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e-Diasporas Atlas

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Plateforme e-Diasporas

<http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=section§ion=24>

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Abstract

The definition of the Egyptian migration as a diaspora has been much debated and often denied. This article investigates the phenomenon of the Egyptian diaspora through an innovative approach based on the analysis of digital activity and the presence of Egyptian connected migrants. Following the methodology of the e-Diasporas project, we found a scarcely connected network of websites, with a large number of isolated nodes, little clusterisation and no authorities or hubs. The fact that the traditional approach of the e-diaspora gave few results prompted us to follow a new research strategy combining data from Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. In particular, thanks to the coincidence with the Egyptian revolt, we could investigate the mobilisation of Egyptian migrants for their voting rights on the micro-blogging platform Twitter. Through Twitter data, we identified links that were not visible through traditional Web mapping techniques and we could observe the emergence of a transnational Egyptian community debating and fighting for a common cause.

Keywords

diaspora, web, Internet, Egypte, Révolutions arabes, Twitter

Mots-clefs

diaspora, web, Internet, Egypt, Arab Revolution, Twitter

Drawing on the theoretical and technical tools provided by the e-Diaspora Atlas project, our research is meant to identify the Egyptian e-diaspora, that is to say the websites of the Egyptian migrants' community.

Following the methodology of the e-Diaspora project, we first built a corpus of websites that was supposed to represent the Egyptian diaspora online. Then we launched a series of automatic crawls to identify all the links among these websites. The result was disappointing: a scarcely connected network, with little clusterisation and no authorities or hubs. This paper aims at explaining the reasons of these findings.

On the basis of the Web maps' analysis, we made some assumptions about the occupation of the digital space by Egyptian migrants. Then, we compared these hypotheses with the features of the Egyptian migration in the physical space. Our analysis was performed at a very favourable historical moment. In early 2011, Egypt was the scene of a major revolutionary movement that led to the fall of Hosni Mubarak. These events drew the attention not only of media but also of several scholars, who have been observing unexpected scenarios for the country and for the whole region (the so-called Arab Spring). The emergence of cyberactivism was one of the most interesting ones (Zhuo et al., 2011). Not only cyberactivists mobilized through websites and social networks, but Egyptian migrants as well used the same media to show solidarity with their countrymen. The digital presence of Egyptian migrants had an unexpected visibility. Notably, Egyptians abroad rallied for their right to vote in upcoming elections.

In this paper, we will discuss if and how this digital activity helps unveil new perspectives in the observation of the Egyptian e-diaspora. Our analysis will focus on the micro-blogging network Twitter and particularly on the use of the hashtag "#right2vote".

Looking for the Egyptian e-Diaspora

Our research started with the websites of Egyptian migrants' associations, especially those active in Western countries. This choice can be explained by the specific features of the Egyptian migration. Started in 1960s, such migration

followed two distinct migratory paths and patterns. On the one hand, the Egyptian migration towards the Arab countries, unstable over the past four decades because of wars and oil crises,¹ can be generally described as a male, short-term and labour-driven migration that can be qualified as "temporary" (Zohry & Debnath, 2010). On the other hand, the migration to the West,² constituted mostly by students and families, is more gender-balanced, long-term and may be qualified as a "permanent migration".³ The groups of migrants in Western countries seemed therefore a more fertile ground for our research on diaspora dynamics.

First, throughout manual Web navigation,⁴ we identified a preliminary group of websites that could be considered representative of the Egyptian migrant websites. We chose association websites such as the American Egyptian Cooperation Foundation (<http://americanegyptiancoop.org/>), the Italian-Egyptian Association (*Associazione italo-egiziana*) (<http://associazione-italoegiziana.it/>) and the Egyptian Association UK (<http://egyptianuk.com/>). The associative life of Egyptians abroad is quite active (Coptic, Islamic, and also non-religious associations like the Rotary Club), and their associations, especially the Coptic ones, often play a crucial political role in host countries (see below).

Given the opposition between migrants and their homeland government, we decided to exclude the institutional websites of the host countries (embassies, etc.). Even if the Egyptian government tries to promote formal links with the diaspora (Di Bartolomeo et al., 2010), Egyptians abroad seem to mistrust embassies and consular services because of the culture of bureaucracy and corruption often attributed to the government (Zohry & Debnath, 2010).

1. If in the 1970s, particularly after the 1973 oil crisis, Egyptians represented the largest workforce in the Gulf countries, Asian migrants have progressively replaced them.

2. Few Egyptians took this path until the Egyptian Constitution authorized permanent and temporary migration in 1971. Migration towards the United States became important only in the 1990s, with an 80% increase between 1990 and 2000 (US Census Bureau, 2003).

3. OECD Database, 29/07/2008. However, during the last 15-20 years, Europe has witnessed new migration flows, mostly of unskilled and irregular migrants (Di Bartolomeo et al., 2010).

4. We used the Firefox Navicrawler <http://webatlas.fr/wp/navicrawler/>.

Following the methodological praxis suggested by the e-Diaspora Atlas project, this corpus has been expanded through automatic explorations. Automatic crawls found few relevant websites, however.⁵ Not only was the initial core of websites weakly interconnected, but also the identification of network boundaries was complicated by the numerous links between migrant websites and the top layer of the Web, in particular media websites. We ultimately defined a corpus of 69 nodes corresponding to as many actors.⁶ This corpus, which we called “starting points”, constitutes

40% of the final corpus published on the online e-Diaspora platform.⁷

These nodes were then qualified according to several categories: type of website (blog, traditional website, portal, Twitter account, other); publisher, that is to say the type of actor that manages the site (individuals, NGOs, groups, media, institutions, enterprises); language of the website (English, Arabic, English and Arabic, other); actor’s activity sector (cooperation, IT, engineering, education, other); actor’s country of origin and region of residence.

The analysis of linking strategies among websites was supposed to reveal the specific topology of the network, to show which actors are central and peripheral, and to identify clusters as well as the authorities and hubs. In our case, however, none of these elements was visible in the graphs (Figure 1).

5. Automatic crawls have been repeated several times with a significant depth (distance 3), and results were filtered with a very low filter (website cited by at least two starting websites or *vice versa*, at least two starting websites that cite the new website).

6. Each node represents an actor rather than a website. It means that several websites managed by the same actor are represented by a single node in the map. For example, the node of the American University of Cairo corresponds to the website <http://www.aucegypt.edu/>, but also to the Twitter account http://Twitter.com/AUC_Newsroom.

7. The corpus is accessible at the URL: <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=90&map=55&nodeattribute=16§ion=24>.

Figure 1. Graph that shows only starting points categorised by publisher.

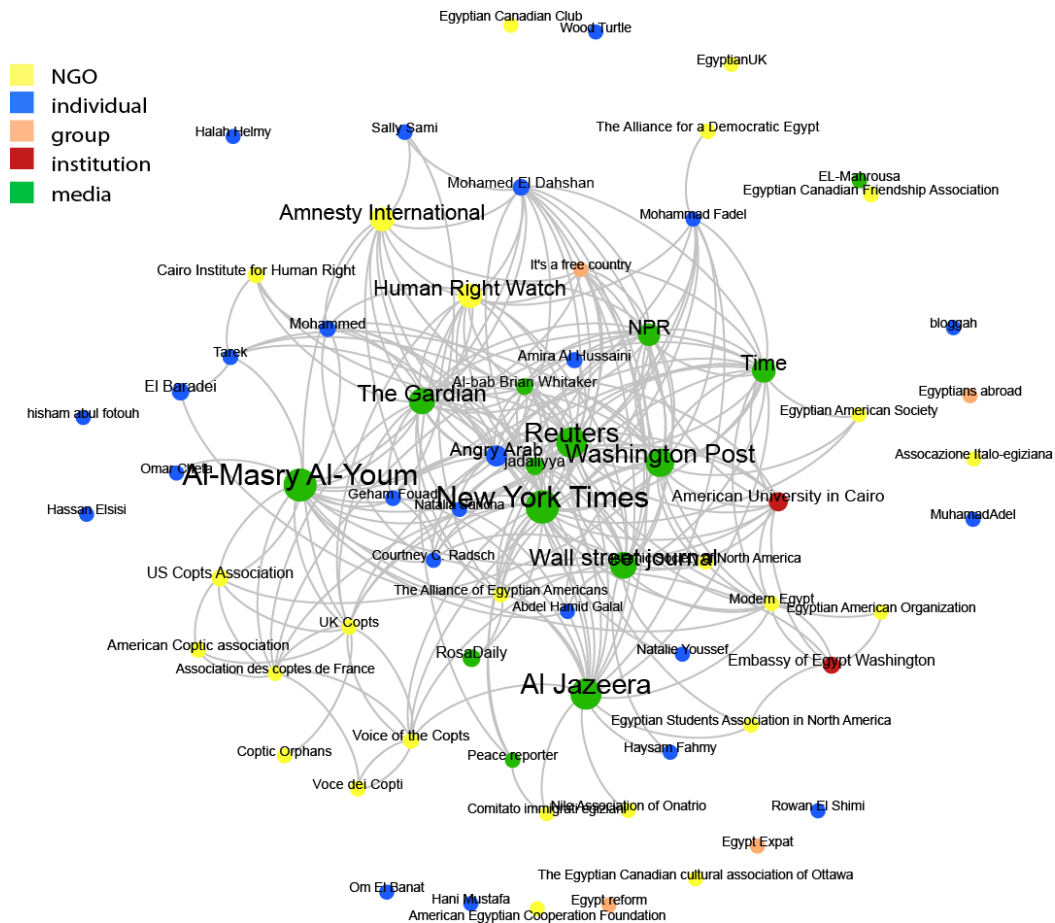
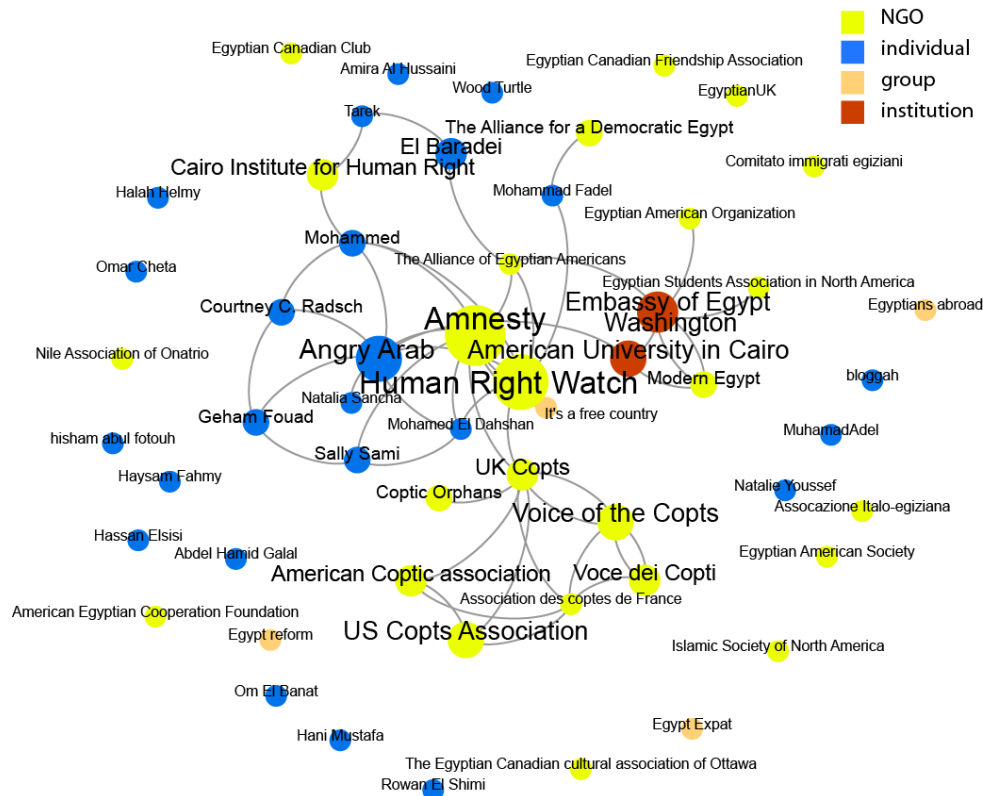


Figure 2. Graph that shows starting points categorised by publisher excluding the “media” category.



The first thing emerging from the analysis of the graphs is the large number of isolated nodes. They represent *individuals or organizations that do not cite nor are cited by other websites of the corpus*. Although some of these websites have significant thematic similarities (see in particular the Egyptian associations based in different countries), they do not mention each other and have no common “neighbour” websites.

Second, considering the categorisation by publisher, media are unquestionably the authorities of the graph and they guarantee the connectivity of the network. Removing media from the graph, the network almost disappears⁸ (see Figure 2). Media websites work as “bridges” linking peripheral websites and national clusters. This may be explained by the fact that most associations’ websites have a “news” page related to Egypt that links to articles published in major international and Egyptian newspapers.

Third, considering the categorisation by region, even though the identification of clusters remains

difficult, we can at least recognize two groups: a bigger group of North American websites (Canada and United States) and a smaller one of Arab country websites (mainly related to Egypt).

The only true cluster visible in the map is that of Copt (Egyptian Christians) associations. Coptic websites are highly interrelated, to each other and to the media, but they have no links to the rest of the network (Figure 2, on the bottom right). No doubt, the Coptic diaspora is one of the largest and more investigated phenomena related to the Egyptian migration. Being strongly defined by a minority religious affiliation, however, it seemed unfit to represent the general dynamics of the Egyptian e-diaspora. This is why, despite its undeniable interest, we chose not to deepen the investigation of Coptic websites.

On the basis of all these remarks, we may challenge the very existence of an online community composed of all Egyptians abroad.⁹ If we take into account the historical features of the Egyptian emigration, this picture of the Egyptian

8. There are two exceptions represented by two groups of associations: Coptic associations and human-rights associations.

9. It should be noted that exchanges on social networks can not be traced through the e-Diaspora methodology (as followed in this research). Thus, any observation in this paragraph concerns the relationships between websites.

e-diaspora becomes less surprising. First of all, the definition of the Egyptian migration as a “diaspora” (Sheffer, 2003: 9-10) has been much debated and often denied. The Egyptian migration is recent and concerns a limited number of people. Today, according to official figures, less than 4 million Egyptians (out of a population of about 80 millions in Egypt) live abroad. 70% of them live in Arab countries and only 30% in European countries, Australia and America (Zohry & Debnath, 2010). In addition, some field studies (see the following paragraph) have highlighted the great variety of the Egyptian diaspora networks, depending on the host country and the religious, social and political identities of migrants. This explains the relative sparse topology of the Egyptian e-diaspora and the fact that the only significant groups in Web maps may be explained on the basis of the common religious identity (the Copts) or common country of residence (see the case of the United States).

Although the literature on Egyptian diaspora is not very rich,¹⁰ this field of study offers interesting new research avenues. A recent study by the International Organization for Migration (Zohry & Debnath, 2010), based on interviews carried out in Kuwait, the UK and the US, shows that 70% of Egyptians living abroad visit Egypt at least once a year, keep informed about what happens in their country and are active in Egyptian associations. Even if these data cannot be considered as representative of all Egyptians abroad, they reveal an interest of part of Egyptian migrants for their homeland, a common feature of diasporas, and invite us to find new strategies for exploring the Web in order to identify digital traces of this fact.

Different configurations of the physical diaspora

10. Few studies have been carried out on Egyptians abroad, and the majority concern the link between remittances and development. In particular, very few of the studies are recent and focus on the political or lobbying role of diaspora. Migrants' remittances have contributed averagely to 6% of Egyptian GDP per year between 1990 and 2006 (Di Bartolomeo et al., 2010). In 2006, according to official statistics, Egyptians mostly working in the US, followed by Kuwait, sent the largest amounts of remittances, but informal money transfers from Libya are equally important. Yet, attempts on the part of the Egyptian Government to attract remittances from migrant entrepreneurs, starting in the '90s, were unsuccessful. The failure of such actions, again, could be partly due to the Egyptian diaspora's distrust of the government and its bureaucracy (Zohry, 2009).

Egyptians in Germany

In Germany, Egyptians are generally well integrated, highly skilled, and their links with the country of origin are weak. According to an analysis of the remittances sent to Egypt (Baraulina et al., 2007), an opportunistic scenario emerges: migrants' remittances serve primarily individual interests of recognition and profit. Likewise, their political involvement consists in lobbying activities to strengthen elite networks and thus favour individual interests.

Egyptians in Germany have created several associations (Coptic, Muslims, non-religious and professional) joined together since 1983 under the so-called “Egyptian House” umbrella, but second-generation and new immigrants are less and less involved in community life. Acknowledging this situation, the Board of Directors of the Egyptian House decided to react by opening the association to young members, thus improving its website. What this simple fact highlights is that, whereas the physical diaspora is weakening, the role played by informal and transnational networks like the Web is intensifying. To prove this, it is interesting to note that the few German websites included in the Egyptian e-diaspora map are activist blogs connected to the international network related to the “right2vote” protest.

Egyptians in Italy

In Italy, Egyptian migrants (generally male, young and middle class) can be divided in two groups according to arrival time. Immigrants who arrived in the '70s integrated quite well, belonged to a highly skilled elite and were involved in transnational diaspora networks (even if they did not intend to return to Egypt). Conversely, since the '80s and especially at the end of the '90s, Egyptians in Italy are more often irregular migrants, less skilled and more likely to be interested in returning home (Stocchiero, 2004). Yet, the second-generation immigrants feel both Egyptian and Italian, thus presenting a dual identity. Their migratory project, initially short term and work related, often transformed into a long-term project, facilitated by mixed marriages and by their integration into the Italian labour market (Stocchiero et al., 2009). Nevertheless, the Egyptian diaspora in Italy maintains a strong relationship with the country of origin through the promotion of cultural and religious identity and the maintenance of family and professional

ties. In fact, e-diaspora Web mapping has identified some Italian websites strictly related to Egypt: not only Egyptian associations such as the Italian–Egyptian Association (*Associazione Italo–Egiziana*) and The Voice of Copts (*La voce dei copti*), but also a few blogs and websites related to the “right2vote” protest.

The Egyptian diaspora and the Copts: a diaspora in the diaspora

The Coptic diaspora has very specific characteristics that clearly distinguish it from other Egyptian diasporas. In 2001, there were about 2 million Coptic Egyptians living in the Western world. The Coptic community in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, which covers almost all Egyptian migrants in these countries, constitutes a very organized and militant network sharing the same diasporic attitude (Brubaker, 2005). What unifies the Copts is the need to maintain the link with the country of origin in order to promote the cause of Christians in Egypt and to sustain them against the government’s abuses.¹¹

A study by Jennifer Brinkerhoff (2005) examines the role played by information and communication technologies in the diaspora and particularly the importance of the Internet in the lobbying activities of the American Coptic Association (www.copts.com). The passage of the “Freedom from Religious Persecution” Act by the US Congress in 1998 is a tangible sign of the power of this association. This Act established formal sanctions for countries that, like Egypt, do not respect the right to religion freedom.¹²

11. Not only their claim for places of worship has been constantly ignored and their conversions are usually not recognised by the State, but acts of discrimination and of vandalism against their churches are widespread. Since the Islamisation of the society in the 1970s under Muhammad Anwar El Sadat, the introduction of Sharia law has strongly affected the Coptic community. Although the Mubarak government generally ignored discriminations against the Copts (considering them less dangerous than the Muslim Brotherhood), the increasing violence against them (particularly the attack at the church in Alexandria in December 2010) has provoked a strong Copt protest against the government.

12. Following the passage of this act, the representative of the Council on American–Islamic Relations characterized the Copt association “three or four guys with a fax” (Rowe, 2001: 90). In reply, the association’s president, Michael Meunier, underlined that the Coptic diaspora is much more active and connected than is generally believed.

3. The Egyptian revolt, the right to vote and the Web

Following the riots in Tunisia, on 25 January 2011, thousands of Egyptians gathered in Tahrir Square. In less than three weeks, the Mubarak government fell and was replaced by a new government supported by the army. Although we prefer to talk of a revolt rather than a revolution (Zhuo et al., 2011), it is indisputable that these movements have generated new hopes not only among the locals but also among Egyptians abroad.

On May 23rd, the hashtag “#right2vote” appeared on the micro-blogging network Twitter.¹³ Through a hashtag, users can assign a topic to a message. So, by using hashtags, network members can draw attention to a theme and facilitate the concatenation of their messages. Within a few weeks (between May 23rd and June 7th, 2011), 227 users used #right2vote in more than 500 tweets. Some of the first tweets:

- @NohaElShoky Egyptians abroad have a constitutional right to vote as Egy citizens, we demand our right to practice our #right2vote #egyarmy” (@RubyFahmi, 26 May 2011 3h41)
- RT @Abdallah_h: Support #right2vote for Egyptians abroad. Electronic voting with prior registration at consulate over coming months” (@hebahtaha, 26 May 2011 4h48)
- Today in #NYC, Egyptians to protest in front of the #UN at 5pm EST #May27 #right2vote #25jan #egyabroad” (@raafatlogy, 26 May 2011 4h52)

After #25jan (Panisson, 2011) and #Tahrir (the hashtags that identified the discussion about the Egyptian revolt), other hashtags organized the after-revolt debate on Twitter: #SCAF or #NoSCAF related to the army’s violent actions; #Mubaraktrial related to Mubarak’s trial; #egyelections related to new elections, and several others. Among them, the emergence of #right2vote revealed the participation of the Egyptian diaspora in the revolt.

The claim for the right to vote can be considered an effective sign of the interest in the homeland

13. Twitter (www.twitter.com) is a social-networking and micro-blogging tool that allows users to send free short messages, called tweets, through the Internet, instant messaging or SMS.

(Shuval, 2000: 43) typical of diasporas. All diasporas share an emotional and tangible connection with the country of origin. This link may be manifested in different ways: cultural, political and economic. From expressing the desire to return to sending remittances to the family; from participating in the life of cultural and political associations abroad to trying to affect the country's political life through demonstrations and petitions.

The issue of voting rights for Egyptians abroad is not new. Such rights have been claimed several times in recent years. According to an IOM study (Zohry & Debnath, 2010), more than 20% of Egyptians abroad complain of being unable to vote and participate in the political life of their country. Yet, until the revolt, migrants never mobilized on this issue. The motivation generated by rare and non-transparent elections was surely too low. Moreover, diversities among migrant groups in different countries and the lack of transnational links hindered the coordination of general protest actions.¹⁴

The revolt of Tahrir Square sparked hopes and a fighting spirit among Egyptian migrants. If the new Constitutional Declaration of 30 March 2011 states that Egyptians abroad should have equal rights to the vote and representation, in the months after the revolt, there was much uncertainty about the implementation of these rights, and the status of the Egyptian diaspora was strongly debated. During these months, Egyptians abroad organised several protest actions that finally moved the government to allow migrants to vote in the country of residence.

In order to solicit this voting right, many protests and several petitions were organized. Notably, Egyptians living in the United States, supported by the National Association for Change (headed by Mohamed El Baradei), signed a petition in April 2011 asking for the restoration of suspended articles 62, 40 and 25 of the 1971 Constitution.¹⁵ Article 62 grants all Egyptian citizens the right to vote, Article 40 ensures the equality before the law for all citizens, and Article 25 concerns the right of temporary or permanent Egyptian migrants. In several countries, Egyptians gathered to protest outside embassies.

14. According to Guibal and Salaün (2011 : 45-62), in the last elections of November 2010 only one Egyptian in ten voted.

15. <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/388068>.

Digital networks provided a common ground for the weak and dispersed Egyptian diaspora, facilitating the creation of links among groups scattered in several countries. The mobilization for the right to vote required coordination at the international level, and the Web provided the occasions and means. Egyptians abroad met and organized through Twitter and Facebook. Then they created the Google group @Egyabroad,¹⁶ which enabled them to join forces and synchronise their physical (i.e. protest outside embassies) and digital actions (i.e. a website, Youtube videos, articles on newspapers and websites...).

The right-to-vote mobilisation not only emphasized migrants' digital presence, but provided a common cause for struggle, regardless of country of residence. Given this favourable circumstance, we have studied the Egyptian migrants' mobilisation on Twitter by following the hashtag #right2vote. This approach allowed us not only to collect information about Egyptian connected migrants, but also to identify new actors and new websites, which we added to our starting points. In the next section, we will describe this empirical study, from the Twitter analysis to the investigation of the final corpus available on the Egyptian e-diaspora platform.¹⁷

The hashtag "#right2vote" : the Egyptian e-diaspora on Twitter

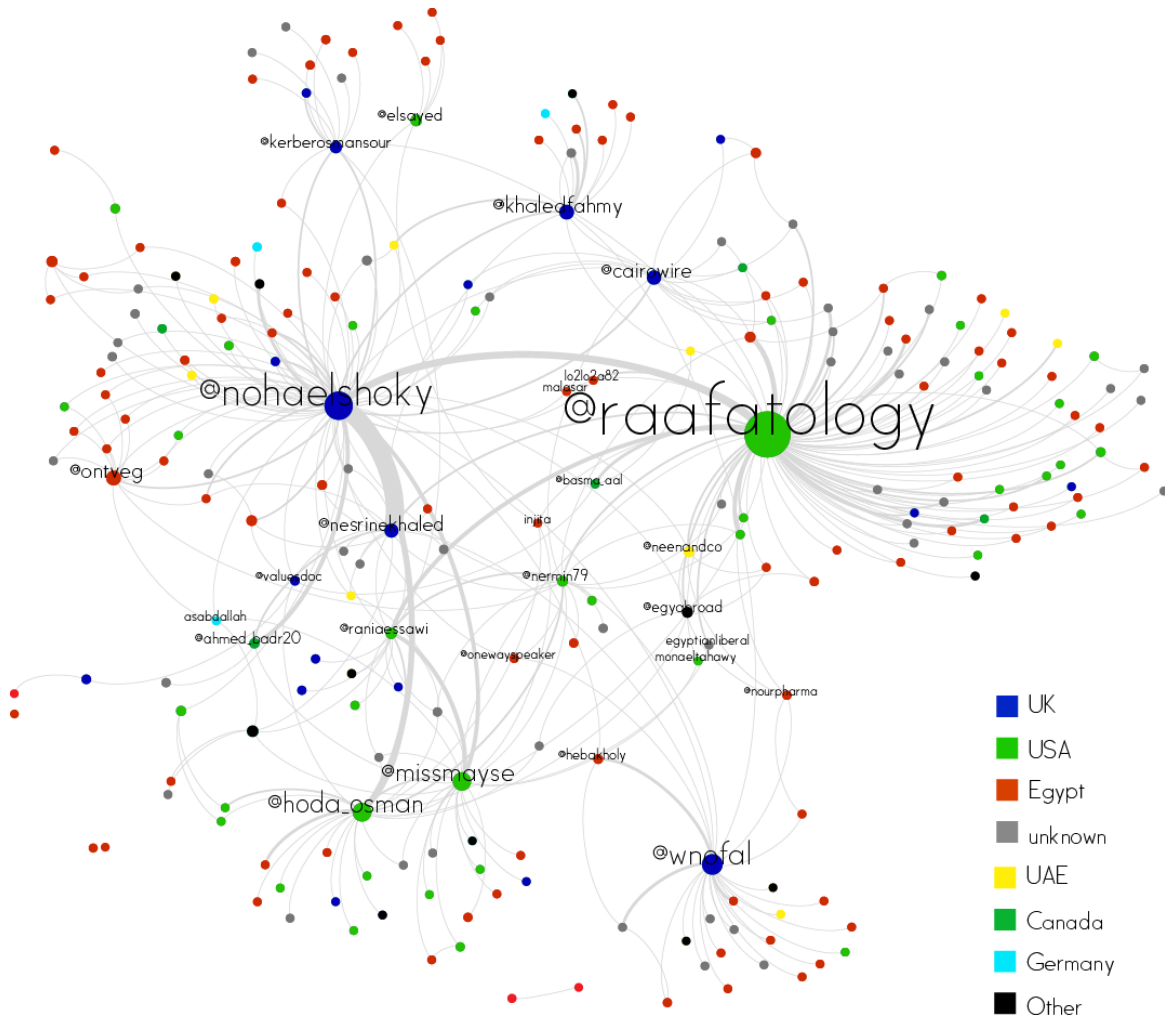
The hashtag "#right2vote" appeared on Twitter in late May 2011 and within a few weeks had gathered hundreds of tweets drawing the attention to the voting rights of Egyptian migrants. The tweets sent between 25 May and 7 June have been archived and analysed. Following the tweet and retweet activity related to hashtag #right2vote, we identified a group of users involved in the subject, followed their discussion and traced their relationships. These relationships are represented in the following image,¹⁸ where nodes are Twitter accounts (i.e. whose size is proportional to the amount of retweets) and edges correspond to retweeting actions.

16. <http://groups.google.com/group/Egyabroad/topics>

17. <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=map&map=55§ion=24>.

18. <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=map&map=69§ion=24>.

Figure 3. Graph of twitter accounts that cited #right2vote between the 23 May and the 7 June 2011. Colours represent the residence country.



This graph includes 227 nodes and 352 links. We organised this corpus into the same categories of the main e-Diaspora corpus: publisher (individuals, NGOs, groups, media); language (English, Arabic, English and Arabic); type of activity

(cooperation, IT, engineering, education...); country of residence; “website owner” (whether the user has a website or not). The information was collected on the basis of the user’s statements in its Twitter account page.

Figure 4. Example of a Twitter account page



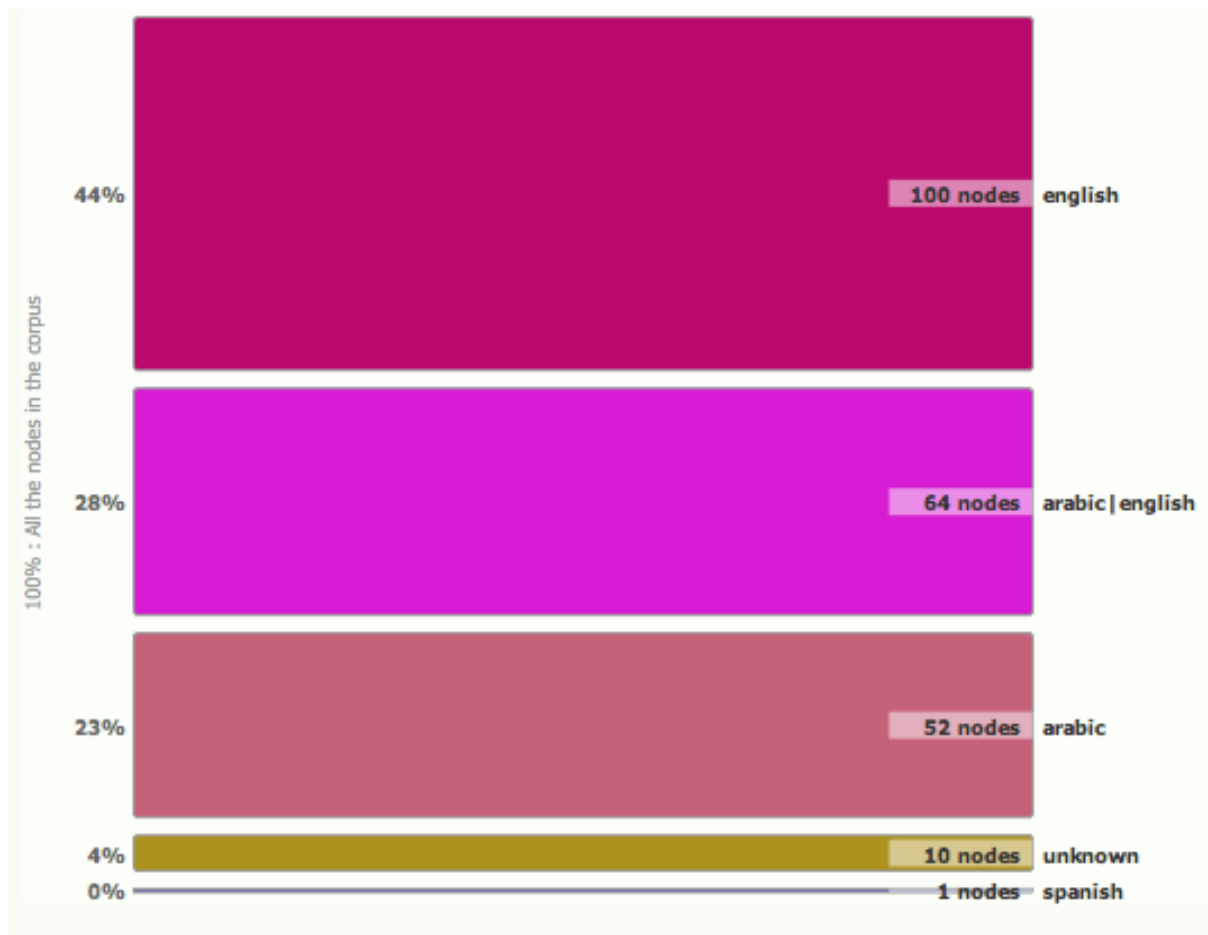
As regards the publisher,¹⁹ it is not surprising that almost all Twitter accounts correspond to individuals (95% of total). Only four media (BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, ONtv) are included in the network, but they do not occupy significant positions, except for ONtv, a liberal Egyptian TV channel, which is the authority of a group of Twitter users residing in Egypt.

19. <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=88&map=69&nodeattribute=2§ion=24>.

As regards the language, the content of most tweet accounts is in English or Arabic and English. It is interesting to note that, although the Egyptian activist blogosphere was born in English, today the Arabic language dominates.²⁰ Yet, users (especially bloggers) who write in Arabic on their website prefer English for their tweets.

20. See the "Frontier activists" corpus : <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=91&map=70&nodeattribute=8§ion=24>.

Figure 5. Distribution by language of the "right2vote" corpus



As regards the country (Figure 6), the majority of Twitter users reside in Egypt. Yet, the authorities of the graph (that is to say the users who wrote the most retweeted messages) are Egyptians abroad, particularly in the United Kingdom

and in the United States (Figure 3): Raafatology, an Egyptian blogger who resides in New York, NohaElShoky, an Egyptian anthropologist who lives in the UK, Hoda Osman, an Egyptian journalist who works in New York, and others.

Figure 6. Distribution by residence country of the “right2vote” corpus



Finally, as regards users' websites, we found that 41% of the accounts (94 nodes) indicate a website URL in their Twitter page.²¹ Almost half of users who have a website reside in Egypt (49%), 19% in the United States and 15% in the United Kingdom. Interestingly, only 11% of these are “activist” websites (compared to 33% of activist websites in the global corpus). Most are personal blogs or websites (written in English) that concern various topics. Indeed, if we consider the “main activity” distribution, 24% of the nodes have been categorised as “media” (journalists or “non-activist” bloggers), 19% as “education” (academic field) and only 15% as “politics” (that is to say, websites of activists). The rest are distributed in a variety of sectors such as arts, information technology, cooperation, business, sciences, engineering and law.

New perspectives for the Egyptian e-diaspora

After investigating the protest for the vote on Twitter, we tried to trace the same phenomenon on the Web. By incorporating the websites of Twitter users, we created a new corpus of the

21. <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=88&map=69&nodeattribute=5§ion=24&value=website>.

Egyptian e-diaspora (the main corpus available on the e-Diaspora Atlas platform).²²

While the initial corpus (“starting corpus”) was weakly interconnected with 69 nodes and 251 edges, this new corpus has a very dense structure with 174 nodes and 1074 edges. Compared to the initial corpus, isolated points are fewer because the new points,²³ (Figure 7²⁴) ensure the link among them. Indeed, although the majority of #right2vote-related nodes are grouped in the lower part of the graph, some of these points are also distributed in the rest of the graph, contributing to its overall connectivity (Figure 8). This means that our analysis of Twitter has not only identified a network of Twitter accounts but also revealed a much wider and complex network, which can be considered representative of the Egyptian e-diaspora.

22. <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=map&map=55§ion=24>.

23. The category “right2vote” includes websites that were identified on Twitter. See <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=90&map=55&nodeattribute=5§ion=24>.

24. <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=90&map=55&nodeattribute=16§ion=24>.

Figure 7. Graph of the Egyptian e-diaspora. Red points are starting points

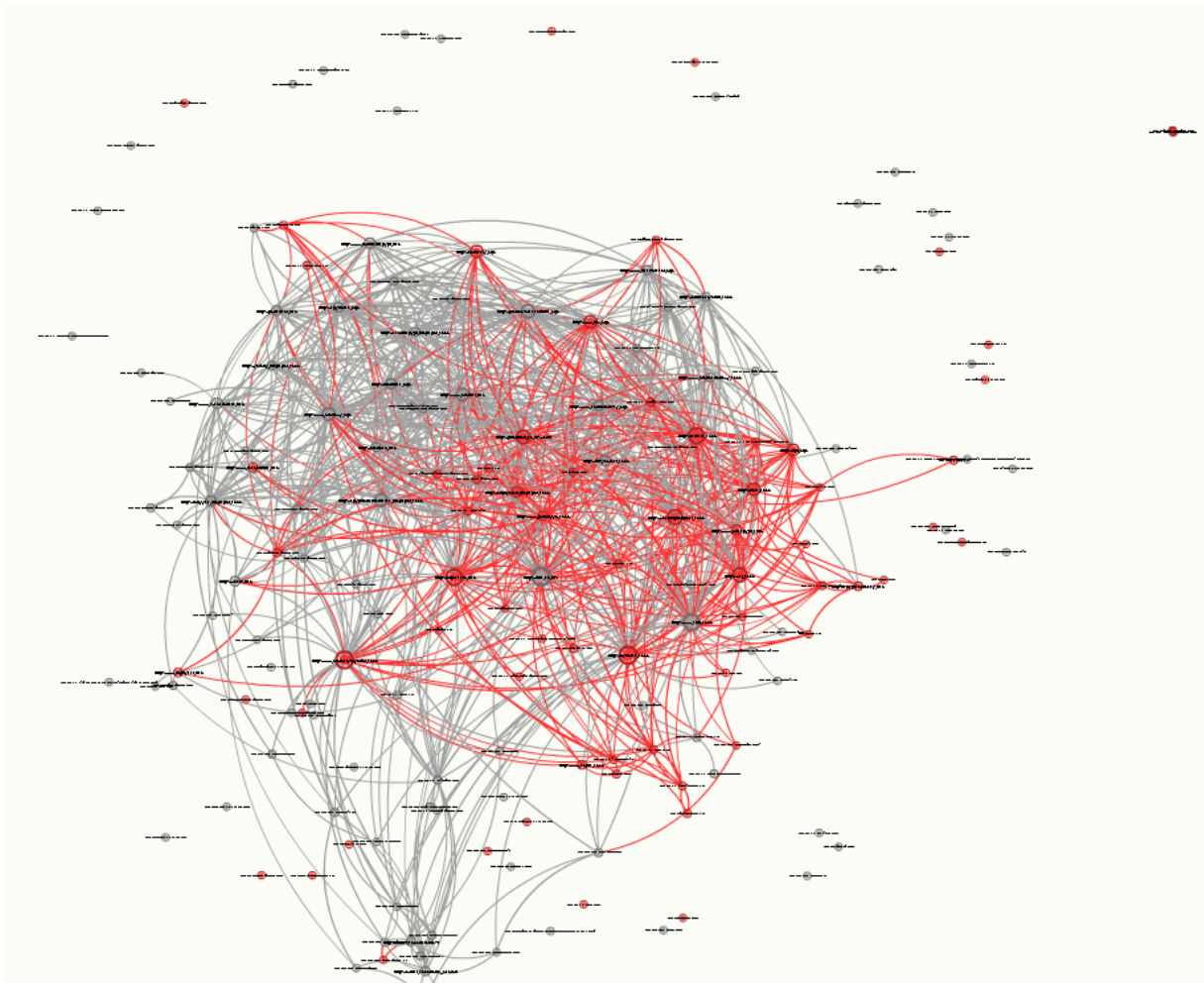
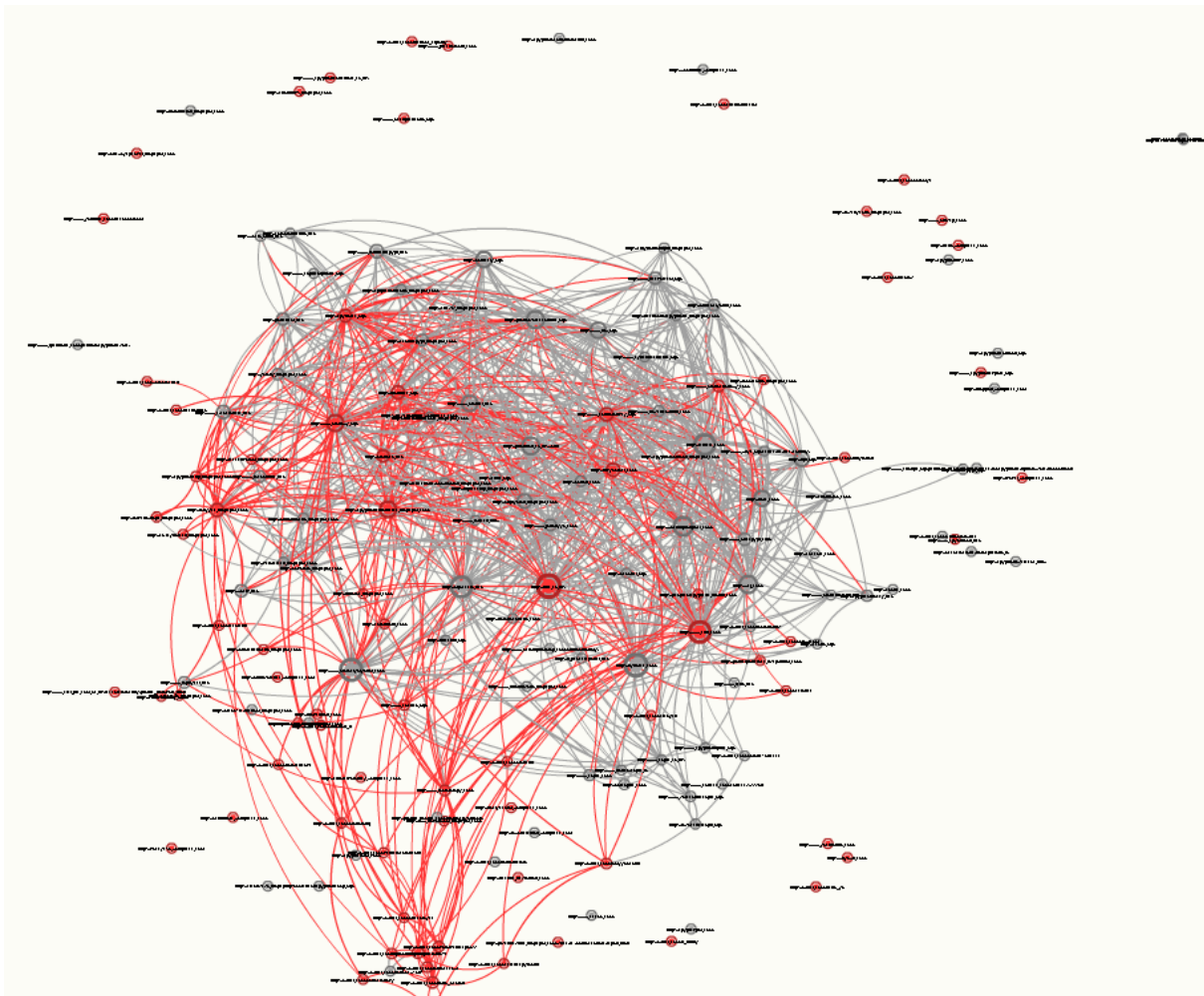


Figure 8. Graph of the Egyptian e-diaspora.
Red points are websites corresponding to Twitter accounts related to #right2vote



In this new graph, several interesting phenomena can be observed.

First, considering the distribution by country, even if North American websites are still the dominant portion of the corpus (33%), we can note that Egyptian websites are more numerous than in the initial network (28% against 14% in the “starting corpus”; see Figure 9 and 10). They are clustered in the top left part of the graph (Figure 11), but they are also strictly connected to other sites, especially to Canadian and American ones (with 47% of outgoing links). This finding may be considered as an evidence of the stronger bond to the homeland after the Mubarak’s fall.

To support this assumption, we can see that almost a half of the Egyptian sites (42%) included in the corpus provide content related to the revolt (rather than to the diaspora) and, among them, the ones with a stronger degree²⁵ are activist blogs and portals that offer content in English and Arabic about the revolt and particularly about human-rights violations. Given these data, we can suppose that the new connectivity of the e-diaspora that can be observed in this graph is strictly related to the activist mobilisation.

25. Except <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/>, which is one of the most important local media.

Figure 9. Geographical distribution of the starting corpus

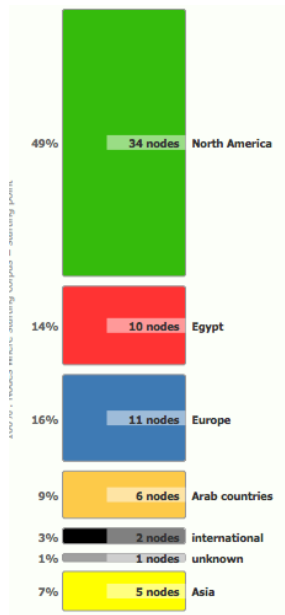


Figure 10. Geographical distribution of the final corpus

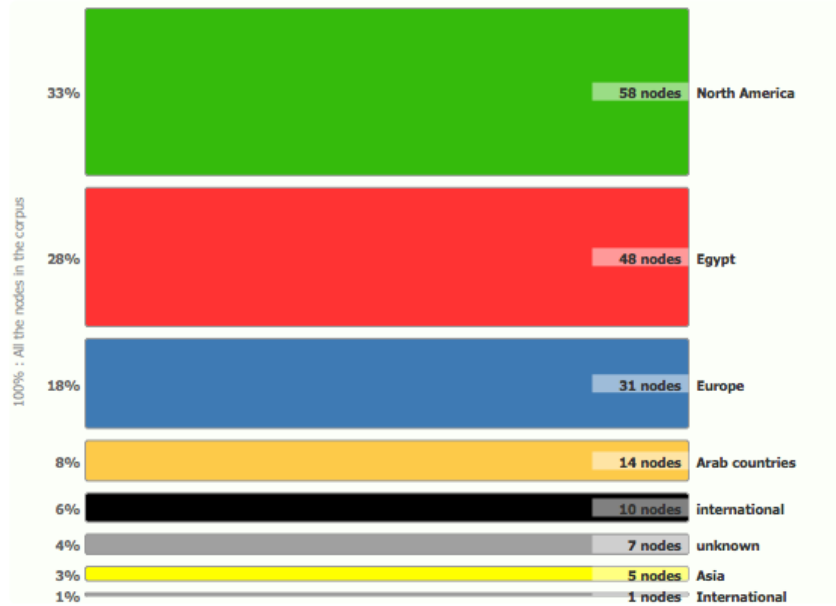


Figure 11. Graph of the final corpus categorised by geographical region

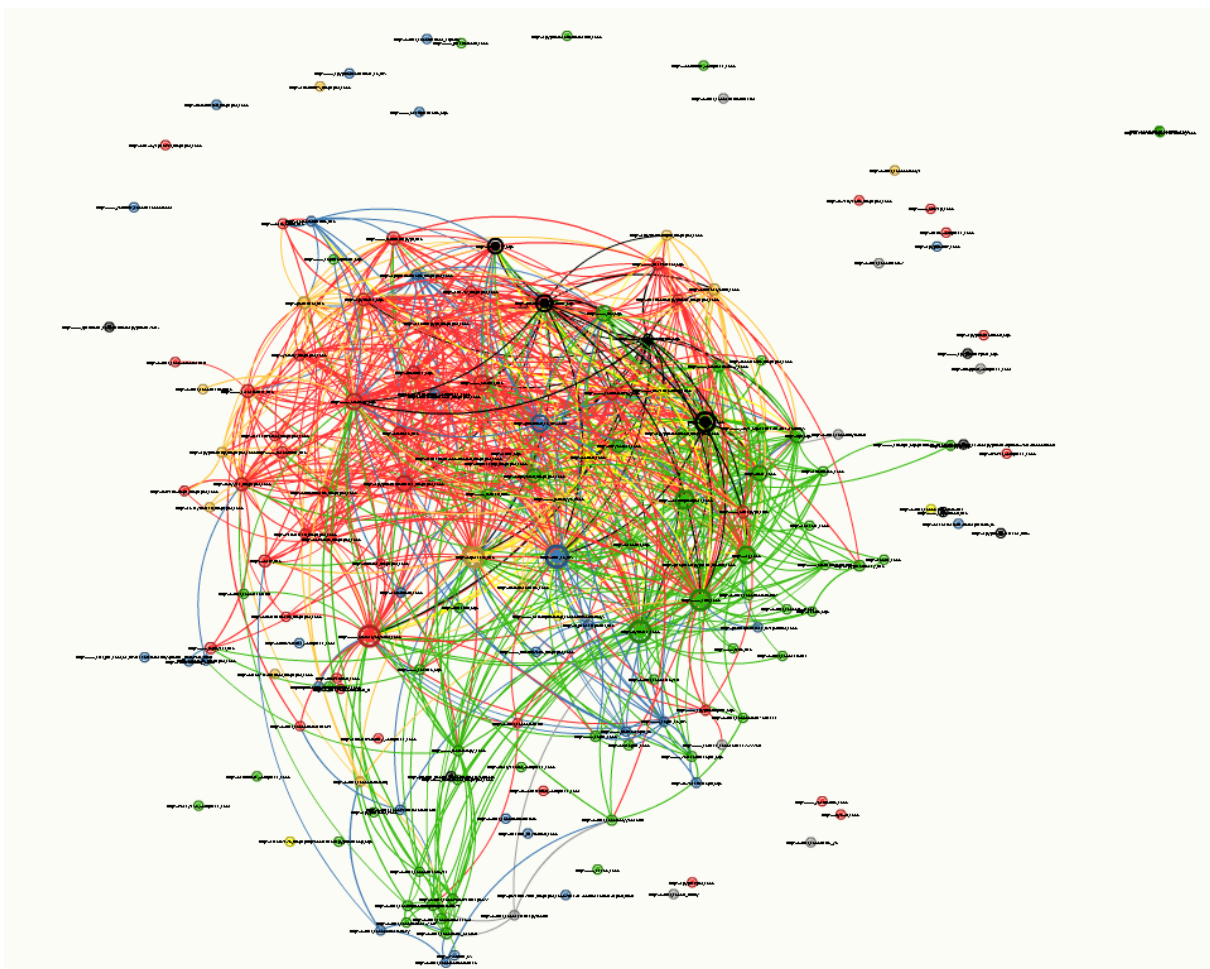
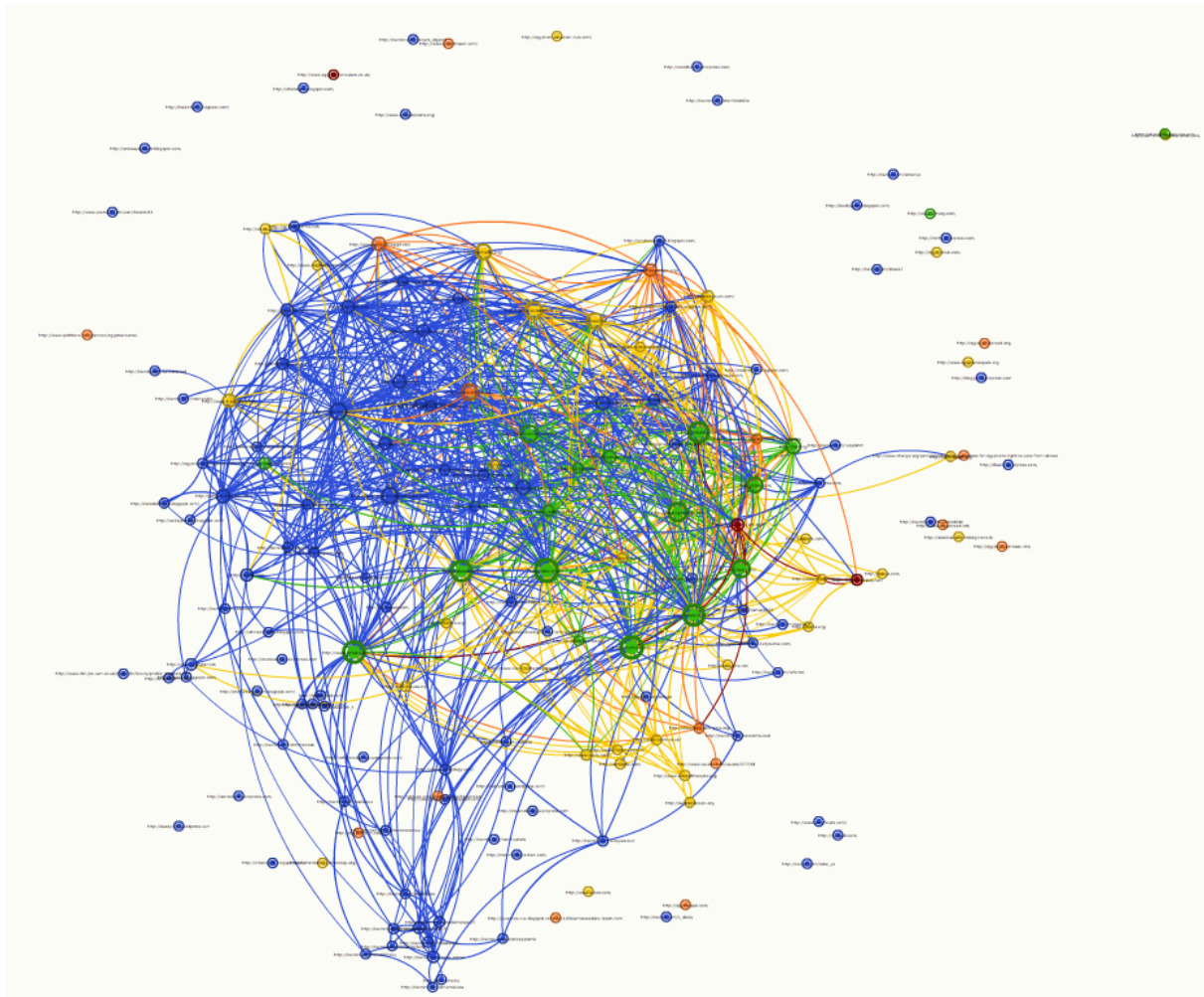


Figure 12. Graph of the final corpus categorised by publisher



<http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=90&map=55&nodeattribute=6§ion=24>.

Second, considering the distribution by publisher, it is evident that the media, such as BBC, Almasrya Alyoum, The New York Times, CNN, Al Jazeera and others, are the authorities of the graph (i.e. the website attracting the most links). Located in the right side of Figure 12, they have a pivotal role, as in the first corpus, linking the different clusters and in particular the activist blogosphere residing in Egypt and the e-diaspora.

Furthermore, considering the distribution by type of activity, we notice that activist sites are only 16% of the corpus. The rest are journalists or “non-activist” bloggers (24%), websites related to research or education (14%) and websites of the cooperation sectors. As we already observed, most actors mobilized on Twitter cannot be considered “professional” activists.

We can conclude that the inclusion of data from the Web 2.0 (notably Twitter) in our Web maps

has led us to discover new phenomena that were less evident in the Web 1.0. Thanks to the mobilisation for voting rights, we discovered a new layer of websites related to the Egyptian e-diaspora, which probably were less active and more isolated before the revolt.

Conclusion

Our research investigated the phenomenon of the Egyptian diaspora through an innovative approach based on the analysis of digital activity and the presence of Egyptian connected migrants. This study has highlighted some online phenomena mirroring the physical diaspora but has also identified new specific dynamics related to the digital space.

On the one hand, Web maps confirmed known phenomena: the fact that the Egyptian diaspora is limited; the weak link with the country of

origin; the variety of the diaspora's dynamics and how they differ according to the host country; and, last but not least, the strength of the Coptic diaspora. Given these facts, we can describe the Egyptian diaspora as one of those diasporas that Alain Médam defines as "still fluid, shifting, floating" (1993: 59).²⁶

On the other hand, as regards the e-diaspora, the study of digital territories helped identify some new phenomena. In particular, thanks to the coincidence with the Egyptian revolt, we could investigate the mobilisation of Egyptians abroad on the voting-rights issue. Through Twitter data, we observed the emergence of a transnational Egyptian community debating and fighting for a common cause. On the Twitter account pages, we were able to find several addresses of blogs and websites that we integrated into our Web mapping. Although several nodes are still isolated, clusters are still residual and media are still the authorities, this extension of our corpus highlighted the emergence of a layer of actors, less visible on the Web but clinging to revolutionary movements.

In conclusion, the combination of data from Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 proved to be a very successful strategy. It allowed us to identify links that were not visible through traditional Web-mapping techniques. We hope that our contribution may help design new developments of the e-Diaspora project on the digital presence of connected migrants.

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26. In French, "des diasporas encore fluides, mouvantes, flottantes".

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