsters were all on the streets, again kept drawing inspiring paintings on the walls (see *figures 1, 2, 3*), preparing flyers, posters of those who were brutally killed by the police, which encouraged Egyptian youth to demand their rights and take revenge for those who they lost during the first few days of the uprisings.¹¹⁰ The findings are summed up in *table 2* (see Appendix II).

¹¹⁰ Khalid Tallima, Eltagamoa, (2012, April 23). Personal Interview



Figure 1: Graffiti, “Same person, same regime- two different faces”; personal photo taken during my field trip to Egypt, April 2012



Figure 2: Graffiti on the wall in Tahrir square; personal photo taken during my field trip to Egypt, April 2012



Figure 3: “People demand removal of the regime”; personal photo taken during my field trip to Egypt, Borsa area, April 2012

Unordinary information was received from the interview with Ezzat Ameen, a young Egyptian artist – writer. Ezzat began to write after the uprisings of 2011, and he wrote his first book called *Party Couch*, in which he talks about Egyptian people before and after these events and the way the movement of ordinary youth had an impact on the these uprisings. It is interesting to see how young Egyptian views the things happening around him, and how he, and many people like him, considers the 2011 uprisings being simple citizens’ achievement and success. He described the details of how youngsters helped each other during the uprisings: “We built tents and there were days when we did not go home for a few nights, masjids and churches were out medical points and shelters.”¹¹¹ Ezzat stated that only Egyptian youth helping each other could stay together, protecting the Egyptian Museum with the fence made out of humans; their unity was depicted in the pictures when Coptic Christians were protecting Muslims while the latter

¹¹¹ Ezzat Ameen, (2012, April 24). Personal Interview

ones were praying. Ezzat talked little about transnational organizations and their possible influence on the Egyptian uprisings, but mostly believing that success of overthrowing the regime was the accomplishment of Egyptian youth.

Fifth question: do national civil societies need transnational links in order to survive and be successful in achieving their aims (regime change in Egypt)? This is Maged Sorour's reply about his organization; also at the end of the interview he answers the above listed fifth question:

“Our organization, One World Foundation, was established in 2005, by youngsters with background in democracy and governance. Till today we have been dealing with 4 main programs: Women Political Empowerment, freedom, electoral education, study of human rights in democracy. We even have one think-tank. About financial support? Yes, we do get funds from Germany, the United States, multinational organizations, European Commission. In 2010, we had a seminar on “Social Movements and Transnational democracy in the Middle East,” and about 90 speakers were present. We talked about our poverty, the need for freedom, and that it was time for him to leave, but this all was not an intended preparation. And plus, Tunisian revolution did not inspire us at all, because, here in Egypt, we had 5 different cases before when people used to burn themselves which didn't work out. We were tired of poor socio-economic conditions; we were annoyed by police, government and regime. I also want to say that before the revolution we were more active than after the revolution. These days, people do not like NGOs anymore, government keep attacking their offices; people do not trust them saying that they work only in their benefits only. Civil society in Egypt did many things. They know a lot, and they have all types of skills, but the Egyptian civil society needs stability. We

have had many seminars and trainings. All the seminars were attended by new people and members all the time. 3 months before the revolution we trained opposition to new media; we demanded rights for Egyptians outside of Egypt. Some of our members were sometimes sent to other countries, like Serbia, for trainings. I also want to mention that the National Democratic Institute (NDI) is behind most of the revolutions, but not behind the January 25th.”¹¹² It seems that according to Maged Sorour, transnational links helped his organization with trainings, and funding. Findings on the question whether national civil societies need transnational ones to survive are summed up in *table 3* (see Appendix III).

So, based on the interviews the following information was gathered: all civil society groups have been facing difficulties in one way or the other. Five national NGOs out of eight that were interviewed in Egypt stated that they had been influential in the social uprisings, and two transnational ones stated that they had not been involved with anything related to the Egyptian uprisings of 2011. Five national NGOs stated that they would like to have some sort of connection or help from TCS not in order to survive but being able to make changes, and in this case – bringing down the authoritarian regime in Egypt, and TCS could help by bringing new ideas and new thoughts, maybe funds as well. The next section will analyze the results of the interviews.

3.2 Analysis of the interviews

¹¹² Maged Sorour, (2012, April 21). Personal Interview

The main idea of this thesis is to find whether transnational civil society had an impact on the uprisings of 2011 that occurred in Egypt. For the purpose of this thesis, I define ‘impact’ or ‘influence’ as the action that can affect other person’s or a group of people’s behavior and actions. I also define ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ influence of transnational organizations on the uprisings. By ‘direct’ I mean – *open* preparation of citizens for the revolution, going out to the street representing their organizations and protesting. By ‘indirect’ I mean *closed* actions, sometimes support national organizations with funds, and mainly giving them new ideas and thoughts but not going and telling them what exactly to do.

It had been challenging for many TCS groups to work in Egypt before the events of 2011 due to the strict government control, mistrust towards these organizations because of them being ‘spies of the West’ and the lack of an actual knowledge among the local people about civil society work in general. This shows that it would have been difficult for TCS to be engaged in protests under these conditions.

Based on the results from the interviews, it became clear that unemployment, human rights violations, corruption, senses of dignity and pride had more effect on people than being inspired by the Tunisian uprisings, or than being helped by TCS groups. Media and public sphere existed in Egypt before the uprisings of 2011, and on the eve of these events media helped Egyptians to spread the word about it. Also national NGOs have been working with their limited resources among their own people; foreign financial support was received by some of the organizations from multinational organizations or from leading Western countries. Since many NGOs in Egypt are based fully on volunteers, there are a few cases that make some national NGOs want work with the

transnational ones, and these are: funding, new skills and new ideas that they can get from them. As it is also mentioned in the results section of this thesis, five out of eight national NGOs would want to have any connection with transnational organizations, which also shows the significance of TCS.

It is already discussed that civil society groups existed in Egypt before the uprisings, and that Egypt was one of the main financial aid recipient from the U.S. According to the information received from interviewees, civil society came to Egypt due to poor socio-economic conditions that Egypt had been having for the last couple of decades, especially in the years of Mubarak's regime; even though these organizations did not have much influence on these poor conditions of Egypt, they still existed in the country. It also seems that it was difficult to influence population directly due to the lack of knowledge and information about civil society in general, and due to mistrust towards these organizations, thus it looks like TCS did not have a mobilizing power in the case of Egypt. If local NGOs wish to be more active in their society and have larger impact on the socio-economic and socio-political issues of their country, they need to find a way to influence its citizens, maybe in the form of education or trainings.

So, I cannot say that there has been no influence of TCS on the uprisings in Egypt whatsoever according to the fact that some national NGOs received financial aid and trainings, but the fact that most of the national organizations stated that they would want to have connection with other transnational organizations shows that TCS was not really there; they were not involved in the social uprisings. All in all, it looks like there has been indirect influence of transnational networks on the Egyptian uprisings either in the form of financial support to some organizations or in the form of trainings.

Conclusion

Was there any impact of TCS on the Egyptian uprisings, and was this transnational engagement a success story? This was the main research question of this thesis that I tried to answer. The main purpose was to understand whether transnational organizations had any connections with national local organizations that eventually caused the uprisings that occurred in Egypt.

I was looking at the concept of TCS because the concept of civil society is very widespread nowadays, thus I wanted to find out whether there was any transnational influence on the uprisings. I concentrated on the Egyptian uprisings because these were fresh events, and successful in overthrowing the regime of Hosni Mubarak. Egypt also has been the second financial aid recipient from the U.S., and various NGOs, civil society groups existed in Egypt before the uprisings.

Based on different understandings and definitions from various scholars, I defined transnational groups as non-profit actors that are needed in any country in order to attract domestic or international attention to socio-economic or socio-political issues of the country; there are local NGOs that work independently sometimes having transnational links. Civil society is considered to be able to influence people, and mobilize them; civil society actors sometimes are mediators in any conflict between the state and its citizens, including being a third party in social movements.

Poor socio-economic and socio-political conditions, including unemployment, political corruption, lack of institutions, had their influence on the population of Egypt; conditions were becoming unbearable especially in the last decade of Mubarak's reign.

For example, when food prices went up in 2008, Egyptian youth, who later formed various civil society advocacy groups, were the ones to protest against it; labor unions and professional organizations had their impact on social movements as well. This kind of issues brought the politicization of socio-economic conditions, and all this eventually led to the uprisings in Egypt in 2011.

Very little freedom was given to civil society in Egypt; they could not operate actively during Mubarak's regime, which was the main challenge that civil society faced in the country. Technology, all sorts of innovations in media and public sphere made it possible for the population of Egypt to get information on any issue around the world. TCS used media, Internet, television broadcast as main tools through which it could enter the Egyptian society. The presence of Internet, facebook and twitter opened chances for civil society groups to reach broader audience, thus influencing the transnational activism in the country.

In order to get a deeper understanding of TCS impact on social uprisings in Egypt in 2011, interviews with both national and transnational NGOs, and a young writer-activist were conducted in Egypt. It has been challenging for both national and transnational organizations to exist in Egypt due to strict government control, mistrust towards these organizations, and also lack of knowledge about civil society among the population; this all made it difficult for civil society to operate in Egypt. National civil society groups had limited opportunities to operate in the country, even though they used to organize meetings, trainings, express themselves through graffiti paintings on the walls, or creating facebook pages. Only some organizations received financial support from multinational organizations and many of them would want to have transnational

connections. After all, it is not always true that civil society can influence uprisings, and on the example of Egypt it can be concluded that there has been indirect transnational engagement in the uprisings, either in the form of funds or in the form of trainings and seminars, but there has not been direct and open engagement of TCS in the Egyptian uprisings.

Findings of this thesis may affect the already existing literature on social upheavals and its links with transnational civil society in terms of fresh information gained from the interviews that were conducted in Egypt in April of 2012, while social uprisings still continued in the country. Even though civil society can exist in any country, but it does not mean that they always are able to have transnational links and influence people, thus causing them to rise against the regime or any other issue, this is what the Egyptian case can teach us. This research also provided background on the uprisings and their causes from the perspectives of local national and transnational organizations as of 2012, almost a year since the social uprisings started in Egypt. In the future scholars can research in depth either the level of impact of local transnational organizations on local national ones in the uprisings of 2011, or research the links between transnational links with the national ones only. It would be interesting to see the level of involvement of western-educated youth in the uprisings, whether they brought any new fresh ideas and thoughts to their society, and whether they have been active from outside or inside the country. It would be also interesting to find out the formation of Arab youth consciences due to the transnational public sphere.

Appendices

Appendix I:

Table 1: *Challenges that civil society faced before the uprisings in Egypt*

1. Permission to get registered	2. Funds	3. Lack of knowledge among population about civil society
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Appendix II:

Table 2: *National and transnational civil society that believe they have been influential in the Egyptian uprisings* (National NGOs –1 through 8, transnational NGOs –9 through 10)

1	One World Foundation	Yes
2	Andalus Itas	Yes
3	Nazra Foundation	Yes
4	Eltagamoia	No
5	Women and Memory Forum	No
6	Hemaia Center	No
7	Salfayo Costa	Yes
8	Egyptian Socialist Youth Organization	Yes
9	ASMAE	No
10	Caritas	No
Total	National:	5
	----- Transnational:	----- 0

Appendix III:

Table 3: *National NGOs that think they need transnational links to survive*

1. One World Organization	Yes
2. Andalus Itas	No
3. Nazra Foundation	No
4. Eltagamoa	No
5. Women and Memory Forum	Yes
6. Hemaia Center	No
7. Salfayo Costa	No
8. Egyptian Socialist Youth Organization	Yes
Results:	8
YES	5
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NO	3

Appendix IV: List of interviewees

1. Maged Sorour – director of One World Foundation;
2. Ahmed Samih – founder of Andalus Itas;
3. Mozn Hassan – director of Nazra Foundation;
4. Ahmed Belal – journalist at the “El Masry El Youm” newspaper (Egypt Today), Egyptian Socialist Youth organizations;
5. Khalid Tallima – president of Socialist Youth organization – Eltagamoa
6. An activist at the Hemaia Center – Young Organizations Network or The Egyptian Union of Young Human Rights
7. Mohamad Tolba – founder of the Salfayo Costa (established after the uprisings of 2011 to create and spread culture cooperation between political parties and religious groups)
8. A representative of the Women and Memory Forum organization

9. Ezzat Ameen – Egyptian writer, author of the book “Party Couch”
10. Abdel Hamid Said – member of ASMAE organization
11. Yehia Refaat – member of Caritas organization

Appendix V: Interview questions:

- National civil society - NGOs, young writer

1. When did your organization/group begin its work?
2. What is your aim and mission?
3. How many members do you have and who usually joins you (gender, age group)?
4. Do you get any foreign (material/moral/financial) support/aid? If yes, from whom?
5. What kind of activities did you organize before and during the uprisings?
6. In your opinion, what are the main tools uniting and mobilizing people?
7. Does your organization accomplish its goals easily?
8. What inspired you more: socio-economic conditions, Tunisian revolution, or Western support/Western ideas of democracy?
9. Did you and members of your organizations go to the streets on January 25th 2011, and in the preceding days?
10. How would you define “transnational civil society”?
11. Are TCS groups able or capable of mobilizing people?
12. What factors are needed for TCS to achieve their goal?
13. Do you think you brought some changes to the uprisings?
14. Was your organization’s role more important before or during the social uprisings?
15. What is the impact of your organization on uprisings?
16. Can you say that you succeeded in accomplishing your goals?
17. What factors prove the fact that you succeeded or failed? How would you measure your success?
18. Who is the actual force behind the revolution?
19. Today, Egypt is trialing foreign people accusing them in supporting NGOs that possibly had their role in the uprisings. What do you think about it?
20. What do you know about the “youth civic movement Otpor!” (Serbian civil society group)? Did Otpor influence TCS in Egypt? (Otpor’s symbol of ‘raised fist’ can be seen on the banners during the Egyptian uprisings)
21. How many civil society organizations exist in Egypt before and after the uprisings of 2011? How many TCS organizations are there in Egypt, and do they have links with the local ones?
22. When and why these TCS have founded links with the civil ones?
23. What kind of difficulties they have faced so far?
24. Do TCS organizations think they have been influential in the Egyptian uprisings?

25. Do national civil society organizations think they have been influential in the uprisings?
26. Do national civil societies need transnational links in order to survive and be successful in achieving their aims (regime change in Egypt)?

Appendix VI: Interview questions

- Transnational organizations

1. When did your organization/group begin its work?
2. What is your aim and mission?
3. How many members do you have and who usually joins you (gender, age group)?
4. What kind of activities did you organize before and during the uprisings?
5. What, in your opinion, are the main tools uniting, mobilizing people?
6. What factors are needed for TCS to achieve their goal?
7. Today, Egypt is trialing foreign people accusing them in assisting NGOs which apparently had their hands on the start of the uprisings. What is your take on this matter?
8. What is the impact of TCS on the Egyptian uprising?
9. What inspired these young protesters more: socio-economic conditions, Tunisian revolution, or Western support/Western ideas of democracy?
10. How many civil society organizations exist in Egypt before and after the Egyptian uprisings? How many TCS organizations are there in Egypt, and do they have links with the local ones?
11. When and why these TCS have founded links with the civil ones?
12. What kind of difficulties they have faced so far?
13. Do TCS organizations think they have been influential in the uprisings?
14. Do national civil society organizations think they have been influential in the uprisings?
15. Do national civil societies need transnational links in order to survive and be successful in achieving their aims (regime change in Egypt)?

Appendix VII: Interview questions

- A writer-activist

1. Can you tell me about yourself, what and where you studied?
2. Did the uprisings of 2011 affect you? Is it the reason you began to write your famous book?
3. What do you think about the uprisings that occurred in 2011?

4. Do you think civil society groups had any influence in the uprisings of 2011? Was there an outside help?

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