THE IMPACT OF INTERNET USE ON SAUDIS IN TERM OF TRUST IN THE POLICE AND ARMY

by

Majed Mohammed Almutairi

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Jason Reineke, Chair

Dr. Ken Blake

Dr. Larry Burriss

ABSTRACT

The Egyptian police played a major role in fighting the protesters during the Egyptian Spring. In contrast, the Egyptian army played a major role in maintaining stability during the revolution (Frisch, 2013). The current study takes those facts into account and examines the impact of the internet on Saudis in terms of trusting the Saudi police and the Saudi army as well as the impact of the political news through the internet in terms of trusting the police and the army. This study relies on a 2011 survey by Arab Barometer of a representative sample of 1,404 Saudis, during the Arab Spring movement. The results of this study found that the internet had no impact on the trust that Saudi Arabian citizens have in their police and army. In contrast, the political news through the internet had a negative impact on the trust that Saudi Arabian citizens placed in their police and army.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The media serve as a major vehicle through which people across the globe access information about other cultures and global news. The media play a significant role in shaping the public's opinion. According to Kraidy and Mourad, Saudi Arabia is the largest media market in the Middle East (2014). Moreover, there are an estimated 18 million internet users in Saudi Arabia (Middle East Internet Usage Stats, 2014), amounting to roughly 66.9 % of the country having access to the Internet. Among the 66.9 % who have access to the Internet, 1.9 million of them are active Twitter users, making Saudi Arabia the world's fastest-growing Twitter nation (Bennett, 2013). According to the Arab Social Media Report, 47% of all tweets in the Arab region stem from Saudi Arabia (Arab Social Media Report, 2013). Also, there are more than 5 million Saudi users on Facebook (Middle East Internet Usage Stats, 2014).

Saudi Arabia's official name is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is the largest Arab country in Asia and the second largest Arab country after Algeria in the world. Saudi Arabia covers an area of approximately 2,149,690 km²/830,000 mi². Saudi Arabia was formed in 1932 by Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud (Mabon, 2012). Saudi Arabia is a highly revered country for Islam, because it is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and houses the city of Mecca, where adherent Muslims worldwide face to pray five times daily. The law and constitution of Saudi Arabia is Shari'a (Islamic doctrine) and the Sunna, (the tradition of the prophet) both of which organize Saudis daily life. The Saudi Arabian flag contains Al-Shahadah (the Oath to God). Mecca and Madinah are in Saudi Arabia, the

two holiest cities in Islam, making Saudi Arabia the central point for over a billion Muslims worldwide. All of these factors coordinate and affect the daily lives of the people in Saudi Arabia (Saudi Embassy, 2015).

The Arab Spring, "the most significant events of the new millennium" (Du, 2015, p.1), started in 2011 in many countries in the Middle East, particularly Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. In those countries, many news platforms covered the revolution. Facebook and Twitter were the major sources that people looked to for news of the Arab Spring. People of Saudi Arabia seem to have a strong interest in looking for political news and regional news in general. Moreover, the internet is one of the major sources people from Saudi Arabia are looking at for the news. The current study seeks to understand the impact of the internet in terms of trust in government institutions among Saudis, in particular the police and the army.

Saudi Police, as a national public security apparatus, is overseen by the Ministry of the Interior (MOI). The MOI was established after King Abdul-Aziz, the founder of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, united the kingdom (MOI, 2017). The objectives and responsibilities of the MOI are to achieve security and provide safety for citizens of Saudi Arabia and its visitors, as well as fighting crime and providing security for pilgrims travelling to Mecca. The ministry also reinforces security relationships with neighboring Arab countries (MOI, 2017).

The Saudi Military is the armed force in Saudi Arabia and was also formed by King Abdul-Aziz as a modern army. After the military organization, he established the branches of the armed forces: air force, navy, air defenses and ballistic missile forces.

Those branches are overseen by the Ministry of Defense (MOD, 2017). However, the Saudi public seems to pay most attention to news about the army, and the media in Saudi Arabia tends to focus on the army news when covering the military. Fourteen percent of news broadcasting on Saudi Television is military news (Hudson and Swindel. 1988) and 8 percent of the stories in the newspapers in Saudi Arabia are about the army (Ghobrial and Wilkins. 2014). However, the Saudi army was built not to transform the society but to maintain the stability of the existing society (Cronin, 2013). In 2007 Saudi Arabia spent more than 33 billion US Dollars on the military, which made Saudi Arabia eighth in the world for spending on the armed forces (Dubai, 2009).

The current study relies on a survey of 1,404 participants conducted during the Arab Spring. There will be four hypotheses in this study. The first examines the impact of internet use on Saudis in terms of trusting the police, where the second examines the impact of the political news through internet on Saudis in terms of trusting the police. The third hypothesis examines the impact of the internet on Saudis in term of trusting the army, where the fourth hypothesis examines the impact of political news through internet on Saudis in term of trusting the army. The relationship between demographic factors and trust will also be examined. The hypotheses are based on the expectation that those who follow political news through the internet will know what happened in Egypt during the Arab Spring and they will see the situations as similar. Moreover, the Egyptian police suppressed the protester and the Egyptian army supported the protester. For that facts Saudi citizen if they exposed to the news that covered the Arab Spring will trust the Saudi army more than the Saudi police.

This study aimed to determine whether the level of trust in the Police and the Army increased or decreased because of the internet in general, whether the level of trust in the Police and the Army increases or decreases because of the political news from the internet in particular, and whether the difference in demographic factors, including gender, age, level of education, urban or rural residence, employment status, income, and religious denomination, has any further impact on the results.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Trust in context

The most relevant study has been done by Gulizar Haciyakupoglu (2015) in "Social Media and Trust During the Gezi Protests in Turkey" Gezi is a revolution that is often compared to the Arab Spring. Haciyakupoglu focuses in his article on trust in the context of the news conveyed by different information sources during the protests.

Through interviews, he found that "social media became the main source of information, and thus the ways in which to invest trust in online sources and channels of information became an imperative issue" (Haciyakupoglu, 2015, p.455). Moreover, trusting the person behind the information lead to trust the platform itself.

The source of credibility

Another relevant study is "Source Credibility during the Gulf War: A Q-Study of Rural and Urban Saudi Arabian Citizens" by Al-Makaty and Boyd (1994). These researchers designed a study that depends on two Saudi groups: each group had different perceptions of the relative credibility of information. The first group clustered was composed pf those who seemed to "have had more experience with other cultures" (Al-Makaty et al, 1994).

The second group clustered included those who seemed "to place a high degree of trust with people they know" (Al-Makaty et al, 1994). They found that people who seem to trust people they know tend to trust audio cassettes as a source of information, while broadcast media was favored over print media among both groups.

The Egyptian's spring

Hillel Frisch (2013), in his article "The Egyptian Army and Egypt's Spring" explains how the police and army interacted during the Egyptian revolution. He says that "the build-up of the police hardly proved to be an effective investment. The Central Security Forces, the principal arm of the regime against internal dissent, failed dismally in protecting the regime in the face of massive demonstrations that broke out on 25 January 2011" (Frisch, 2013, p.183).

In contrast, he says that "Egypt's military has played a critical role in transforming potentially revolutionary situation with potentially dire consequences in the military itself" (Frisch, 2013, p.200). He argues that the police played a major role working against citizens, while the army protected the country during the revolution.

Internet censorship in the Arab Spring seen from China

Ying Roselyn Du (2016), in her article "Same Events, Different Stories: Internet Censorship in the Arab Spring Seen from China" found how China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan framed the Arab Spring news through the internet. Every country follows its level of press freedom. Du, designed her study based on the Framing theory. She sought to know how the three regions are covered the Arab Spring and examined the media's perspectives in all these countries, which will be along with the protesters' perspective and that of the government.

Du argued that her study was different from the other framing studies, which focus on the framing of issues that are relevant to the media`s country in a one way or

another. She cited other studies that show how the Chinese and American news were framing the visiting of the Chinese president to the United States or how Chinese and Hong Kong news were covering the Hong Kong Handover, a revolution that happened in 1997, often compared with the Arab Spring. The difference in her study was that it analyzed the Arab Spring and its framing in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, countries that do not directly relate to the events. Also, those countries have a different level of press freedom: Taiwan is the freest among them and China the strictest.

Du's research question was how Arab Spring news was framed in the three foreign countries. However, she found that all countries "adopted significantly different overall news perspectives" (Du, 2015, p.107). Moreover, every media outlet stands with its ideological controls. Chinese media chose to stand with the government perspective and not to cover the news that is favorable toward the uprising. Media in Hong Kong and Taiwan were more favorable toward the protesters. She concludes that media is often promoting the interests of its owners. Also, she states that "The Internet has played a crucial role in the Arab Spring. Despite the tight regulation of Internet connection providers" (Du , 2015, p.112). The protesters can easily videotape the protests and upload it to the internet.

The internet in Saudi Arabia

Another study that is relevant to the current study is written by Khalid M. Al-Tawil (2001). In his article "The Internet in Saudi Arabia," he describes the history of the internet in Saudi Arabia and its censorship. He said that internet connectivity starts in

1993 in the King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM), through the college of computer Sciences and Engineering. The internet was provided from the Portal company in the United States. Two years later, in 1995, KFUPM switched their connection from the Portal company to King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) was connected from King Faisal Specialist Hospital, which was connected from Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD, USA. Three years later, in late 1998, KACST connected to Saudi Telecommunications Company (STC). STC then became the internet providers to Saudi Arabia. In February 1999, the internet services were made public through STC. To provide the internet to the public, STC extended its network through several multi-billion dollar projects.

Al-Tawil said the biggest concern with giving the public access to the internet was that the internet could affect the Saudi's cultural and religious values, as well as issues of national security. For these reasons, the government of Saudi Arabia censored the internet. Al-Tawil also explained the censorship procedure. He said that "All international WWW traffic must go through the main proxy server at Internet Services Unit, which will keep a log of this activity. Only the ISPs proxies are allowed to connect to the ISU proxy" (Al-Tawil , 2001, p.630). Through this process, the Saudi government allows only information that does not affect cultural or religious values or national security.

#Hashtags for change

Another relevant study is called “Can Twitter Promote Social Progress in Saudi Arabia” by Irfan Chaudhry (2014). Chaudhry explored the use of the internet among Saudi citizens. He researched the regulation of the internet in Saudi Arabia trying to see to what extent the government controls internet access.

He found that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had controlled the access to the internet through the Internet Services Unit, a department that control and censure the internet access. (ISU) is under the umbrella of King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, a scientific government institution that supports and enhances scientific applied research. However, the reasons that (ISU) provided on their web page was:

> The Internet Services Unit oversees and implements the filtration of web pages in order to block those pages of an offensive or harmful nature to the society, and which violate the tenants of the Islamic religion or societal norms. This service is offered in fulfillment of the directions of the government of Saudi Arabia and under the direction of the Permanent Security Committee chaired by the Ministry of the Interior (Internet Services Unit, n.d., para. 1).

Chaudhry believes that the government goes way beyond these reasons. He states that “Anyone who speaks up against the ruling Saudi government is liable to be punished under the laws on the use of technology” (Chaudhry, 2014, p.948). Because there were more than 13 million internet users in Saudi Arabia (Middle East Internet Usage Stats, 2013), he wants to examine one of its social platforms, in particular, Twitter.

The main reason for choosing Twitter was because most of its accounts are open and there is no need for special access to see and examine the conversations between users. Another reason was that Twitter has a way of searching for the keywords using

“hashtags.” Chaudhry claims that social media played a significant role in the Arab spring which leads the people of Saudi Arabia to divide their opinions between those who demand an open social network space and those who want more restrictions. He further examines one of the famous hashtags in Saudi Arabia #Women2Drive. A social movement started in June 2011in Saudi Arabia to enable women to drive. The #Women2Drive, was utilized for all tweets connected to the campaign.

Chaudhry found that the internet and social media, in particular, can make a political change and both citizens and the government seek to make that change. Even though the government is not concerned about political protests after the “Day of Rage” incident. In this incident an active protester launched a Facebook page encouraging the people of Saudi Arabia to go protest on a specific day to promote social and political changes in government policy. Only one person showed up and was arrested by the authorities.

Coverage of the Arab Spring in Saudi newspapers

Ghobrial and Wilkins (2014), in their article “The politics of political communication: competing for news discourses of the 2011 Egyptian protests” analyze the newspapers' coverage of the Arab Spring from four countries: Egypt, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and the United States of America.

In Saudi Arabia, the sample was Al Riyadh newspaper. They chose Al Riyadh due to the fact that it is “the first daily newspaper published in Saudi Arabia since 1965, with a circulation of about 150,000” (Ghobrial et al, 2014, p.138). They analyzed Al Riyadh for

13 days and found that 8% of the stories were about the army and 7% about the police. Even though the percentage looks small, it was the most coverage of the army compared with newspapers in Egypt, Tunisia, and the United States of America. Al Riyadh is the newspaper that frames the most protestors as victims and peaceful, with a percentage of 15%. Even though the percentage looks small, it was the most coverage of the army compared with newspapers in Egypt, Tunisia, and the United States of America.

Rationale and hypotheses

Haciyakupoglu (2015) found that social media became the main source of information during the revolution, Al-Makaty et al. (1994) found that Saudis interacted in different ways to search for information during the Gulf War, Du (2016), argued that every media outlet's coverage of certain issues depends on its region's regulation, Al-Tawil (2001), states that the internet can affect the Saudi's cultural and religious values as well as issues of national security, Chaudhry (2014), found that the internet and social media, in particular, can make a political change and both citizen and government seeking that change, and Frisch (2013) writes that police play a major role in working against Egyptians. These studies suggest people from Saudi Arabia looking to the internet as a credible source of information, resulting in a lack of trust for the police. The first and second hypotheses for this study are:

H1: Greater internet use will tend to be associated with diminishing trust in public security (the police).

H2: Greater internet use for political news will tend to be associated with diminishing trust in public security (the police).

The third and fourth hypothesizes relied on these studies, as well as Frisch's (2013) conclusions regarding the military when he states that the military plays a major role in protecting the country. It is conceivable that that people from Saudi Arabia who rely on the internet as a credible source of information will know how the Egyptian army protected Egypt and its people, and might be more likely to trust the army as a result. The third and fourth hypotheses in the current study are:

H3: Greater internet use will tend to be associated with greater trust in the armed forces (the army).

H4: Greater internet use for political news will tend to be associated with greater trust in the armed forces (the army).

The study will further examine whether demographic factors significantly affect the trust or not. This study will examine the effects of gender, age, level of education, urban or rural residence, employment status, income, and religious denomination on the level of trust placed on police and the armed forces. The reason of chosen these demographic factors are because there is no significant deference between Saudi citizen.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Method

The current study uses information from a survey conducted by Arab Barometer, an organization made up of Arab and American scholars established in 2005. Arab barometer joined in partnership with the Arab Reform Initiative in 2010 to launch the second wave of a national survey in more than 10 Middle Eastern countries. One of those countries was Saudi Arabia. They survey seeks to measure the citizen's attitudes and behavior toward trusting government institutions, measure the citizen's media activity and usage, and report citizen's demographic factors. According to Arab Barometer, "This second phase is funded by the Canadian International Research and Development Centre (IDRC), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP)" (Arab Barometer, 2016).

The survey was conducted in Saudi Arabia face to face in Arabic by local researchers. Those researchers are supervised by a Ph.D. Candidate, Saud Alsarhan. The survey was conducted between January, 5th, 2011 to February, 6th, 2011 and from March, 26th, to April, 9th, 2011 (Second Wave code book, 2016).

Sampling, procedures, and participants

Participants (N = 1404) were Saudis selected by a complex sample design, which included stratification and clustering. The survey was stratified by five regions: 20% from the east; 28% from the west; 19% from the south; 3% from the north; and 30% from the center. The stratification was further divided into urban and rural areas. The survey`s

participants were selected randomly from each stratification by a cluster of 10 (Second Wave code book, 2016).

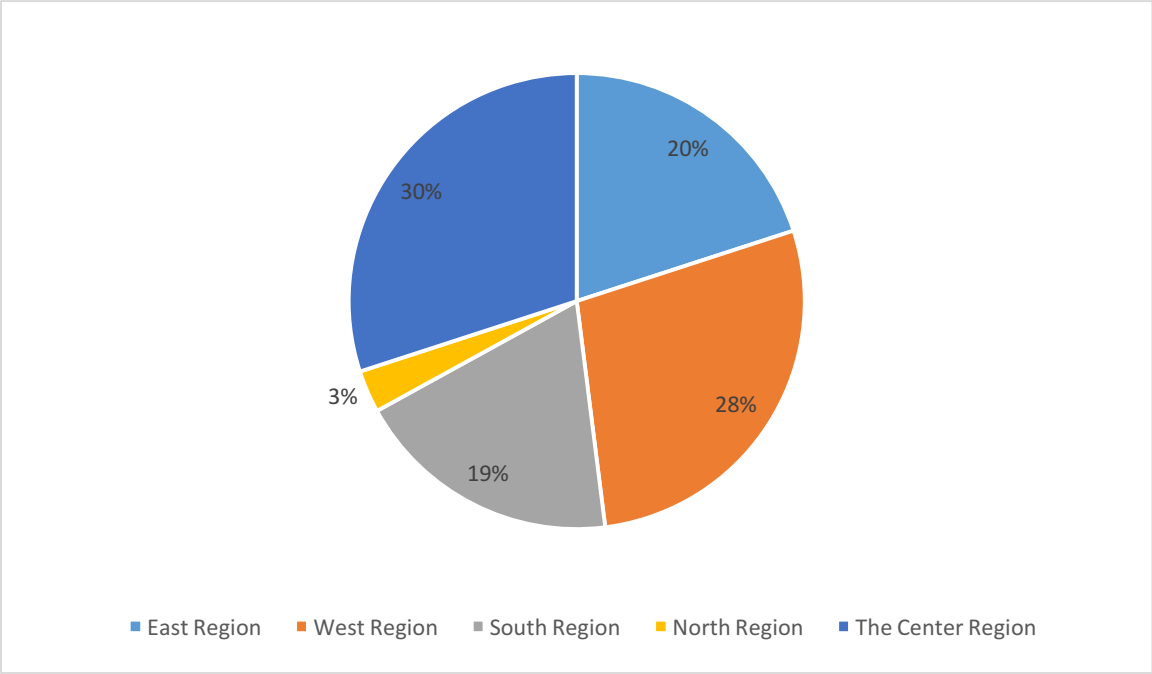

Figure 1. The Sample by Regions

Out of the 1404 participants in the survey, 50% (697) reported being female and 50% (707) male. The average age given was 37.52 years (SD = 12.569, Min = 18, Max = 84). 91.5% (119) of the participants reported being urban and 8.5% (1285) rural. 47% (662) of the sample not employed and 53% (742) of them employed. The monthly income was asked in Saudi Real then converted to 2011 US Dollars, and the average was 2,659 US Dollars per month (SD = 3645.41, Min 186.13, Max = 79770). Finally, the participants were asked to indicate which religious denomination they belong to. There were five denominations in the survey: Hanbali, Sunni, Shafi`i, Shi`ite and Jaafari. In fact,

Sunni represents the majority religious denomination in Saudi Arabia, and Hanbali and Shafi`i are subsects of Sunni. Also Shi`ite represent the minority religious denomination in Saudi Arabia, and Jaafari is a subsect of Shi'ite. Due to the fact that Hanbali and Shafi`i are included in Sunni and Jaafari is included in Shi'ite, I recoded the religious denominations into two groups, "Sunni" and "Shi'ite". 96.5% (1345) of the participants reported being Sunni and 3.5% (49) Shi'ite. Figure 2 represents demographic identity in more detail:

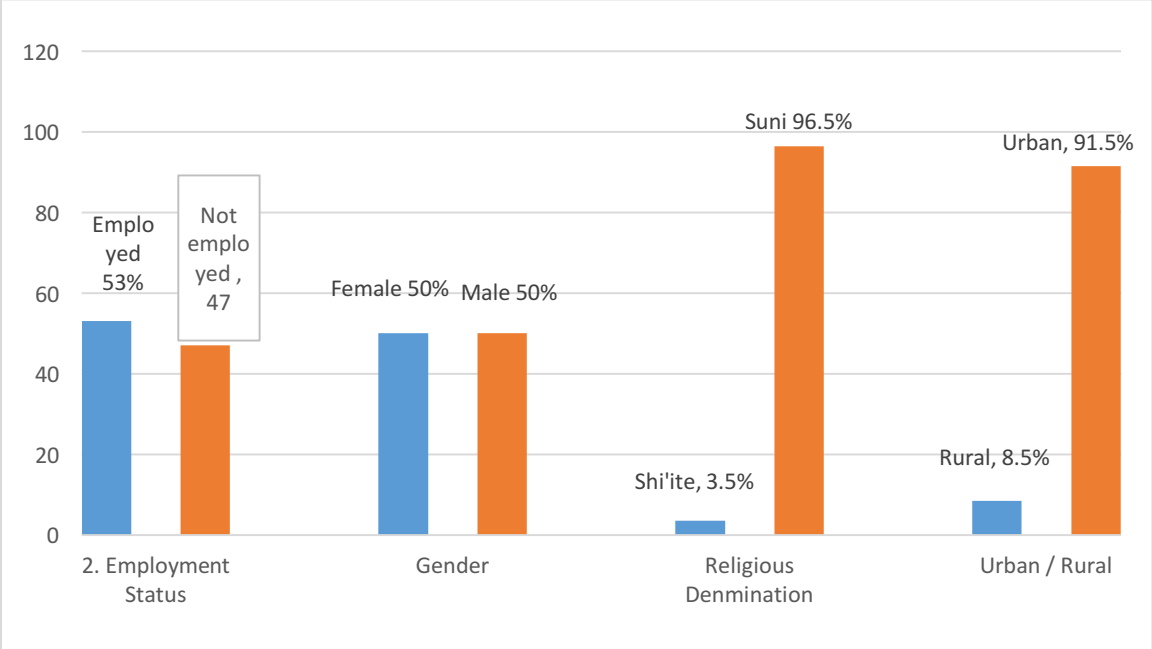

Figure 2. Demographic Identity of the Current Survey Participants (N = 1404)

Level of education was assessed on a scale where 1 indicated "illiterate/literate," 2 "elementary," 3 "preparatory/ basic," 4 "secondary," 5 "mid-level," 6 "BA," 7 "MA." (M = 4.33, SD = 1.655). Look to table 1 for more details.

Table 1. Education Identity of the Current Survey Participants (N = 1404)

	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate/Literate	122	9%
Elementary	116	8%
Preparatory/ Basic	114	8%
Secondary	399	28%
Mid-Level	167	12%
BA	443	32%
MA	43	3%
Total	1404	100

The survey was designed to measure public opinion about certain topics such as political issues, economic status, religious matters, and trust of government institutions. In terms of trust of government institutions, one of the questions was, "to what extent you trust those institutions, public security (the police) and the armed forces (the army)" on a scale where 1 indicated "I trust it to a great extent," 2 "I trust to medium extent," 3 "I trust it to a limited extent," 4 "I absolutely do not trust it." However, I re-coded the answers in order to measure the trust into a scale where 1 indicated "I absolutely do not trust it," 2 "I trust it to a limited extent," 3 "I trust to a medium extent," 4 "I trust it to a great extent." The results for "the police" was (M = 3.35, SD = .810) and the results for "the army" was (M = 3.47, SD = .781).

Participants were also asked “how often you use the internet” on a scale where 1 indicated “daily or almost daily,” 2 “at least once a week,” 3 “at least once a month,” 4 “a few times a year,” 5 “I don’t use the internet.” However, the answers were re-coded to measure the use on a scale where 1 indicated “I don’t use the internet,” 2 “a few times a year,” 3 “at least once a month,” 4 “at least once a week,” 5 “daily or almost daily,” (M = 3.505, SD = 1.665). Also, participants were asked “in general did you follow political news through internet” on a scale where 1 indicated “daily,” 2 “a few times a week,” 3 “a few times a month,” 4 “rarely,” 5 “I don’t follow political news at all.” However, the answers were re-coded in order to measure their following of political news through the internet into a scale where 1 indicated “I don’t follow political news at all,” 2 “rarely,” 3 “a few times a month,” 4 “a few times a week,” 5 “daily,” the results were (M = 2.62, SD = 1.550).

Independent variables

There were two separate independent variables, for the first and second hypothesis participants were asked how often they use the internet in general. For the third and fourth hypothesis participants were asked how often they use the internet in order to look for political news. See figure 3.

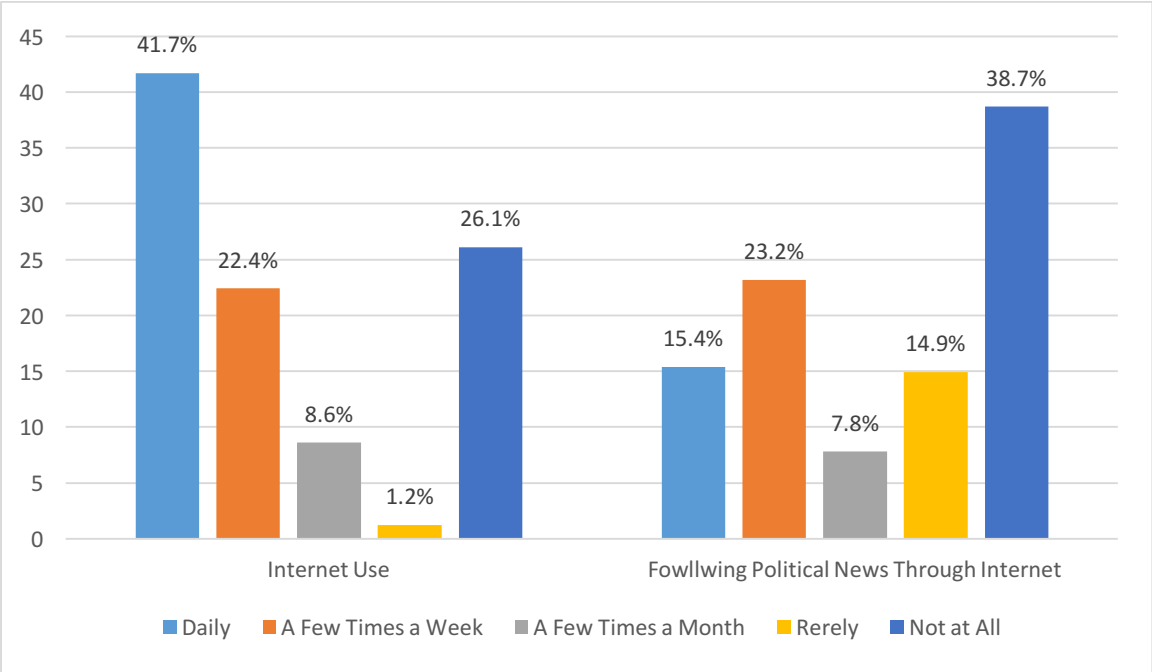

Figure 3. Internet Use in General and Following Political News Through Internet (Independent Variables)

Dependent variables

There are two dependent variables in the study. Participants were asked to what extent they trust the police and the army. The first and third hypothesis the dependent variable is to what extent Saudis trust police. The second and fourth hypothesis the dependent variable is to what extent Saudis trust the army. Figure number 4 presents the dependent variables.

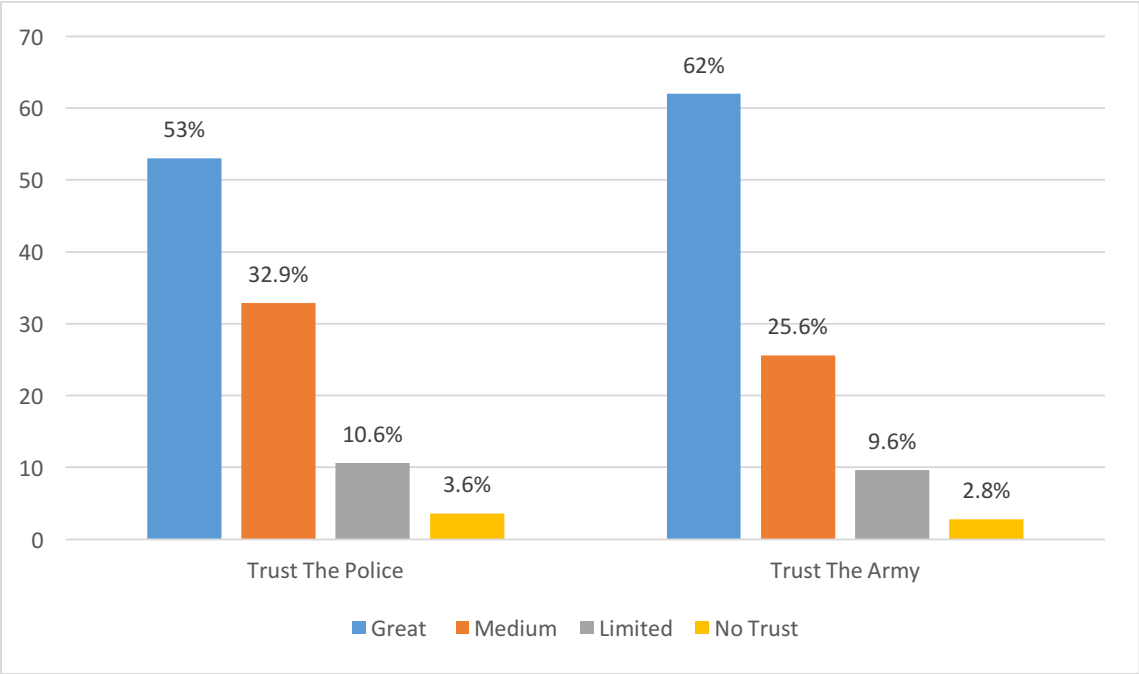

Figure 4. Trusting the Police and the Army (Dependent Variables), (N = 1404)

Control variables

To see what relationship, if any, demographic factors have with trust in the police and army the study will use multiple regression to include these variables in analysis. Interviewers reported the gender because the study was conducted face to face where 1 indicates "Male" and 2 "Female". However, I re-coded the results into 1 indicate "Male" and 0 "Female." This dummy coding is standard procedure for dichotomous nominal variables in a regression analysis. Also, the interviewer reports the location in which the survey was conducted, where 1 indicates "Urban" and 2 "Rural". Like gender, this variable was recoded so that 1 indicates "Urban" and 0 "Rural," so as to determine which of the two displayed more trust. The religious denomination was reported in the survey, like gender and residency, where 1 indicates

"Sunni" as the majority and 0 indicates "Shi'ite" as the minority. 96.5% (1345) of the participants reported being Sunni and 3.5% (49) Shi'ite. Education, employment status, and income as described previously were also included in analysis as demographic controls.

Data analytic plan

In the current study, multiple regression was used to test the four hypotheses. To illustrate, the first hypothesis, the relationship between trust in police and internet use, controlling for the influence of all the other demographic factors on internet use. The second hypothesis, the relationship between trust in police and internet use while searching for political news, controlling for the influence of all the other demographic factors on internet use searching for political news. The third hypothesis, the relationship between trust in army and internet use, controlling for the influence of all the other demographic factors on internet use. The fourth hypothesis, the relationship between trust in army and internet use searching for political news, controlling for the influence of all the other demographic factors on internet use searching for political news. The SPSS program was used to explore the overall correlation between the dependent variables, trust the police and trust the army, and the independent variables, internet use in general and following political news through the internet, with the influences of the demographic factors.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The major purpose of this research was to determine whether greater internet use in general, and internet use for political news in particular, will tend to be associated with less trust in public security (the police), and greater trust in the armed force (the army), respectively.

Recall H1, stated that greater internet use will tend to be associated with diminishing trust in public security (the police). There was not significant evidence of a relationship between using the internet in general and trusting the police ($b = 0.019$, $p =$ ns). However, the multiple regression results indicate that Sunni ($b = 0.649$, $p < 0.05$) tend to report more trust in police more than Shi'ite. In contrast urban people tend to report less trust in the police more than rural people ($b = - 0.248$, $p < 0.05$). There was no evidence of a relationship between gender ($b = 0.010$, $p =$ ns), age ($b = 0.003$, $p =$ ns), level of education ($b = - 0.041$, $p =$ ns), employment status ($b = - 0.096$, $p =$ ns), or monthly income ($b = 1.55$, $p =$ ns) and trust in police after controlling for the influence of the other variables in the model. See table 2 for more details.

Table 2. OLS Regression Equations Estimating Trust in The Police from General Internet Use and Control Variables

	Model 1	Model 2
Gender	0.003†	0.010†
Age	-0.002†	0.003†
Level of Education	-0.034†	-0.041†

Table 2 (cont.)

Urban or Rural	-0.248*	-0.248*
Employment status	-0.093†	-0.096†
Monthly Household Income in US Dollar	1.388E-5*	1.387E-5*
Religious Denomination	0.654*	0.649*
Internet use	--	0.019†
Adjusted R^2	0.043*	0.43†

Notes

Trust in the Police in a scale of 4

† p = ns *p < 0.05

H2, which stated that greater internet use for political news will tend to be associated with diminishing trust in public security (the police) was supported. The multiple regression results indicate that there is a negative coefficient between internet for political news use and trust in the police (b = - 0.076, p < 0.05). in another world Saudis who reported greater political news through internet tended to trust the police less than those who reported less political news through internet. Moreover, Sunni (*b* = 0.645, p < 0.05) tend to report more trust in police than Shi'ite; in contrast urban people (*b* = - 0.256, p < 0.05) tend to report less trust in the police than rural people. There was no evidence of a relationship between gender (b = 0.015, p = ns), age (*b* = 0.002, p = ns), level of education (b = - 0.016, p = ns) employment status (b = - 0.078, p = ns) monthly

income (b = 1.55, p = ns) and trust in police after controlling for the influence of the other variables in the model. For more detail see Table 3.

Table 3. OLS Regression Equations Estimating Trust in The Police from Political News Internet Use and Control Variables

	Model 1	Model 2
Gender	-0.008†	0.015†
Age	-.002†	-8.415E-6†
Level of Education	-0.034†	-0.016†
Urban or Rural	-0.244*	-0.256*
Employment status	-0.093†	-0.078†
Monthly Household Income in US Dollar	1.637E-5†	1.588E-5†
Religious Denomination	0.653*	0.645*
Internet use for political news	--	-0.076*
Adjusted R^2	0.043*	0.059*

Notes

Trust in the Police in a scale of 4

† p = ns *p < 0.05

H3, which stated that greater internet use will tend to be associated with greater trust in the armed forces (the Army) was not supported; there was no relationship between using the internet in general and trusting the army (b = 0.019, p = ns). However, the multiple regression results indicate that Sunni (b = 0.727, p < .05),

relatively males (b = 0.129, p < 0.05) tend to report more trust in the army than Shi'ite and females. In contrast urban people (b = - 0.174, p < 0.05), relatively employed (b = - 0.129, p < 0.05), relatively less educated (b = - 0.051, p < 0.05) tend to report less trust in the army than rural people, not employed and more educated. There was no evidence of a relationship between age (b = 0.002, p = ns), monthly income (b = 1.55, p = ns) and trust in the army after controlling for the influence of the other variables in the model. See Table 4 for more detail.

Table 4. OLS Regression Equations Estimating Trust in The Army from General Internet Use and Control Variables

	Model 1	Model 2
Gender	0.133*	0.129*
Age	-0.001†	0.000†
Level of Education	-0.048*	-0.051*
Urban or Rural	-0.174†	-0.174*
Employment status	-0.128*	-0.129*
Monthly Household Income in US Dollar	4.142E-6†	4.140E-6†
Religious Denomination	0.728*	0.727*
Internet use	--	0.009†
Adjusted R^2	0.049*	0.48†

Notes
Trust in the Army in a scale of 4
† p = ns *p < .05

H4, which stated that greater internet use for political news will tend to be associated with greater trust in the armed forces (the Army) was not supported; the data does not support the hypothesis. In fact, Saudis who report greater internet use for political news tended to report less trust in the army. The multiple regression results indicate that there is a negative coefficient between internet political news use and trust in the army (b = -0.079, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, Sunni (*b* = 0.715, $p < 0.05$) relatively males (*b* = 0.154, $p < 0.05$) tend to report more trust in army more than Shi'ite and females. In contrast urban people (*b* = - 0.188, $p < 0.05$), relatively employed (*b* = - 0.115, $p < 0.05$) tend to report less trust in the army more than rural people and not employed. There was no evidence of a relationship between age (*b* = 0.003, p = ns), level of education (*b* = - 0.027, p = ns), monthly income (b = 1.55, p = ns) and trust in army after controlling for the influence of the other variables in the model. See Table 5 for more detail.

Table 5. OLS Regression Equations Estimating Trust in The Army from Political News Internet Use and Control Variables

	Model 1	Model 2
Gender	0.128*	0.154*
Age	-0.001†	0.003†
Level of Education	-0.047*	-0.027†
Urban or Rural	-0.174*	-0.188*
Employment status	-0.130*	-0.115*

Table 5 (cont.)

Monthly Household Income in US Dollar	6.765E-7†	5.266E-7†
Religious Denomination	0.729*	0.715*
Internet use for political news	--	-0.079*
Adjusted R^2	0.049*	0.066*

Notes

Trust in the Army in a scale of 4

† p = ns *p < 0.05

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This study tried to determine the impact of the internet on trusting government institutions, in particular, the police and army. However, there were four hypotheses in this study: H1, which stated greater internet use will tend to be associated with less trust in public security (the Police) was not supported; H2, which stated greater internet use for political news will tend to be associated with less trust in public security (the Police) was supported; H3, which stated greater internet use will tend to be associated with greater trust in the armed forces (the Army) was not supported; and H4, which stated greater internet use for political news will tend to be associated with greater trust in the armed forces (the Army) was not supported and unexpected by the results.

Summary

In terms of trusting the police, it was expected that people from Saudi Arabia trust police in general. The participants' trust in the police was assessed on a scale where 1 indicates a great amount of trust with a percentage of 53%, 2 indicates a medium amount of trust with a percentage of 33%, 3 indicates a limited 11%, and 4 indicates no trust at all with a percentage of 4%. With those results, we confidently can say that the people of Saudi Arabia trust the police in high level.

In terms of trusting the army, it was also expected that Saudi citizens trust the army to a great extent. The results of this study show that 62% of the participants trust the army in a great amount, 26% trust the army in a medium amount, 10% trust the

army in a limited amount, and only 3% do not trust the army at all. With those results, it is obvious that people of Saudi Arabia trust the army in high level.

The use of the internet in general and the use of the internet searching for political news, was assessed in the study on a scale of one to five for each. In the internet use on a scale of one to five where 1 indicates daily or almost daily with a percentage of 42%, 2 indicated at least once a week with a percentage of 22%, 3 indicated at least once a month with a percentage of 9%, 4 indicated a few times a year with a percentage of 1%, and 5 indicated I do not use the internet with 26%.

In contrast the using of the internet to look for political news the study shows that 15% of the participants use the internet looking for the political news every day, 23% use the internet looking for political news a few times a week, 8% of the participants use the internet looking for political news a few times a month, 15% of the participants rarely use the internet looking for the political news, and 39% of the participants do not follow the political news at all.

There was no evidence of an effect of the internet in general on trusting either the police and the army. That finding stands in the opposite point of view for Al-Tawil (2011), as he states that the internet can affect the Saudi's cultural and religious values as well as issues of national security. The current study found that there is no impact of the internet in general on the national security. In contrast, the political news through the internet has a negative impact on trusting the police and army. As this study aimed to discover the other factors that impact the trust upon the police and the army, the religious denomination and the living place (urban or rural) also has an impact on

trusting both the police and the army. Nevertheless, gender, a level of education and employment status have affected the trust only on the army.

However, the internet use looking for political news will decrease the amount of trusting the police and trusting the army. Also, the religious denomination has impacted the trust on the police and the army as well. The results show Sunnis trust both institution more than Shi'ites. The other factor that affects the trust on both police and army was the living place (urban or rural). The results show urban people trust both institution less than rural people.

The unexpected result is that people from Saudi Arabia who follow the political news on the internet trust the Saudi army less. However, this hypothesis was also built on the Egyptian Spring and it was assumed that those who follow the political news will be aware of what happened in Egypt, and as a result, their trust in the army will increase.

Implications of the study

From the researcher's point of view, the reason for decreasing the level of trust on the police and the army caused by political news from the internet, is that the internet is an open source of information and it can provide malicious propaganda from people or organizations against the Saudi policy. However, the current research suggested that both the police and army need more activity to defeat that malicious propaganda on the internet so Saudi citizens can understand what are accurate stories about the police and the army and trust them as a result. The data show that people

from Saudi Arabia trust police and army in general. Unfortunately, the trust is decreasing among those who use the internet searching for political news. That obviously concludes that the internet for political news has a negative impact on trusting of both police and army. Also, they need to do frequent press conferences to provide the society with their update not only in disaster times but also in peace and safety times.

As most countries have intelligence agencies those agencies can set the agenda that can affect other countries. However, the Shi'ite represents minority in Saudi Arabia and it represents a majority in other countries and it can be ideal for those countries to affect the level of trust of Shi'ite by setting the agenda and providing tendentious propaganda. As the study show that the Sunni trust both institutions more than Shi'ite, both institutions must provide the Shi'ite denomination with stories that increase the level of trust, those stories come through a public figure from Shi'ite denomination. In current time Saudi Arabia collaborates with other middle eastern countries in a "storm packets," a war on Yemen, to support the legitimate Yemeni's government it will be ideal if the armed forces invited public figures from Shi'ite denomination to cover the war from their social media accounts. Then trust might increase in Shi'ite denominations as a result.

Also, the armed forces and the public security need to activate the public relations departments and collaborate with other communities' institutions during the national days and other national events so people from Saudi Arabia tend to know those institutions better in the celebration times rather than on active duty.

In terms of urban people who are less trusting the police and army, both institutions need to establish events and museums to provide the successful stories and the military equipment they have so the level of trust will increase as a result. Also, it will be ideal if they visit the local schools and educate the youth about the public security and the armed forces.

The findings in the current study can encourage the future researchers to address new solutions and ideas to increase the level of trust toward the government institutions.

Strengths and limitations

All studies have strengths and weaknesses. The current study's strengths were that it built on recent data. Furthermore, this study was conducted in 2017 and the data was collected in 2011. Another strength is the sample in the survey that represent Saudi Arabia, because the population of Saudi Arabia is over 27 million and the sample is 1404 participants. Hopefully, the current study will be a rich reference for future studies that measure the level of trust in government institutions and the effect of media on that trust. Another strength is that the study is one of its kind that finds out the impact of the political news through the internet on Saudi's trust. Also, the finding of the current study will add new knowledge about the impacts of political news through the internet on trusting the police and army so they can increase the trust as a result.

In contrast, one of the weaknesses of the survey is that the Arab Barometer does not ask about social media use in general or what kind of social media participants use

to look for political news. Social media and the internet are very fast growing. Another weakness is that the current study was built on data that was collected in 2011 and six years' period might have new progress that can affect the study. Another weakness is that while all the rationale in the current study are based on the assumption of attention to media about events in Egypt, the survey questions don't ask directly about that. Also, the armed forces have four branches: army, air force, navy and air defense. The survey only asked about trust in the army. Also, the survey only asked about the trust in the police as the police are not the only public security force.

Recommendations for future research

The recommendations for future research are, examine the impact of the internet in terms of trusting the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. Examine the impact of other media platforms such as Television and Newspaper in terms of trusting the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. Examine the impact of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, etc., in terms of trusting the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. Expand the study to examine the impact of media in general and social media in particular on the trusting of the government institutions among Middle Eastern countries. Examine why the trust in Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior is decreasing by the influence of internet use searching for political news. Examine why the trust in Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior is decreasing by the influence of internet use in the religious denomination. Examine why

the trust in Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior is decreasing by the influence of internet use in urban society.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to explore the relationship between internet use and the level of trusting the government institutions, in particular, the police and the army. However, some of the results of this study were expected and others were not. The internet use, in general, has no impact on trusting both the police and the army, where the political news on the internet has a negative impact on trusting the police and the army. These facts conclude that both institutions need more activity on the internet to raise the level of trust. Moreover, they need to activate the public relations departments and find some new solutions that might increase the level of trust.

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