

**How does Social Media Networking (SMN) trigger “participation spiral” in  
the context of semi-authoritarian states? Case study of Kazakhstan.**

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Research Paper submitted to

Graduate School of Public Policy

University of Tokyo

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Public Policy, International Program

June 2022

Tokyo, Japan

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## **Section 1: Introduction**

Social Media Networks (SMNs) are an increasingly important platform for political discourse amongst the general public. We all, probably, witnessed some of our networks casually chat away their experience of having a heated discussion with an “internet stranger” over certain social issues or government decisions. Personally, I was involved in similar conversations with peers, co-workers and supervisors during my occasional stays in Kazakhstan. While this appears normalised in our daily lives today, the possibility to share ideas or discuss sensitive issues within or beyond our own community is an opportunity that emerged not so long ago, and certainly given not to everybody. The main difference of discussing such Internet exchanges in free speech countries versus the countries with limited and regulated information flow, these online experiences are a unique opportunity to those in the latter situation. An opportunity generated by SMNs that empowers individuals to pursue their beliefs, mature their political awareness, and lead to greater political participation. In a sense, the Internet is the best available tool for political involvement and for igniting public demand in the context of authoritarian states.

In the literature this phenomenon has been addressed along the lines of digital activism, some authors (Keremoglu and Weidmann, 2020) positing the importance of Internet as a liberating technology in many repressive regimes. On the other hand, however, there is a plenty of studies that propose the age of “digital totalitarianism”, pointing at the growing central government control of the Internet (Rod and Weidmann, 2015; Hu, 2022; Keegan, 2022). Indeed, many countries in recent years opted for Internet control measures such as blocking websites, using firewalls, imposing censorship, or shutting down the Internet. Although these perspectives provide a categorised understanding of how the Internet functions in clearly defined democracies or autocracies, it does not cover a large area of grey zone that exists in practice. What about the states that fail to come under the category of democratic rules, but also do not necessarily hold up to the strict standards of institutional control of autocratic regimes? These states, referred to as semi-authoritarian regimes in this paper, provide an important and interesting framework to study the role of the Internet and SMNs.

By focusing on the case study of Kazakhstan as a semi-authoritarian state, the aim of this paper is to revisit the importance of the socio-political context of a state to improve our understanding of a successful SMN activism and its impact on political engagement. Primarily, I aim to explore the process of how SMNs’ structural features can trigger ‘participation spiral’, a

phenomenon defined as a continuous expansion of political activism of the general public, sustained by individual motivations. The findings of this paper indicate a continuous growth in public's willingness to attend political discussions and demonstrations, which gradually grow into SMN enabled chain reaction. Thus, these observed transformations in public attitude towards political engagement point at the 'participation spiral', which is conceived through the analysis of social media tools.

This paper builds on existing studies that challenge technologically deterministic understandings of the role of the Internet in regards to different political regimes. In particular, it aims to complement the study by Faris (2015), who lays a similar groundwork for analysing the role of social media blogging and activism in Egypt. This paper will provide a more nuanced and most up-to-date analysis of how SMNs can assist in activism leading to reforms. The rest of the paper will be organised into four sections. The Section 2 will discuss the existing literature on the nexus of Internet and political regimes. Section 3 will introduce background and case study findings. Section 4 will discuss the process of 'participation spiral', finally, concluding with further implications in Section 5.

## **Section 2: Review of the Literature**

Does Internet control prevent political activism? Most of the questions in the literature addressing the role of Internet remain deterministic. Analysis suggest that with more complex events in domestic politics coming together Internet has a more versatile role.

The study by Rod and Weidmann (2015) illustrates a positive correlation between Internet expansion and strengthening autocracies, pointing out the repressive potential of the Internet technology rather than its liberating features. This study, however, focuses on states with high level of press censorship. On the other hand, the study by Keremoglu and Weidmann (2020) provides a different approach in explaining the central governments' role in controlling Internet access and its effectiveness for autocracies to maintain power. Authors' work assesses the direct relationship between an autocratic government and the Internet, positing that digital tools or digital tactics can sometimes be a complementary tool to offline suppression of mass protests. Both of these works provide a crucial perspective on the potential of Internet technology in states with stringent institutional control over information exchange and generally over cyberspace. However, this paper would like to focus on an opposite spectrum and explore how Internet is not necessarily

repressing in the context of transitioning (semi-authoritarian) regimes, that is, regimes with weakened central power but non-established democracy.

Another group of literature approach the role of the Internet and digital media from a different angle, by emphasising its impact on social change and digitally enabled participation. Earl and Kimport (2011, p.71), for example, posit that Internet's knowledge production feature allows the creation of "ephemeral coalitions" highlighting the importance of low participation costs due to ICTs. They also discuss the effectiveness of mesomobilisation that is conducted in the age of Internet, thus pointing out at the importance of speed and extent of cyber communication to ignite more political involvement (ibid.). Similarly, Barbas (2020, p.74) analyzes social media's role in the context of communicational activism, which serve as an engine for "dialogical" knowledge production as opposed to hierarchical transmission of knowledge. This differentiation comes in relevant when further analysing the impact of SMN on fostering democratic participation for two reasons. Firstly, since most of the communication taking place on social media is based on dialogues and discussions it can be argued that all Internet members have an equal access to generate knowledge. Secondly, "communication and education processes [are] 'circles of culture', which generated consciousness raising and the politicisation of participants" (Barbas, 2020, p.75), and which is a significant factor for social movements. Furthermore, the correlation between communication and consciousness raising is discussed by Stephansen (2020), in which the collective processes of knowledge production allow for the articulation of identity of movements.

The works reviewed in the first paragraph clearly demonstrate the high probabilities of Internet technology being exploited by central governments, however the analysis are limited to autocracies with high censorship regulations. In comparison, reviewed studies in the second paragraph mainly focus on the actual potential of the Internet being used for political movements and social changes, without much consideration of domestic situation and political regime. Nonetheless these authors brought up the Internet's networking feature, which leads us to further single out SMN platforms as our independent variable to study its characteristics in affecting dependent variable – people's behaviour in regards to political participation. The above reviewed studies, therefore, would further be complemented by the following two studies on which this paper will build on to elucidate the process of 'participation spiral'.

Vanderhill (2020), in her work brings up crucial questions on how Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are used to both undermine dictators and strengthen their

rules, thus introducing us to the complex effects of Internet on autocratic regimes. Author rightly posits that the role of ICTs differ significantly in authoritarian regimes vis-à-vis democracies, where ICTs are often the only avenue for political discourse to build democracy. Vanderhill (ibid.), also, highlights that ICTs do not determine regime outcomes (as opposed to the literature reviewed in the first paragraph), but remains a vital contributing factor. Her analysis are limited to Kyrgyzstan in the former Soviet Union central Asian context, while dismissing Kazakhstan for the lack of major protests or political overturns between 2005-2018. Therefore, the focus of this paper's case study will be events after 2018 in Kazakhstan that have led to government overthrow in 2022. Second source that this paper will be relying on is the study by Faris (2015) as he focuses on a semi-authoritarian context of Egypt, assessing the extent of effect of Internet on fostering online communities and real-time organising. Similar to Barbas (2020), the author claims that Internet has a positive impact on democratic culture, highlighting the aspect of many-to-many communication that SMN allows.

The next section will introduce background and the findings from the traced data from SMN platforms in Kazakhstan. It should be reinstated that these analysis will be considered in the context of semi-authoritarian states, as these states differ in the extent of their Internet and press regulation. Semi-authoritarian states are not necessarily those that can be categorised into the middle category between ideal democracies and totalitarian regimes on a linear scale, but rather regimes that have varying control levels across different time period. One element that allows such fluctuations in Internet control is the general absence of a central institutional regulatory measure in the cyberspace.

### **Section 3: Methodology**

The main methodology of this papers is qualitative research based on a single case study. It involves analysis of secondary data such as news reports, blogs, and process tracing analysis of social media commentaries, groups and posts that were trending around 2021 to beginning of 2022. This section will start with introducing the political and Internet situation in Kazakhstan to provide a general overview, then will proceed to assessing the participation dynamics by using Google Analytics and Popsters to analyse SMN content and user engagement.

### **Section 4: Case study background and findings**

#### **4.1 Socio-political context of Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan has remained one of the more repressive regimes in comparison to its neighbours like Kyrgyzstan, with the same president that has ruled the country since its independence in 1991. The Nazarbayev's legacy carries a lot of restrictive regulations, imprisonment of oppositioners and consistent marginalisation of the public that spoke out. This legacy has now drowned in its own repercussions that we see today. The country largely suffers from the lack of transparent and fair elections, as well as the absence of genuine opposition parties. The political elite that has mainly consisted of the close family members of Nazarbayev remained the main powerholders even after Nazarbayev's resignation in 2019. Once the president's responsibilities were passed down to the Senate chairman Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev, central control remained stringent and systemic corruption prevalent, while elections non-credible. After this presidential transition the former president still held influential positions in the official decision-making. According to Freedom House (2022), Kazakhstan scores low (0/4) on representative and fair decisions regarding policy implementation. Nazarbayev's resignation was seen as a mere façade for the international community, as the political power remained centralised, while the nation's grievances were left unaddressed. According to Bohr, et.al. (2019), the power of the first president is deeply rooted to an extent that no economic or political reform can happen without his participation. The report also predicted that it is only when Nazarbayev leaves the political arena completely that possibilities for social change may arise under Tokayev's rule (ibid.).

Despite such sceptical prognosis and overview of the political situation in Kazakhstan, the regime is relatively free in some aspects. According to a media report by Toleukhanova (2020), the democratic indicators of the country have slightly improved from 1.29 in 2019 to 1.32. This improvement is attributed to the shifts in public attitudes to domestic politics and increase of political engagement. Moreover, there are evidently more platforms dedicated for free expression of public demands. Growing number of independent media, as well as rising number of interviews with university professors, political experts and the youth regarding the political situation in Kazakhstan point at transitional signs towards democratic values. One of the most influential practices became the production of short interviews with famous Internet bloggers that are most known amongst the general public. This has so far been crucial to engage the apolitical youth into the dialogues. All these shifts in public attitude were especially seen during the transitional period

upon Nazarbayev's resignation. This transitional period became a precedent to what was about to become a milestone in independent Kazakhstan's political history.

#### **4.2 Internet situation in Kazakhstan and the growing role of SMNs**

In Kazakhstan, freedom of expression is allowed within the set boundaries of the government, both on the Internet and traditional press. According to Freedom House (2021), the freedom on the Net was categorised as "Not Free" scoring only 33 points of 100 in 2021. The main Internet control tool in Kazakhstan is State Technical Service (STS) that allows the government to disrupt or suspend internet access in the risk of social emergency (ibid.). However, the actual extent of social media censorship is less than traditional media control. As Kozhanova (2019) states, "online media landscape in Kazakhstan is subject to less overt forms of restrictions on the free flow of information". It can also be explained by the absence of a central monitoring institution, as while STS allows government control of internet it does not carry out function of spotting and purging undesired contents. Therefore, despite the certain degree of regulation and prosecution of cyberspace activists there has been rapid increase in the number of Internet users.

According to World Bank data, 86% (or roughly 15 million) of the total population use Internet in Kazakhstan, this is a significant growth in a decade, where it stood at merely 32% in 2010. For context, Japan's Internet users make up 90%, while US is at 91%. Figure 1 illustrates this rate on a graph, including other central Asian countries (World Bank Data, 2022). It can be seen that Kazakhstan is one of the most Internet connected states, with active Internet users. Studies also show that there were 12 million social media users in Kazakhstan in January 2021 (Kemp, 2021). The use of social media has especially grown since the start of the pandemic, the growth accounted for 26% from 2020 to 2021 (Zhusupova, 2021). Report shows that during this period the role of social media and messengers was bolstered as the main platform for communication and keeping up to date with topical news (ibid.). Another explanation for such rapid growth of Internet penetration is the low cost of mobile Internet. Kazakhstan was identified as one of the top cheapest mobile data providers with the value of 1GB of data equaling 0.9 USD (Satubaldina, 2021). Considering the listed factors, this paper will analyse the impact of social media on its users' behaviour, particularly regarding political news, messages and dissemination of local events. It should be noted that the type of social media or messengers varies across countries.



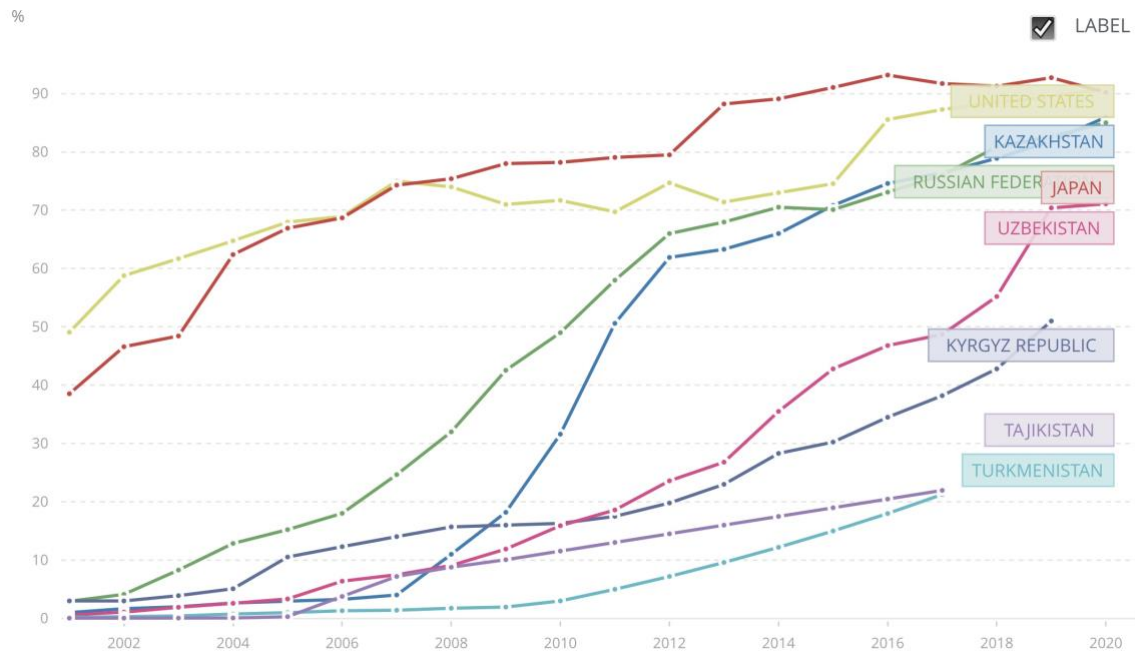


Figure 1. Rate of Internet users (Source: World Bank Data, 2022)

Most popular SMN platforms in Kazakhstan are Vk.com, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp. These tools serve not only as entertainment platforms, they also function as news portals. According to the study by Scientific Research Centre “Molodezh” in 2020, social media websites and blogs were the main source of information (61.5%), followed by state media (39.1%) and local Internet news websites (33.3%). This indicates that any information posted and distributed across social media either via famous influencers or independent online-news reporters, has a considerable power to influence users’ beliefs and actions. In order to understand the reciprocal dynamics between these information sharing platforms and the users, this paper studied the reaction of the public to political trends on social media. The results show that there is a growing shift in public attitudes towards previously taboo topics on social issues.

#### 4.3 Political awakening and participation dynamics

After the resignation of Nazarbayev there was a growing trend in social media reportage – real time news-sharing through the use of videos and photos taken by public. The public evidence based posts and the real-time coverage of the news gives people an instant access to discuss the situation in the commentaries. This practice has been prevalent, namely, on Instagram. Kypshakbayev (2021) posits that “civil society activism in Kazakhstan is largely taking place

online, with social media serving as the most important tool.” According to the report, since 2019 there were roughly 7-8 new Instagram accounts dedicated for providing transparent coverage of the socio-economic situation in the country (ibid.). Instagram is one of the SMN platforms that showed the most engagement from public in the form of commentaries, shares and reposts, thus it provides an appropriate pool of data for analysis. The engagement with posts were analysed from independent news online platforms on Instagram, namely, Azattyq and HolaNews.

Azattyq is one of the most popular Instagram news account that currently has 690 thousand followers (Azattyq, Instagram). The page shares roughly around 5-6 reports/posts per day. This paper has traced the number of commentaries under posts on governmental reforms and the topics relating to Nazarbayev’s rule from 2019 to 2022. It was observed that posts with the most engagement were on corruption and political elites, ranging between 300-400 commentaries. In terms of quantity this engagement remained roughly the same between 2019-2022. However, the actual content of the messages have shifted from scepticism to more awakened discussions of the social issues. HolaNews is another newly founded online news media platform with an audience of 300 thousand followers on Instagram (HolaNews, Instagram). Similarly, data was collected from the content of discussions in the commentary section on their YouTube channel and Instagram TV. The engagement levels were higher for this platform, with commentaries exceeding 1000 per post on topics related to government rule. In addition, general mood of the users were also compared through commentaries in 2020 versus today. It was similarly observed that the interviews shared in 2020 were met with overwhelmingly sceptical messages and open disinterest in the raised social issues (HolaNews, 2019). However, starting from the end of 2021 to beginning of 2022 one of the most quoted comments included open direct criticisms of the ministers and political elites. The increased sources of alternative online news started shifting public attitude, which eventually had an impact on the official media.

Maricheva (2021) – an editor for Instagram account Protenge, stated in an interview that “[...] any media that fails to talk about protests begins to feel uncomfortable” (cited in Kypshakbayev, 2021). It is harder for official media to censor anti-government messages and protests, as these will instantly be available online. For example, the coverage of oil protests have now become a less taboo topic across all media. It is known that protests and labour strikes in Kazakhstan is a rare type of expressing public dissent as there is an immediate suppressive measures from the government. However, one of the long-sustained protests originate from

Zhanaozen strikes 2011, which is known as one of the most brutal clashes between police forces and the workers (Kumenov, 2021). The demands of the strikes were to raise salaries for employees of the mining and oil industry. Similar strikes occurred in 2016, and throughout the year of 2021. The tragedy of Zhanaozen strikes became a commonly shared grief that was trending across social media up until the January crisis in 2022. Posts about Zhanaozen started gaining more attention. Growing number of protests against Nazarbayev started flooding SMN platforms, with a motto “Shal Ket!” literally translated into “Step Down, Oldster”.

According to the Google Analytics, there were roughly 7000 online reports that had the phrase “Shal Ket!” in their content, between January of 2021 to June 2022. In contrast, from 2019 to 2020 there were around 1500 online reports with the same phrase. The following year from 2020 to 2021 the number increased to 3000 online reports. Considering that most of the oppositional news reports or any articles that criticise the Nazarbayev’s rule were immediately taken down from the Internet, while its authors prosecuted, such continued increase of reports addressing Nazarbayev’s removal could indicate rapidly growing dissent or greater freedom of expression, or its combination (Figure 2). All these assessed trends indicate changing public mood that has gradually translated into greater social grievance. Moreover, confidence in public expression continued to build up through SMNs. Thus, public networking through social media created a precedent to public mobilisation on the basis of commonly shared griefs.

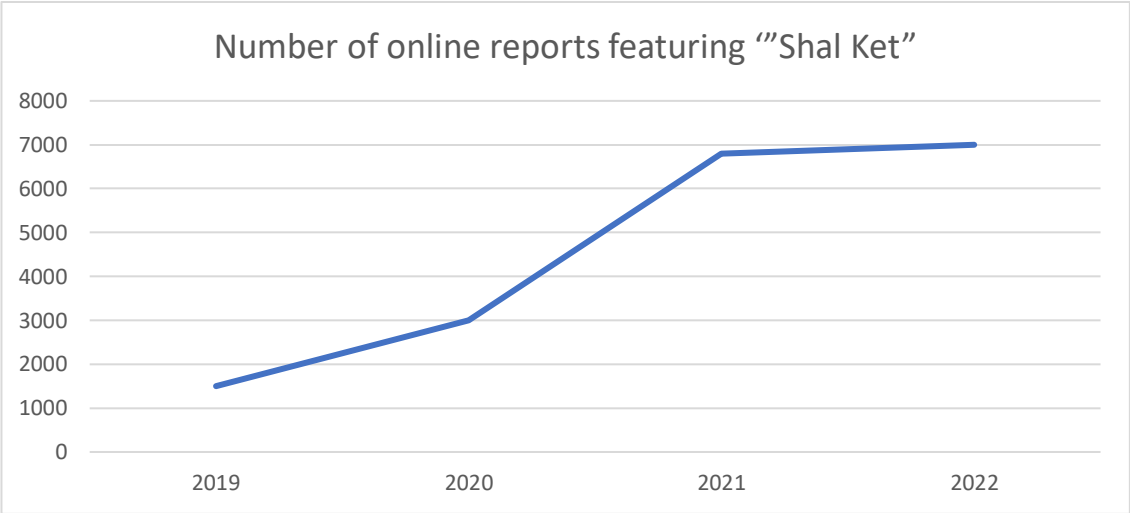


Figure 2. Number of online reports (Source: Author’s work, 2022)

## Section 5: Discussion

This section will discuss more in depth how SMNs have triggered gradual mobilisation – ‘participation spiral’ of the public in nationwide protests. Then it will conclude with analysis of the aftermath of these protests in terms of political reforms and social changes.

### 5.1 ‘Participation spiral’

This paper divided participation spiral into 4 stages, categorised under 3 characteristics of the Internet (transparency, open access, instant communication), which enable each stage and set a foundational trigger for participation spiral (Figure 3).

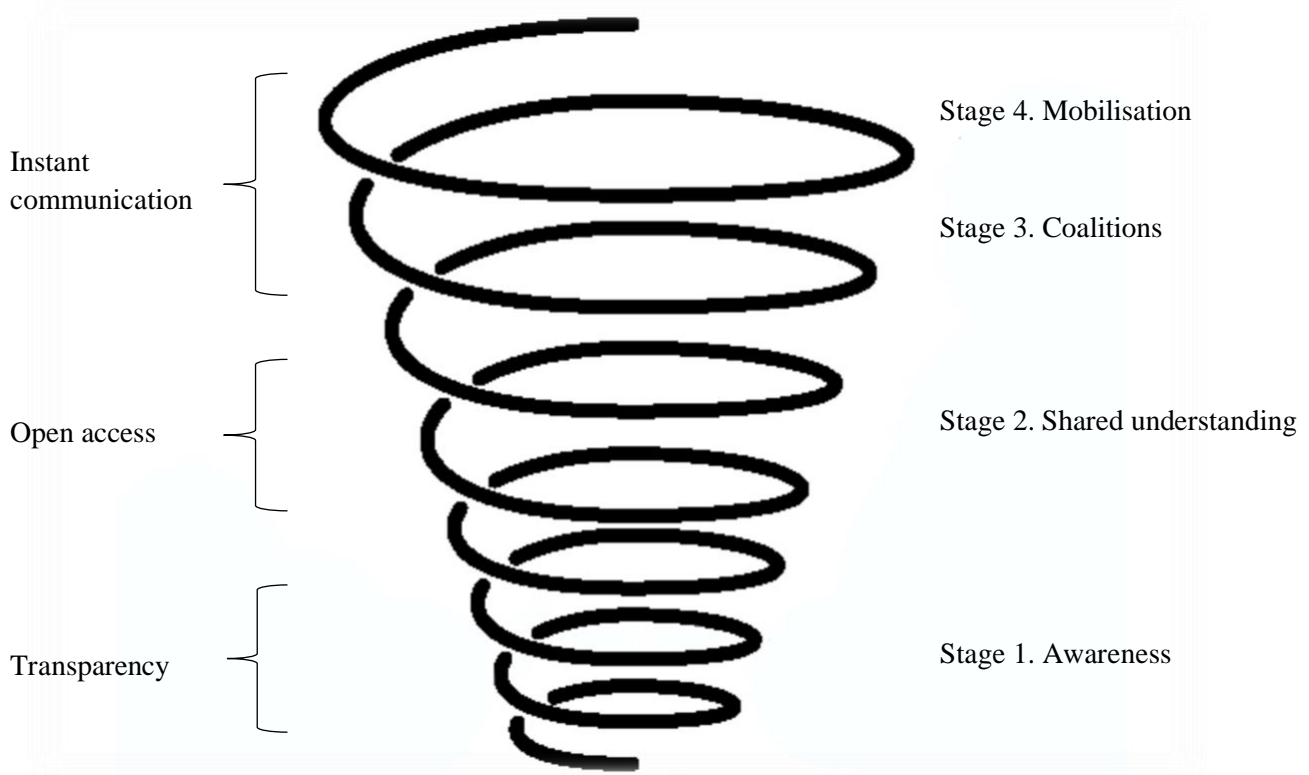


Figure 3. Participation Spiral (Source: Author’s work, 2022)

The first stage falls under the category of transparency. Based on the analysis in the previous section it can be seen that high internet penetration rates and increasing active social media users transferred the supply of information into the cyberspace. This also means that the growing number of suppliers that are independent news accounts on platforms like Instagram

reduced the information monopoly by state media. Therefore, it can be observed that the Internet access guaranteed people transparent coverage of the protests through information dissemination in SMNs. In this first stage, transparency generates greater awareness and interest in socio-political situation for its users.

The continued exposure to the truth and instantaneous access to uncensored information gradually prompts internet users to express their views, thus shedding more light on the commonly shared griefs. This is the second stage of the spiral, enabled through open access. It allows many-to-many communication, through commentary sections, which empowers people to participate in discussions. In addition, the generated knowledge in these online discussions challenge the public scepticism on social change. The analysis of commentaries in section 3.3 illustrated this case, where SMN ties have altered discourses. Moreover, open communication creates networked activism, meaning that certain trending political posts are shared from one network to another, including via private chats. This stage exemplifies Faris' (2015) theory of networked activism that leads to informational cascade – boosting public confidence to voice their concerns. These informational cascades, as seen in both cases of Egypt and Kazakhstan, cause sudden and unexpected shift in public participation. According to a public survey evaluating the extent of public trust in messages received from their network via WhatsApp and Telegram apps, 12.52% of respondents indicated a complete trust, 65.28% indicated that they trust occasionally, while 19.51% do not trust at all (Zhusupova, 2021). These numbers help us understand the level of engagement we are able to get simply by disseminating information within the network. Since every message received comes from a relatively trusted source, as the study indicates, trust element in Kazakhstan's SMN is what had allowed a sustained participation spiral.

Once public posts on open platforms are transferred into individual messaging platforms, the third characteristic of SMN – instant communication – leads us to the next stage of participation spiral. The speedy flow of information establishes a common understanding of particular issues amongst the internet users. In the case of Kazakhstan, the main motto of public dissatisfaction became “Shal Ket”. As reports featuring this motto were rising there was a simultaneous rise of Instagram meme posts trending #ShalKet (Appendix 1). The spread of memes and hashtags are an effective way to expand networks by attracting online users with the most trending posts, igniting public interest. It can also be said that the Internet's open access to these memes and hashtags promoted public education about the existing dissent against the central government. Therefore,

the use of motto #ShalKet became a manifestation of a shared understanding that extended to all corners of the country, bringing people together. Shared understandings informed individuals of their networks' willingness to express their political demands and to mobilise. These private information exchange created reassurances for users that were unsure about the risks of political participation, by facilitating organisation on specific issues. Referring back to Earl and Kimport (2011, p.71), the SMNs help form "ephemeral coalitions" around a specific problem. Similarly, oil protests in Kazakhstan prompted formation of temporary online groups that were actively promoting petitions and fostering offline meetings. One after another, employees of the oil and mining companies went out on street marches. Increased prices of oil and gas, however, concerned not only the workers of this industry, but it resonated with much larger public discontent and deep resentment towards the power elite that has been ruling the country for the last 30 years.

Thus, instant communication served as an engine for the last stage of the participation spiral. As mentioned in section 3.3 oil protests started breaking out from the end of 2021. Many social media posts referring to Zhanaozen tragedy were shared amongst groups and via individual messages, triggering consciousness about the accumulated public grievances. Thus, on 4<sup>th</sup> of January the country was experiencing public protests throughout all of its 14 regions. The most effective tool for such coordinated and organised mobilisation became Instagram and WhatsApp. Once Instagram groups started informing the public of real time location for meetings amongst its network, the digital flyers spread across these networks at an instantaneous speed. High levels of Internet penetration allowed most of the population to pick up on this digital flyers, leading to nationwide mobilisation.

Driving from these stages of public involvement, the participation spiral can be summarised as a phenomenon whereby structural features of Internet allow SMNs provide transparency, open access and instant communication that create a chain reaction in public behaviour. Starting from gaining awareness, to boosting confidence in public expression to offline mobilisation there is a continuous expansion of political engagement. In the case of Kazakhstan, the accumulated effects of commonly shared grievances and growing dissent resulted in a nationwide revolution that eventually overthrew the main powerholder of the regime – Nazarbayev.

## **5.2 Aftermath and the role of semi-authoritarian government**

Immediate aftermath of such nationwide protests was the removal of Nazarbayev from any political decision making position, and the subsequent removal of the family’s close members in the political arena. Another biggest indicator that SMN mobilisation was effective is the government’s reaction to shutdown the Internet to prevent further public coordination (Teplyakov, 2022). This reaction shows that the central government clearly saw Internet as a temporary threat to its stability. Figure 4 compares two maps illustrating a dispersion and rates of Internet penetration and the map of major protests breakouts (Government Statistics; Azattyq Radio).



Figure 4. Ratio map of Internet users; Map of major protests (Source: Government Statistics; Azattyq Radio)

However, the shutdown did not necessarily prevent the expansion of protests, as public continued marching streets even without the SMN tools. By this point it was impossible to stop the public from gathering, resulting in a brutal suppression of the protests with a shoot-to-kill order from president Tokayev. Essentially, the tragedy of January crisis lies within the regime's long standing problems of poverty, corruption and power monopoly. In Faris' words this was a "fatal combination of networked activism and popular dissatisfaction" (2015, p.176). On the other hand, at the cost of January events there were several reforms that took place immediately. The new president has strengthened his image by addressing people's demands. This also included restructuring of the government and constitutional reforms that took place on 5<sup>th</sup> June (Esquire, 2022).

In sum, this paper has evaluated a short-term immediate rather than long term consequences of SMN enabled participation spiral. It illustrated that SMN tools are most effective in challenging semi-authoritarian regimes, opening windows for potential transitional milestones. The case of Kazakhstan reinforces the arguments made by both Vanderhill (2020) and Faris (2015) that Internet is an effective tool to challenge authoritarian regimes and to empower political activism. The case study analysis of these authors however were mainly based on times when Internet just started gaining popularity. Thus their conclusion was derived from assessments on SMN on public behaviour with low Internet penetration and connectivity between 2009-2013. This paper included analysis of more up-to-date data in the context of higher Internet penetration.

## **Section 6: Implications**

The discussion of regime outcome for Kazakhstan was not covered in this paper as it would become mainly speculative ideas about the future. In the long term, there should be a build up effect of these mobilisations and the generated knowledge from protests and social movements, particularly, with Internet's another important characteristic – storage of information. On the other hand, after failing to prevent such public mobilisation, central government can take further actions to strengthen internet surveillance and control. Further research in this direction would complement this paper to contribute to the studies of authoritarian durability.

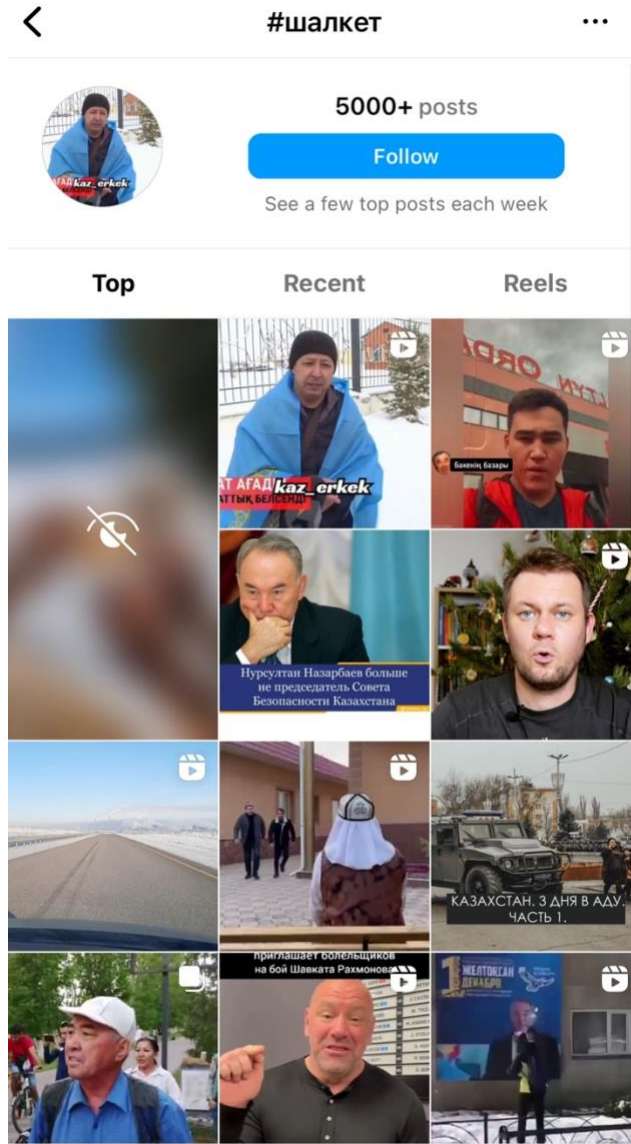
Although this paper has not directly applied comparative analysis between Kazakhstan and Egypt, it did rely on Faris' (2015) analysis of the social media induced movements. Therefore, it has partially exemplified the theory proposed by Faris (2015), with additional analysis and



explanations of dynamic relations between SMNs and the public in the context of former Soviet Union state. On a broader discussion, the ‘participation spiral’ is applicable to other semi-authoritarian regimes that are similarly experiencing political turbulences. This paper adds to the literature that discusses the role of SMNs in relation to semi-authoritarian political regimes and its impact on political participation. It hopes to invite more scholars to study effects of SMNs under the conditions of transitionary periods or transitioning regimes.

In terms of implications for policies, Kazakhstan’s government should take an advantage of the growing role of SMN in public’s political participation. There is a need to allow for more platforms for expressing common dissent, and to implement more transparent governance institutions of the cyberspace. For international community, there should be greater attention given to the voices reaching out to international organisations from the local public in Kazakhstan. There is an evident shift in public values towards more democratic values, as well as maturing political awareness. This is an opportunity for the international community to assist with capacity building for public education and free flow of information, that will further create mechanisms of cooperation between the central government and the public.

# Appendix



Appendix 1. Trending Instagram memes on #ShalKet (Source: Instagram, 2022)

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