

The Impact of Cyberspace on Arab Societal Security

Social Media as a Model

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Abstract:

The current study aims at investigating the impact of cyberspace through virtual communities and social media on changing the culture and societal identity of individuals. It examines the resulting security challenges which have affected the community security system and its integrity. Given the massive use of social media, there has been a necessity to make efforts and to establish standards within state institutions to regulate this interaction and contribute to formulating laws and legislations to curb this phenomenon, which has been increasing day by day.

Keywords: *community security, cyberspace, social media, cyber challenges, community security system.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Considering the wave of artificial intelligence and the information revolution resulting from rapid technological development and the transformation of communication patterns between individuals and institutions, along with countries' efforts to modernize their systems to keep up with the requirements of the era, there have emerged significant impacts of cyberspace on societal security. This environment now enables individuals to participate in policymaking and formulation, leading to changes in societal security concepts such as identity, culture, and beliefs due to the use of social media. The impact of social media extends beyond freedom of expression, increased knowledge, or building social relationships to potentially affecting the value system of these individuals. This creates an open field for escalating security threats and undermining the stability of societies. Consequently, our research problem is centered around the following question:

The Extent to which community security affects cyberspace? What are the effects of social media on Arabs' identity and values?

- **Section One:** The Concepts of Community Security, Cyberspace, and Social Media.
- **Section Two:** The Impact of Syber Challenges on the Arab Community Security System.
- **Section Three:** The Different Effects of Social Media on the Arabs' Identity and Values.

II. Section One: The Concepts of Community Security, Cyberspace, and Social Media.

1. Definition of Community Security:

In the traditional perspective, security has been linked to how a state uses its power to manage threats to its territorial integrity, independence, and political stability, particularly in the face of other states. Thus, security in this context is merely synonymous with national interest and how to enhance it by relying on military strength. This stems from the fact that security studies developed within the framework of the realist school, which thrived during the Cold War era and monopolized this field of knowledge. (Baldwin, 1995)

Before delving into the aspects of the evolution of the concept of security, it is worth referring to the definition provided by Wolfers Arnold, who states that security, in its objective aspect, means "the absence of threats to acquired values," and in its subjective aspect, it means "the absence of fear that these values will be attacked." Applying this to the Cold War period, these threats were confined to the fears prevalent in the United States and its allies regarding the communist tide and the dangers threatening liberal values. Consequently, European (or Western) studies came to dominate, contributing to the exclusion of a significant portion of humanity and building a racist conception of security. Moreover, they took on a technical character, inclined towards practical aspects, as researchers competed to produce studies that could be used to formulate effective policies to confront the Soviet Union. (Baldwin, 1995)

All this led researcher to draw closer to decision-making circles, which compromised the intellectual neutrality of security studies necessary for researchers to accurately perceive the real-world threats. Involvement in decision-making circles constrained researchers' awareness of new challenges, such as the rampant poverty in the Global South. Combined with weak institutional structures in these countries, this led to ethnic group conflicts over resources. The failure to recognize this new challenge was natural, given that Cold War specialization was one of the factors contributing to the failure to predict the end of the Cold War. This has implications for the traditional conception of security, which lacked the

flexibility to perceive developments in the international system and consequently to formulate appropriate policies for ongoing transformations. Therefore, the concept of societal security, with its dimensions and elements, came to impart a scientific and knowledge-based approach to how international and national measures and strategies are taken to combat social threats and advocate for the establishment of a just security society aiming to achieve a common security identity while eliminating class conflicts within the societal system.

Thus, the risk society is a social theory describing the production and management of risks in modern society, relying on the role of social media and the press in exposing the harms of competing political interests. In the twenty-first century, perspectives began addressing vulnerabilities and forms of harm and disturbance to establish societal security that ensures individual dignity. (Allag, 2017, p104)

2. Definition of Cyberspace:

Cyberspace is considered an important product of information technology and the mechanisms of communication networks in the digital world. Systems and devices such as electronic management programs like the Internet, electronic service systems, and models for processing local and international data and information enhance the quality of public administration services. (Bouhafsi & Sahbi, 2023, p 176)

The adoption of the cyberspace project aims to re-engineer governmental and non-governmental operations by activating modern technologies that improve the quality of public administration and its branches. It creates an environment of digital interaction between individuals, the business sector, and public units, using administrative techniques such as the Internet, electronic planning networks, electronic communication, and electronic systems to enhance the quality of decisions, administrative efficiencies, and increase transparency and legal accountability to strengthen the relationship between citizens and administrations.

Thus, electronic management is a practical result of the applications of information technology, data, and communications imposed by cyberspace to form administrative structures that execute tasks and services electronically. This is done using electronic archives, email, electronic directories and calendars, and others to re-engineer public facility services and government and international relations by transforming services into electronic formats. (Bahloul & Ismail, 2019, p5) It aids in making administrative decisions quickly and accurately, simplifying administrative procedures, and addressing bureaucratic issues such as bribery and administrative corruption to achieve comprehensive administrative development. This ensures the quality of public services in their modern concept, where digitization has become an urgent necessity to meet the increasing demands and needs of the public.

3. Definition of Social Media:

The term social media refers to platforms that enable interaction between people, allowing them to share information, ideas, and data in virtual communities. There are many social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and others.

Therefore, social media sites represent the increasing reliance of individuals on the Internet and cyberspace as a means of entertainment, obtaining news, learning about individuals and communities, and expressing their opinions and ideas. When someone hears another person speak to benefit from others' mistakes, social media can be defined as one of the marketing tools used by companies, youth, and people with new ideas to market their products and services, known as electronic marketing via social media sites.

Coinciding with the fourth millennium, the world witnessed global technological revolutions that increased the rates of progress and prosperity, leading to innovation and the emergence of modern digital inventions and modifications associated with movements of progress, learning, and leadership. Intelligent internet systems, smart computers, and modern technological techniques allow access to semi-fictional scientific breakthroughs. Social media and countless applications are used to accelerate economic growth rates and improve international services, ultimately modernizing the institutional, political, and economic frameworks of countries.

4. Classification of Social Media Sites:

We can classify social media sites in terms of (public accessibility) into two categories:

- Sites that contain individuals or groups of individuals connected by certain social, cultural, or professional frameworks. These sites are considered closed and not accessible to the public.

- Social media sites open to everyone: Anyone with an electronic account can join these sites and choose their friends. Facebook is one of the most prominent examples of these sites.

Some classify social media platforms based on (the form of blogging), including:

- eb-Blogs (Electronic Blogs): Traditional blogs where individuals or groups regularly post entries on various topics.

- Social blogs: Blogs that emphasize social interaction and community engagement, often involving user-generated content and discussions.

- Microblogs: Platforms like Twitter, where users post short updates or messages, typically limited to a certain number of characters.

- Wikis: Collaborative platforms where users can contribute, edit, and modify content collectively, such as Wikipedia.

- Podcasts: Platforms for audio blogging, where users can create and share audio recordings on various topics.

They are also classified according to the means of participation and interaction.

- Blogs for Text Exchange: These appear in the form of owned blogs written by individuals, often supported by images, videos, and links to other websites. Examples include Microblogs, which allow for the exchange of short messages with a limited number of characters.

- Picture-Sharing Websites: These are platforms dedicated to sharing photos, such as Flickr, which allow users to upload, share, and store images.

- Video Sharing Websites: Platforms like YouTube, where users can exchange and upload video files.

- Networks: Examples include Facebook, the most common and widespread, which allows for information exchange, adding friends, and following them. It encompasses all the previous formats, enabling the exchange of text, images, and videos.

III. Section Two: The Impact of Syber Challenges on the Arab Community Security System.

1. Definition of Cyber security:

Cybersecurity is the process of protecting systems, networks, and software from digital attacks that aim to compromise sensitive information systems, disrupt electronic operations, and undermine adversarial electronic activities by implementing a Unified Threat

Management system to accelerate key security functions and processes such as detection, investigation, and remediation.

Governments strive to possess the most robust operational frameworks on how to deal with incomplete and successful cyber-attacks, enabling the formulation of a practical program that defines the nature of electronic attacks, management mechanisms, and solutions requiring smart technology availability. This includes developing intelligent software and technologies to combat viruses and contain their unwanted developments across various sectors such as energy, transportation, and digital systems, accelerating high-speed national services and ensuring protection of sensitive information against computer system breaches and preventing electronic violations and their undesirable evolution, thereby ensuring compliance with regulatory regulations.

Cyber security is crucial for protecting educational and professional systems and combating cybercrimes swiftly and effectively. It aims to develop effective strategies to defend the digital world system, ensuring the continuity of essential operations for national and local governments and companies using high-quality procedures and technologies to protect information and personal data from theft, sabotage, virus transmission, and preventing attackers from accessing sensitive databases, taking all necessary crisis measures to counteract them.

The specialties and tasks of national and international bodies included developing government policies that adhere to frameworks, standards, and controls related to cybersecurity, disseminating them to relevant entities, and updating them. These encompassed:

- a. Cybersecurity controls for social media accounts of entities.
- b. Cybersecurity controls for sensitive cyber space systems.
- c. Cybersecurity controls for cyber computing.
- d. Cybersecurity controls for operating systems.
- e. Setting national standards for encryption.

2. Challenges of Cyber Security on Arab societal Security:

Cyber threats pose a challenge to social services, as their magnitude relates to targeted attacks on electronic systems, networks, and sensitive data across various sectors and administrative institutions. These attacks utilize advanced and sophisticated techniques to manipulate information maliciously, leading to financial losses and undermining the credibility of public administrations. Government systems could potentially compromise citizen privacy and national security. Other sectors also face risks of theft and loss of sensitive information.

Municipalities and departments are crucial sectors in public administration and are increasingly targeted by cybercrimes perpetrated by specialized groups in electronic hacking. These attacks aim to gain control over governmental systems and data. Municipalities are targeted through malicious programs that propagate fraudulent messages, aiming to breach networks and steal data, launching complex cyber-attacks. Their goal is to disrupt and disable information systems essential for public services in a country, leading to the shutdown of essential citizen services such as registry services and certifications. Cyber threats encompass strategies and mechanisms aimed at:

- a. Electronic Penetration: Computer systems and networks of public administration are breached to steal and manipulate sensitive information.

- b. Malicious Software: Includes viruses, spyware, and Trojans used to hack information systems in administration.
- c. Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) Attacks: Government websites are targeted by attacks that cause service collapse and unavailability.
- d. Electronic Attacks: Digital identity data of individuals is stolen and used for illegitimate purposes.
- e. Electronic Piracy Attacks: User accounts on social media or email are hacked and used to spread false information.
- f. Electronic Intrusion: Information systems are infiltrated to steal sensitive information such as personal and financial data.
- g. Digital Transformation and Cyber Piracy: During digital transformation and adoption of artificial intelligence, incidents of administrative file theft and destruction of email have escalated to seriously harm the state.
- h. Dark Web and Citizen Privacy Breach: The dark web relies on hidden, rapid software to impersonate identities and activities remarkably well, turning them into a market for malicious individuals.
- i. Biotechnological Threats and Cybersecurity: Smartphones and biotechnological technologies hold treasures of information, especially if applications allow login/logout like software applied in public administrations to facilitate and enhance public administration services. If someone manages to steal passwords, bureaucratic disasters of unforeseeable severity and impact occur. Penetrating the information network system of administrations leads to phishing attacks aimed at stealing national and credit card data and passports for serious purposes.

IV. Section Three: The Different Effects of Social Media on the Arabs' Identity and Values.

1. Motives for Using Social Media:

There are several fundamental motives that have transitioned the world from the real to the virtual, primarily:

1.1. Family issues:

The family serves as a protective shield for individuals, providing them with security, welfare, stability, and reference. The absence of this integrated environment can lead to social disturbance and emotional deprivation, making individuals resort to social media platforms.

1.2. Boredom and seeking entertainment:

Boredom resulting from poor time management, or its effective utilization drives individuals to endlessly search for applications to occupy themselves and to seek many friends through social networks.

1.3. Curiosity:

Curiosity creates a virtual world filled with ideas and innovative technologies that attract individuals to experiment with and use in daily life. Social media platforms strongly attract individuals to the virtual world.

1.4. Networking and forming friendships:

Social media platforms attract many friends from various social classes, bringing them together through social links and values, sometimes by providing opportunities for acquaintanceship and building relationships among individuals. (Toubal, 2021, pp 82-84)

2. Impact of Social Media on Cultural Identity:

Identity refers to the collection of characteristics that distinguish something or someone from others, whether individuals or groups. Each identity comprises several elements that constitute a dynamic entity moving through various stages, highlighting some aspects in one phase and others in another. The term "identity" is commonly used to describe a person expressing their individuality on one hand, and their relationship with the community they belong to on the other, such as religious, national, or cultural identity. Several elements can crystallize a collective identity, including shared land, history, language, culture, and other factors. These national identities have evolved historically, naturally due to events, conflicts, and changes within societies.

With the rapid technological advancements and their widespread use in all aspects of modern life, identities in general, and Arab identity in particular, have been significantly affected. Arab identity is based on belonging to the characteristics of the Arab nation, its components, and its essence (national language, cultural symbols, shared values, common history, and shared destiny). This affiliation can be spiritual, political, or both. (Al-Darwi, 1999) These characteristics that distinguish Arab identity from others are now threatened in the digital transformation era and the dominance of virtual societies.

The relationship between identity and the use of social media is one of the most important issues of concern, especially with technological transformations in the era of globalization, which have given rise to what is known as social networking sites. These sites have facilitated the transfer of some cultural symbols to a Westernized context, posing a threat to Arab identity and culture. This is evident in the youth adopting Western fashion, ideas, and communication styles, among other issues that are reshaping the Arab cultural system. Diagnosing the reality of identity in light of its use in social media applications like Facebook and TikTok is crucial as these platforms serve as points of contact for cultures and identities among individuals of the same ethnicity and different races. This situation is experienced across various fields of life, with aspects of cultural globalization manifesting their impact on Arab cultural identity.

Cultural globalization has had a significant impact on Arab cultural identity, penetrating the specificities of Arab society and its principles, with social media platforms becoming attractive factors for university students in various areas of life. The educational effects include the prevalence of consumerist, individualistic, and selfish culture, alienation of individuals from their communities, the spread of sexual culture, violence, pornography, and unregulated freedom.

V. Conclusion:

Despite the positive impact that the cyberspace and social media have had on reshaping social, political, and cultural aspects of life, increasing their benefits, facilitating relationships between individuals and institutions, and directing countries towards adopting artificial intelligence to manage various administrative and social life requirements through electronic systems, they are still vulnerable to hacking and the risks of cyber terrorism, with severe consequences. These threats not only jeopardize national security but also threaten social cohesion through the diverse dangers posed to cultural environments and social upbringing due to the expansion and development of cyberspace.

Dealing with these impacts requires growing awareness and keeping pace with the evolution of this space in its various cultural, social, and familial dimensions. It can be

addressed by embracing the gains of globalization, especially in the scientific and technological realms, while emphasizing Arab cultural identity, instilling values of loyalty and belonging to the Arab community, and nurturing future generations with proper education that reinforces tolerant Islamic values and confidence in Arab society and its cultural uniqueness.

Efforts should be maximized to leverage the positives of cultural globalization, seize scientific and technological opportunities, and deploy them across all fields to keep pace with and align with the global scientific and technological revolution. This approach aims to elevate the Arab world to a distinguished position among nations and societies without compromising its Arab identity and social security.

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