



**The changing role of Media and its impact on Conflict: an analysis of new media in the
Arab Spring Uprising of Egypt 2011**

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Declaration

I, Danille Janse van Vuuren, hereby declare that this dissertation is a product of my own work except where otherwise stated and expressly acknowledged, and that this work has not previously presented in part or in its entirety, at any other university for the award of a degree.

Signature: _____

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Abstract

The Arab Spring Uprising of Egypt, that took place from the beginning of January 2011, received a considerable amount of attention from the media and broader international community. The Arab Spring Uprising of Egypt is in reaction to decades of dictatorship, degraded and undervalued standards of living, high inflation rates, failing economies, corruption and high unemployment rates. The Egyptian Uprising included demonstrations by widespread provincial activity and spontaneous protests in order to raise awareness and increase pressure on the Egyptian government to fulfil the demands of its people. New media was identified as a catalyst for the Egyptian revolution, since it was used as a tool to inform Egyptians as well as the rest of the world about the condition of the Egyptian conflict, it provided evidence of the regime's illegitimacy, and it provided Egyptians with a platform to air their grievances with the Mubarak regime as well as to promote pro-democratic protests. This study is concerned with identifying how new media was used in Egypt's Arab Spring Uprising as a tool to obtain pro-democratic goals and whether it resulted in a constructive transition to democracy. A discussion of the history of the Middle East and Egypt is provided as well as the Arab Spring Uprising of Egypt. Two predominant themes, namely: conflict, and the media will also be discussed. Furthermore, Conflict Theory and The Mass Communication Theory is applied in this study in order to interpret the uprising of Egypt.

Key words: The Arab Spring Uprising, new media, Conflict Theory, The Mass Communication Theory, Egypt

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“If all States were good and all dissidents’ evil, the moral problems implicit in conflict would be agreeably simplified, but there are good states and bad” (Crozier, 1974, p.2).

Chapter 1: Introduction

“The widely diverse and pluralistic online communities in the Arab world are creating and sharing content, calling into question the future of the many state-owned or self-censored media that provide less in the way of engagement that Arab audiences have come to expect” (Ghannam, 2012, p.4).

1.1 Overview of the Study

Popular uprisings, dubbed as the *Arab Spring uprisings*, in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have received a considerable amount of attention from the media and the broader international community (Demissie, 2011). The uprisings that were initially sparked in Tunisia in 2010 have progressed to Egypt in 2011 as well as to the rest of the MENA region (Osman, 2011). The revolutions have one linking principle in common – all of them have or are experiencing pro-democratic revolutions in the form of dynamic protests and demonstrations for change in government from repressive authoritarian regimes to democracies (Heiss, 2012).

The uprisings are in reaction to decades of oppressive rule, growing economic disparity, massive corruption, repression and grave human rights violations (Saikal, 2011). Economically Egyptians suffered for decades under the Mubarak regime due to widespread corruption and poor economic management (Heiss, 2012). It was estimated that in 2006 10 percent of 84 million Egyptians were unemployed and the country had been experiencing soaring food prices and inflation (Demissie, 2011). In 2007, 32 percent of the population were completely illiterate; 40 percent of the population were below the international poverty line and there was not only a sense of general confusion, resentment and rejection among the youth of Egypt, but an increasing overarching feeling of an irreparable damage (Osman, 2011).

One of the central tools used by the pro-democratic protestors, in order to obtain their goals of political reform, social justice and economic viability, is the media, specifically new media (Al.-Ani, Mark, Chunh, and Jones, 2012). In Egypt the media, specifically new media in the form of social media such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *YouTube*, have fulfilled numerous functions (Manrique and Mikail, 2011). The media can be seen as a tool used for communication amongst the population which shapes the way the public perceives the conflict; its causes and consequences, its importance and how to think about it (O’Sullivan, Dutton and Rayner, 1994). The media also brings to the international community’s attention the true range of the grievances that the oppressed are experiencing in Egypt (Speicher, 2010). Importantly new media are used as tools by pro-democratic protestors as well as citizens to express their knowledge and experiences of local realities which supply vital information to the world about the conflict in Egypt when the world is unable or unwilling to see (Hamamou, 2011).

1.2 Significance and Aim of the Study

In spite of the pervasiveness of the media, conflict and conflict transformation processes - these elements combined have received very little scholarly attention and this poses an immense problem since these elements play crucial roles in contemporary life (Reuben, 2010). The effects of the media on society are well documented (O'Sullivan et al, 1994, Wolfsfeld, 2005, Baran and Davis, 2006 and Speicher, 2010); however, studies of the impact of media on conflict processes as well as pro-democratic conflicts are significantly less visible. This study hopes to contribute to filling the knowledge gap about the complex relationship between media, conflict and pro-democratic uprisings. Furthermore, political research on the media remains limited compared with the volume of research on other intermediary institutions, such as media and political parties or interest groups (Reuben, 2010 and Becirovic, 2010). Thus, there is an unprecedented shortage of political research on a wide range of media issues and this study, because of its political nature, will therefore offer a political account of the impact of the media on conflict transformation processes.

Numerous studies (Wolfsfeld, 2004, Bratic and Schirch, 2007 and Reuben, 2010) have confirmed that the impact of the media on conflict is greater than the impact of the media on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Little scholarly attention has been directed at the impact of media as a tool for conflict transformation, either constructively or destructively. This study is, therefore, interested in discovering how and in which ways new media have been used in Egypt in order to fulfil various functions central to achieving pro-democratic goals. The study is also interested in whether the media vehicles used for pro-democratic goals have had a constructive or destructive outcome on the conflict (Bratic and Schirch, 2007, Reuben, 2010 and Ramsbotham, Woodhous, and Miall, 2011).

In this research dissertation the following questions will be addressed. Firstly, how was new media used for pro-democratic goals in the Arab Spring Uprising of Egypt. Secondly, what impact did new media have on the Egyptian uprising and which roles did new media fulfil in the conflict. Lastly, has the use of new media led to a constructive or destructive outcome on the conflict transformation process in Egypt.

1.3 Research Methodology

This paper will identify previously published literature and theoretical frameworks, central to the research question, in the form of desktop research. The research will be based purely on textual data which includes discourse analysis, content analysis, textual criticism, and historical study. This study focuses on the Arab Spring Uprising in Egypt by locating pre-existing documents in the form of journals, extracts, newspaper reports, online articles and archives in order to determine how new media was used for pro-democratic purposes. Since new media played an imperative role in the Egyptian uprisings this paper will focus on how new media was used to fulfil different goals for pro-democratic ends. This paper aims to study the different kinds of functions and results that new media had during the Egyptian uprisings.

This study employs a phenomenological/interpretivist approach since the aim of this study is to make sense of a certain phenomenon (Eagle, Hayes and Sibanda, 1999). Furthermore, this study aims to interpret and give meaning to certain actions and results that will appear throughout the study (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). This study employs both an exploratory and explanatory approach since this study will be investigating the phenomena of media effects on society and conflict transformation processes as well as describing why and how this phenomenon has taken place. This study will gather information by using a qualitative method. This study incorporates qualitative research methods by analysing existing data in the form of case studies in order to establish the effect of the media on conflict transformation processes (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999).

Chapter 2: Background, Problem Setting, Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

“The state is necessary – but rebellion against it is inevitable” (Crozier, 1974, p.22).

2.1 Background

The Arab Spring Uprisings have changed the lives of millions of people around the world as a wave of citizen-led uprisings swept across the Middle East and North Africa, toppling age-old autocratic regimes (Helgesen, 2011). The Arab Spring Uprisings, which started in December 2010, have aroused immense attention and outcry from neighbouring countries and the international community as Arab states demanded political and governmental reform (Murray, 2012). The entire Middle East and other parts of the Arab world have been governed for decades by despotic, corrupt and tyrannical regimes (Lewis, 2005).

The Arab Spring Uprisings are in reaction to numerous grievances depending on the particular state involved, for instance the reasons for the uprisings range from the pro-democratic protests for change in government from repressive authoritarian regimes to democracies, to protests for equality and visible economic reform, to protests for political transparency and modern institutions (Groshek, 2011). The uprisings are in reaction to decades of oppressive rule, growing economic disparity, massive corruption, repression, inequality, disregard for human rights and complete censorship (Hinnebusch, 2012). One of the central tools used by the various protestors, in order to obtain their goals of political reform, social justice and economic viability, is the media – especially new media in the form of social media (Groshek, 2011).

The Arab Spring Uprising that initially sparked in Tunisia late 2010 and spread to Egypt and Libya within days, led analysts to identify new media as an important catalyst of the uprisings (Manrique and Mikail, 2011). New media include mobile phones and Internet-based applications such as email, blogs, and forums, social networking sites such as *Facebook and Twitter*, and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) programmes such as *Skype* (discussed further in chapter 1.3.2 (v) page 22). Looking at the role of these tools in the processes of political change, two phases are clearly distinguished: firstly, their role in bringing down old regimes, and secondly, their significance in consolidating transitions to democracy once the revolution has settled. Democracy can be defined as a “system of government in which all the people of a country can vote to elect their representatives and the fair and equal treatment of everyone in the country” (Wehmeier, 2005, p.389). Although it is clear that new media made a crucial contribution to the overthrow of Ben Ali (Tunisia) and Mubarak (Egypt), experiences from other parts of the world show that their role in sustaining the democratic transition process in the longer run is less certain (Murray, 2012).

2.2 Problem Setting

The next section will contextualise the two main themes that will take prominence in this study, namely; conflict, and the media. What has become clear in all of the Arab Spring Uprisings, ranging from Tunisia to Yemen, is the consequence of conflict which evolves between the parties involved (Murray, 2012). Although the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya were initially peaceful the same cannot be said for Syria or Yemen. Conflict has taken many forms in the uprisings, usually from the side of the state in reaction to protests or non-cooperation, but has also been used as a tool by more aggressive citizens for various reasons.

The role that the media has played in the Arab Spring Uprisings has changed the very nature of revolutions, not only in the MENA, but the rest of the world. The media have been recognised as a catalyst for the uprisings, especially new media (Manrique and Mikail, 2011). The media were used as a tool to capture the graphic and surreal video clips and photographs of state violence against protesting citizens from the Arab states. The media were also used as a tool to inform protesting citizens about upcoming events or other protest-related information.

The protesting states were demanding political reform and democratisation in order to take control of their futures and develop their countries. Democracy has become the cornerstone of the developed world, encouraging economic development and focusing on human development and human rights (Rakner, Menocal, and Fritz, 2007). The Arab states, through the use of the media such as television and the Internet, have experienced the positive effects of democratisation and want their own states to become democratic. Democratisation can be understood as the transitional process from or a progression from an authoritarian or repressive state towards a democratic state (Ginsburg, 1996). Democratisation is subdivided into three phases. The first phase is known as the liberation phase whereby the previous authoritarian regime opens up or disintegrates. The second phase – the transitional phase – often takes place when the first competitive elections occur. The third phase known as the consolidation phase occurs when democratic practices are expected to become more firmly established and accepted by most relevant actors in the system (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986 and Linz and Stepan, 1996).

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Conflict in context

“War is normal, peace the exception” (Crozier, 1974, p.23)

One third of all countries in the world have experienced some type of violent conflict in the last fifteen years (Loaris and Laori, 2008). For many theorists, such as Hobbes (1651), Marx (1859) and Crozier (1974), conflict has been seen as a normal state of civil and international relations. Knowledge about conflict has

increased considerably but so has the scope of violence (Bartos and Wehr, 2002). Conflict, like most political terms, is a broad and loaded concept. Generally it is best understood in terms of the diversity of the interests of parties involved. Conflict is seen as a “situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or argument”, “a violent situation or period of fighting between people, groups or countries” and “a situation in which there are opposing ideas, opinions, feelings or wishes” (Wehmeier, 2005, p.305). Conflict arises from the belief that the interests and aspirations of the people, groups or countries cannot be achieved simultaneously. Usually, conflict is brought about because of misconceptions about ‘the other’ and the wrong beliefs that are held about cultures and traditions thus leading to distrust and hate (Reuben, 2010). The differences in interests, goals, and attitudes also constitute sources of conflict associated with social change shifting the position of actors, giving rise to new issues and ultimately changing the political agenda of the community (Brinkerhoff, 2006). Furthermore, conflict usually lies along the lines of identity, reputational and economic interests (Reuben, 2010).

Conflict does not exist in isolation; it is a product of social interaction that is embedded within a larger social context. Therefore, conflict will generally have an impact, first on the parties involved, and then more broadly. Conflict Theory scholars have long characterised these effects as either constructive or destructive (Reuben, 2010). Although any conflict is counterproductive, it can have elements of constructiveness. On the one hand, it is the vehicle through which conflicting interests can be revealed and resolved. Such propositions can stabilise, integrate and improve relationships. Furthermore, constructive conflict can produce “curiosity, prevent stagnation and forestall premature decision making” (Reuben, 2010, p.51) and can help groups establish their identities and the boundaries between them. Destructive conflict, on the other hand, spoils relationships through the use of harsh tactics and this can lead to outcomes that are detrimental to the interests, needs and concerns of one or more of the parties. It can foster the “unnecessary dissipation and diversion of time, money, and other resources” (Reuben, 2010, p.52) which has long-lasting physical and emotional effects.

Regardless of the condition of a dispute, once a dispute manifests itself, one of its central principles is to escalate. Conflict can be necessary to bring conflicting issues to the surface and to resolve them. Constructiveness, an element of Conflict Theory (discussed below 2.3.1 (i)), argues that if parties to the conflict use contentious tactics, the dispute is more likely to escalate destructively. If the parties use problem-solving tactics, the dispute has a better chance of escalating constructively (Reuben, 2010). The lack of communication between the conflicting parties is responsible for these misconceptions. Therefore, the application of modern technology is pivotal in improving the underlying mechanisms of conflict and paving the way for sustainable peace and this can be achieved through conflict prevention and peacebuilding mechanisms and programmes (Loaris and Laori, 2008). The media, for instance, have the capacity to escalate conflict constructively or destructively (Reuben, 2010). Through its power to communicate messages to many people, the media have unique capacities to escalate conflict – constructively or destructively. Here, the media serves as a moderator of disputes,

encouraging escalation that may be more constructive or destructive, depending upon what is reported (Ramsbotham et al, 2011). The media's impact on the escalation of conflict is more widely recognised than the media's impact on peace-building (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). Yet, the media can prove to be a valuable vehicle for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding aim to effect cognitive, attitude and behavioural changes in people (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). A cognitive change involves changing the way people think about conflict and other groups of people. An attitude change involves changing the attitudes people hold of each other. A behavioural change involves changing the way people act towards each other. Peacebuilding orientated studies have started to construct strategies and conditions for positive use of the media in conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Ramsbotham et al, 2011). These studies realise the power and limitations of media effects on people. Firstly, the media have the ability to increase cognitive knowledge by supplying people with information. Secondly, media messages and setups have been effective in adjusting and changing attitudes. Thirdly, the media hardly directly affects behaviours but is able to shape attitudes and opinions that can directly affect people's behaviour. The above elements provide peacebuilding practitioners with the tools to best utilise the media in order to promote conflict transformation processes.

Conflict transformation aims to advance an understanding of the over-all meaning of conflict by applying techniques central to transforming that particular social conflict into a constructive end (Ramsbotham et al, 2011). A transformative approach incorporates two proactive foundations: a positive orientation towards conflict and a willingness to engage in conflict in order to produce constructive change or growth (Lederach and Maise, 2003). Conflict transformation acknowledges that conflict is a natural part of relationships and seeks to understand how these particular actions are rooted in human relationships. Furthermore, conflict transformation approaches seek to build constructive change out of the energy created by conflict. It also seeks to respond to on-the-ground challenges, needs and realities in order to reduce violence and increase justice. It aims to address the natural rise of human conflict through nonviolent approaches. Thus, it suggests that change takes place at the interpersonal, inter-group, and social structural levels (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). A well-known theory that best describes the nature of conflict is Conflict Theory.

2.3.1 (i) Conflict Theory

Conflict Theory acknowledges the importance of national and international conflict for nations moving towards a process of democratisation (Reuben 2010). This theory holds that the cohesion of conflict exists because of a clash of interests and that conflict could lead to outcomes that are either constructive or destructive (Lepird, Canny, and Saldanam, 2008 and Reuben, 2010). Conflict Theory is a macro sociological theoretical perspective developed to make sense of the various reasons and outcomes of conflict (Michalowski, 2011). It stems from the idea that power is the core of all social relationships and that resentment and hostility are constant elements of society.

Conflict Theory asserts that the relative power of a given social group dictates social order, in that the most powerful groups in a given state do not only control the lawmakers, but also the law enforcement tools of the state (Petrocelli, Piquero, and Smith, 2003). The notion of 'threat' underlies the conflict perspective. For instance, in a capitalist society where economic resources dictate who has power, it is in the interest of the ruling class to preserve economic stratification in order to control the legal order. As a result, the dominant economic class is able to create a domestic order that allows for its interest to be promoted and maintained.

Furthermore, the larger the gap becomes in economic disparity between the groups, the more pronounced the dynamics of enforcement and coercion are necessary in order for the dominant groups to maintain their supremacy. In essence, Conflict Theory maintains that the privileged will use coercion control apparatus of the state in order to restrain and limit those who threaten their interests and this usually results in a conflict environment between the dominant group and its opposition (Petrocelli, Piquero, and Smith, 2003). Finally, stability is only achieved once a dominant group obtains control and balance to society is restored (Lepird et al, 2008).

Conflict Theory is influenced by Karl Marx and his notions of dialectical historical materialism, Max Weber and his notion of ideal-type methodology, and George Simmel and his notion of symbolic interactionism (Michalowski, 2011). Marx believed that all humans make their own history in order to achieve their full human potential and that economics play a crucial role in power distinction. For Marx, using dialectical historical materialism, attempts to discover the total, fundamental, and crucial source of conflict – that of economic relations (Michalowski, 2011).

Weber argues that power is the ability of a person to impose their will on another, even when the other objects to this (Lepird et al, 2008). For Weber, authority can only be achieved through legitimate power, which is obtained through consent (Michalowski, 2011). However, the distribution of power and authority is the basis of conflict and if a certain authority is not recognised as a legitimate holder of power conflict will ensue. Weber, furthermore, argues that people with power want to keep it that way while the people without power are in continuous conflict in seeking it (Lepird et al, 2008). Weber saw conflict as not being limited to the economic and political sphere but also conflict of ideas and values (Michalowski, 2011).

Simmel wrote extensively on the sources of conflict. He saw conflict as a fundamental social process in which society is largely shaped by the competing interests of social groups who are in constant competition for dominance in order to enact or maintain a social structure that best suits their interests (Petrocelli, Piquero, and Smith, 2003). Simmel saw conflict as taking place between social groups, internally (because no one group would exhaust one's individuality) and externally (because of cross-cutting commitments) (Michalowski, 2011). Simmel disagreed with Marx on the basis that social classes are formed horizontally and that there is a difference in power and opinions within each group (Lepird et al, 2008). Simmel further argues that the origin of power is skill at spontaneity, and it cannot exist without the participation of the powerless (Michalowski, 2011).

Modern Conflict Theory took prominence in the 1950's, still under the wing of Marx, Weber and Simmel. However, because of the changing nature of society, Conflict Theory evolved through the help of two German Sociologists, Lewis Coser and Ralph Dahrendorf (Michalowski, 2011). Coser argued that conflict can be understood to take place over values and claims of scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise and eliminate their competitors. Conflicts are a natural occurrence in social life that takes place between various groups in society (Michalowski, 2011). Conflict is not necessarily a sign of instability – rather conflict leads to social change, it can stimulate innovation, and during times of war, can increase central power (Lepird et al, 2008).

Dahrendorf saw social order as being maintained through the forces at the top and usually through force or conflict. Laws are made to serve the interests of the privileged and the police are used to suppress and control any opposition that poses a threat to the status quo (Dahrendorf, 1959, cited in Petrocelli, Piquero, and Smith, 2003). He saw tension as a natural process and as constant. For Dahrendorf, extreme social change can happen at any time and once reached, conflict will disappear, even if temporarily (Lepird et al, 2008).

Conflict Theory has three broad shortcomings. Firstly, it tends to ignore other ways of achieving agreement or compromise. Secondly, Conflict Theory only tends to side with groups who lack power and is therefore only one-sided. Thirdly, Conflict Theory focuses on economic factors as the predominant reason for all conflict in societies (Lepird et al, 2008).

Conflict Constructiveness, an element of Conflict Theory, lists a number of benchmarks that can be used to assess whether conflict escalation is constructive or destructive and in what direction that particular conflict is going (Reuben, 2010). Firstly, the communications between the parties: are the parties involved able to communicate effectively about the conflict. For instance, how is the media portraying the various sides of the conflict, do the media establish a platform which fosters or inhibits the ability of the parties to communicate effectively about the conflict of dispute.

Secondly, the tactics of the parties: whether the tactics used in the conflict would likely lead to parties using more cooperative, stabilising tactics, or more contentious, escalating tactics in pursuing the dispute. Conflict Theory holds that a party's choice of tactics is a function of many factors. For instance, how the media presents the conflict and to which ends.

Thirdly, the outlook of the parties: the various attitudes of the parties towards each other and towards the conflict. For instance, a constructive outlook will be characterised by a positive outlook, while a destructive outlook will be characterised by a negative outlook. Media coverage that inclines audiences toward a constructive outlook makes it more likely for the parties to reach constructive outcomes. However, media coverage that inclines audiences toward a destructive outlook would cause a destructive outlook.

Lastly, the social bond between the parties: the extent to which conflict is likely to promote or hinder the social bond between parties. For instance, the media can influence the quality of social connections by

emphasising either the differences or similarities between parties (Reuben, 2010). The possibility of the media playing a key role in developing constructive alternatives in combating violent conflict should not be taken for granted. The following part will focus on the media and the various functions it fulfils in society, as well as a discussion of the Mass Communications Theory.

2.3.2 The Media in context

“The media are not the holders of power, but they constitute by and large the space where power is decided” (Castells, 2001, p.1).

The media provides people with important information about their environment and other environments around the world. The media interpret events beyond our physical realm and help us to make sense of them (Rantanen, 2005). The media can be defined as the means of communication that reach or influence people widely through information and entertainment, such as the radio, television, newspapers and the Internet (Wehmeier, 2005). Traditionally the media were held responsible “for a range of social ills: juvenile delinquency, terrorism, permissive behaviour, decline of religiosity, falling educational standards and political apathy” (Williams, 2003, p.7). It was believed that the media have the ability to shape, change and enforce the popular ideals and values of the dominant social group. Contemporary conceptions of the media are more optimistic when it comes to the impact of the media and its ability to shape the values and ideals of society. In order to make sense of these conceptions the media and its impact on society needs to be studied further. The study of the media, and the process of mass communication cannot be separated from the understanding of the social and cultural context within which they operate and the actual functions that the media fulfils (Williams, 2003).

2.3.2. (i) Media Functions

Because of the nature of the media, the media fulfils a wide range of functions in society (Batic and Schirch, 2007). The media have been identified as one of the biggest information providers in history - providing people with important information about their environment and how to respond to these imminent problems (Rantanen, 2005). The media interpret events beyond our physical realm and help us to make sense of them (Ramsbotham et al, 2011). The media are also argued to have elements of a ‘societal watchdog’ (Batic and Schirch, 2007). The media sometimes act as a third party ‘watchdog’ whereby the media provides feedback to the public on local problems (Reuben, 2010). The media also bring hidden stories out into the public about issues that affect society directly or indirectly (Fowler, 1991).

The media are often referred to as gatekeepers of factual information and realities (Batic and Schirch, 2007). In the sense that the media acts as an actor who sets agendas, filters issues and tries to maintain a balance of views. The media are known to subscribe to an ethic of objectivity and honesty which is upheld through legal

obligation (McQuail, 1972; Galtung, 1973; and Williams, 2003). The legal obligation of the media to be impartial in the reporting of any events is of the utmost importance (Gunter, 1997). In the media, the broadcasters are obliged to pursue a policy of objectivity, fairness and impartiality. The media and journalism are assessed by their measure of objectivity, balance and impartiality. Staying true to all three of these principles is a quality expected from the media. The media have to give a fair, balanced and representation of the opposing sides of issues which directly or indirectly affect the life and welfare of the people (Gunter, 1997).

The media are often seen as a policymaker or an actor for policy reform (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). In contemporary society the media have growing influence on policymakers as well as the passing of policies (Becirovic, 2010). The media have also been seen as a diplomat or international relations actor (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). The media are used to cover diplomatic initiatives and send messages back and forth between sides of conflict. The media have also at times been used as a peace promoter (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). For instance, media events can be used at the beginning of negotiations or to break diplomatic deadlocks, thereby creating a climate conducive to negotiation. For this reason the media have also been seen as a bridge provider to prevent conflict (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). The media can promote positive relationships between groups which in turn can foster unity amongst rival states.

2.3.2 (ii) The Study of the Media

Any account of mass communication or evaluation of the effects, context and production of media messages is interlaced with a much broader discussion of social life (Williams, 2003 and Fourie, 2007). Many theorists over the years have argued that the media have the capacity to influence their audiences (Glover, 1985; DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Williams, 2003 and Bell et al, 2004). The key question debated is whether the media have the power to shape, change or even determine the attitudes and behaviour of individuals (Bratic and Schirch, 2007).

During the 1950s social scientists theorised about the effects of different kinds of communication, especially media, on its audiences. They were concerned with how audiences were “moved to obedience or riotous action, anger or joy, critical thought or deep emotion” (Williams, 2003, p.7). Furthermore, the role of mass media were seen as playing a critical role in reproducing ruling or popular ideas, false consciousness or legitimisation of those who maintained political power

During the 1970s another strand of media studies developed challenging the view that audiences were merely seen as passive consumers of what they see, hear and read. Emphasis, instead, was placed on the audience as active consumers of the media (Williams, 2003). This relationship had become increasingly popular since the post-war period. Individuals were regarded as using the media to satisfy a range of needs, which includes escapism and the ability to construct their sense of who and what they are. Furthermore, the media were also seen as playing a crucial role by presenting the ideals and beliefs shared by most people in society (Williams, 2007).

The role of media institutions, personnel and practices and their ability to shape the media have been another focal point in media studies (Williams, 2003 and Ramsbotham et al, 2011). Political economy theorists have for years focused on the role of media control and ownership and its “ties to the established power structures of society and the related issues of the role of the market in determining the nature of media production” (Murdock, 1990 cited in Williams, 2003, p.12). The perspectives of those who run the media shape the stories that are covered. They favour four values when it comes to covering stories: immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). These four values make it difficult to use the media for peace resolution purposes. Corporate control over media, as in some countries, controls the types of stories that are covered and framed. Violent conflict makes headline news and media mostly covers conflict and not peacebuilding, precisely because of conflicts newsworthiness (Bratic and Schirch, 2007).

There is also an interest in the role of the media in the democratic processes of countries, especially those countries which have grown since the post-war period (Williams, 2003). The media have become a more integral part of the political process in contemporary life (Reuben, 2010). The media have become the fourth force in a democratic country (Becirovic, 2010). Of recent interest to scholars is the relationship between culture and democracy within the national context (Williams, 2003). Technological and economic change has led to the growth and spread of global media (Rantanen, 2007). Furthermore, many scholars argue that policy in modern societies is no longer possible without the help of the mass media (Becirovic, 2010).

Studies have found that the media have a powerful capacity to frame the subjects that it covers. Framing can be seen as the media selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and then making them more prominent in a communicating text. In other words “to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Reuben, 2010, p.60). Framing is best understood as a process that undermines the legitimacy of media content (Schirch and Bratic, 2007). Conflict frames are particularly common in news coverage, and news media framing effects have been found to influence public opinion. This makes the use of media for peace difficult and usually violent conflict makes headline news. Conflict and disputes are persistent features of news coverage and therefore play a crucial role in the solution or hindrance of conflict (Reuben, 2010).

Modern media can convey different elements of a global conflict with unparalleled fullness and range, explaining the perspectives of the decision-makers in conflict and bringing together the separate elements of a crisis with extraordinary speed and detail. At the same time media can serve as a tool of propaganda and propagate conventions that ignite wars (O’Sullivan, 2003). In conflicts, people view others through the prism of pre-formed perceptions and stereotypes (Ramsbotham et al, 2011). The mass media filters what people see and hear, thus influencing perceptions of others. The mass media can enthusiastically reinforce the characteristics of group conflict. Therefore the media can shape either a constructive or a destructive reaction to a particular conflict (Reuben, 2010).

Furthermore, the media remain highly sensitive to the prevailing political culture, which they help to constitute. On the one hand, the tendency for media to see conflict from one side is well known, especially when national media are reporting on a war in which their own country is engaged. For instance the reporting of the 1990s Gulf war (Ramsbotham et al, 2011). In some instances the modern media industries influence the reporting of all conflicts and it tends to focus on a limited group of conflicts at any one time and even then mainly on new or dramatic episodes of violence. On the other hand, the media can also play an active role in promoting a constructive approach to transforming conflicts and paving the way for sustainable peace (Reuben, 2010 and Bratic and Schirch, 2007).

Numerous studies confirm that the impact of the media on conflict is greater than the impact of the media on conflict prevention and transformation (Wolfsfeld, 2005 and Bratic and Schirch, 2007). Thus the media are seen as often playing a destructive role in conflict transformation and peace processes (Reuben 2010). On the one hand, the media are usually criticised for “framing issues between opposing views, portraying elections as horse races, attending more closely to strong, extreme minority opinions than to the moderate majority, and returning again and again to familiar stories of violence and human depravity” (Pauly, 2010, p.16). On the other hand, media framing has also been studied in the communication context, where research has shown its importance in “defining conflict, interpreting and reinforcing conflict dynamics and ultimately resolving conflicts” (Lewicki and Grey, 1996, p.6). Since it distributes information about conflict, news media coverage can intensify conflict dynamics by framing issues of conflict, the identities and relationships between the parties and the interactive process of conflict in a positive manner, thus contributing to a culture of peace and understanding (Ramsbotham et al, 2011).

The media, especially television and the internet, provide society with immediate sources of information, the means to verify information with a wide number of sources, and the ability to transmit news to anyone in the world (Speicher, 1998). A new kind of citizen is evolving out of this phenomenon; a citizen journalist who uses their cell phone cameras, blogs, and social network profiles, combined with their knowledge and experience of local realities to supply vital information to the outside world about the conflict. This information can then be used as a tool to hold governments accountable as well as to lay down a platform for unrestricted public opinion and public disagreement (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). However, news media are inclined instead, for a variety of reasons, to propagandise war in the service of the state and as an instrument of executive rule (Becirovic, 2010). The question about the use of the media for the purpose of propaganda, party (private) or state interest is an old one (O’Sullivan, 2003). The use of the media in order to propagate or promote certain ideals or norms in societies is central to the Mass Communication Theory – which has for decades described the changing nature of the media as well as the impact of the media on society.

2.3.2 (iii) The Mass Communication Theory

Communication, through the advances in technology and the process of globalisation, is a central part of how societies constitute themselves and therefore shapes the way conflicts are conducted (Williams, 2003 and Fourie, 2007). Mass communication have always been a two-edged sword since, on the one hand, it informs and educates - which could empower and unite societies and, on the other hand, it divides societies and deepens social, political and economic cleavages leading to violent conflicts (Castells, 2001 and Ramsbotham et al, 2011).

Thoughts and ideas about the impact of mass communication started to appear during the latter part of the nineteenth century when the rapid development of large factories in urban areas and the development of the more powerful printing presses started to take precedence in society (Williams, 2003 and Baran and Davis, 2006). Many theorists at this time were sceptical of the prospect of the ever increasing industrialisation derived from a fear that the cities would become darkened by crime, cultural diversity and unstable political systems. The dominant perspective that emerged from this time was referred to as the Mass Society Theory which held that society would lose all of its individuality and would become slaves of the machines (Williams, 2003). It argued that the media disrupts and unsettles the existing social order. Mass Society Theory has been the predominant Theory of Mass Communication since the mid-1800s to the 1950s.

The early twentieth century saw the emergence of the general belief that the media exerted considerable influence over people and society (Williams, 2003). This was especially evident during the 1930s when in Europe reactionary and revolutionary political movements used the media in their struggles for political power (Baran and Davis, 2006). German Nazis improved on World War One (WWI) propaganda methods and techniques by exploiting new media technology to consolidate their power. During the 1940s Paul Lazarsfeld began to empirically investigate the notions of mass society (Baran and Davis, 2006). Lazarsfeld was specifically interested in the media's power and influence. He found that the media were not at all as powerful as people thought the media to be – but rather than serving as a disruptive tool the media seemed to reinforce existing social trends.

During the 1960s a group of European social theorists argued that the media enabled dominant social elites to create and maintain their power (Baran and Davis, 2006). The media provided the government and its elites with a highly effective means of promoting worldviews favourable to their interests. During this time mass media were viewed as a “public arena in which cultural battles are fought and a dominant, or hegemonic, culture is forged and promoted” (Baran and Davis, 2006, p.34). In reaction to this another school of thought emerged, the school of British Cultural Studies. They believed mass media were promoting a hegemonic worldview and a dominant culture among other subgroups in society and in the rest of the world.

Mass Communication Theories highlight the significant impact that the media can have in shaping the public's attitudes about a given situation or issue – especially conflict (Reuben, 2010 and Bratic and Schirch, 2007). There are three general themes of concern associated with the impact or effects that the media have on society. The first of these is concerned with the political or persuasive powers that the mass media, especially

news media, use in order to manipulate society. The second reflects a concern for certain traditions, especially with culture, losing their importance or value because of new popular notions taking over. The last, and most troubling issue, is concerned with the impact or effects of the media on social behaviour (O'Sullivan, 1994).

Mass Communication Theories focus on how the media have portrayed the key divisions in modern society: issues such as race, gender, class, and ethnicity (Williams, 2003 and Baran and Davis, 2006). The media are usually seen as being biased, reproducing stereotypes or being in favour of a particular view of the world (Williams, 2003). Bias is one of the few terms that is directly connected to the media. The term bias can be understood as "the tendency to depart from the straight and narrow" (Williams, 2003, p.125). Bias in news and information means the systematic disposition to favour one side or to favour one interpretation or to sympathise with a cause (McQuail, 1992). Charges of bias are regularly thrown at the media. Mass Communication scholars have for years criticised the media for its lack of accuracy and fairness in their coverage. Accusations of media bias are usually aimed at factual forms such as news, current affairs and documentaries.

2.3.2 (v) New Media and ICTs

New media is an umbrella term that has to do with any communication device or application, including: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hard-and-software, satellite systems as well as the various services and applications associated with them (SearchCIO-MidMarker, 2003). Social media, an element of new media, can be defined as "a social structure which is characterised by networked communication technologies and information processing" (Castells, 2004, cited in Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012, p.148).

Social media fulfil a number of functions in an online community, namely; social networking, publishing of material and resources, photo, audio and video sharing, microblogging, live casting, virtual worlds, and aggregators (Safko, 2010). Social networking provide the platforms in social media to connect, share, educate, interact and build trust. Social media is a platform to accurately publish or record data for other people to access. Photo, audio and video sharing enable users to capture and transmit information. Microblogging, allows users to communicate via broadcasting that exists in the form of blogging. Live casting enables users of social media to stream continues live, first person video from a web/mobile camera. Aggregators generate information from multiple online sources to one specific location, for instance the # of *Twitter* and using # to locate and follow a particular threat (discussed further in chapter 5, p.)

Although social media are a relatively new phenomenon, they have launched themselves onto society at an unprecedented rate (Smith et al, 2011). One of the major reasons why social media have so easily been embraced by society is that they "help-connect people with each other in ways that are valuable, meaningful and convenient, on their own terms and on an unprecedented scale" (Blanchard, 2011, p.4). Social media have also transformed the way individuals communicate and interact with one another. Therefore it can be argued that social media have inverted traditional communication practices by providing a space through which individuals can provide and access material presented on line (Smith et al, 2011).

Beginning from the 1990s, information communication technologies (ICTs) have been recognised as an important element by which countries have successfully pursued knowledge sharing and enhanced economic and social development (Castells, 2001). The Internet, mobile phones, social networking tools, and television are all instrumental ICT tools (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). The emergence of ICTs was accompanied by the hype that they could serve to bridge the economic, educational, digital, and social gaps experienced by the developed and developing nations (Loaris and Laori, 2008). However, information technologies have highlighted the marginalisation resulting from globalisation, promoting despair and hopelessness in the South, and have thus contributed to the emergence of terrorism (Brinkerhoff, 2006). Recent research on information technology and terrorism confirms the Internet's supporting features for terrorist activities because of the ease of access, anonymity, and international character which it offers. Several studies confirm the importance of the Internet and the media for marginalised groups in networking and promoting their political agendas.

The unfolding of the Arab Spring in the MENA led political analysts to identify ICTs as a key catalyst for political change (Manrique and Mikhail, 2011). This has intensified the debate of the potential of ICTs for political transformation (Michaelsen, 2011). ICTs are changing the very nature of politics in authoritarian states as the populations are demanding democratic political transitions. Two key roles of ICTs in processes of political change have been identified in the Arab Spring. Firstly, ICTs role in bringing down old regimes by "mobilising important parts of the population and creating alternative discourses to authoritarian regimes, which found international backing" (Manrique and Mikhail, 2011, p.1). Secondly, ICTs significance in consolidating transitions to democracy once political instability has settled.

Communication tools, especially mobile forms of technology such as smartphones and laptops with 3G and Wi-Fi access, enabled individuals from the MENA to share information about their revolution instantaneously and with little restriction (Storck, 2011). Social media have been more effective, than any other form of traditional activism, in defining the political outcome because of their ability to capture and transmit information virtually immediately through ICTs. This information played a key role in accelerating social protests on forums, blogging platforms, video-sharing platforms and social networks. These tools were increasingly used by Arab activists to gather and spread key information virtually instantaneously which actively changed the political environment in the MENA. For instance, *Twitter* (which is a mobile phone-enabled social media with embedding capabilities), was used mainly as a platform for discussion of what was going on amongst *Twitter* users and as a way of providing first-hand accounts of events on the ground (Storck, 2011). In this way, social media allowed members of the revolution as well as members of an international audience, to follow these events in real-time.

Furthermore, the mobile nature of ICTs also had a great impact on social media's effectiveness to shape the political landscape of the MENA, thanks to their dual ability to facilitate protest and to transmit visual images and texts about the uprisings, practically instantaneously, locally and globally (Manrique and Mikhail, 2011). For instance, *Twitter* users could *tweet* updates by the minute and include other key forms of media such as

photographs and videos with little difficulty (Storck, 2011). Thus, the link between the instantaneous nature of the forms of communication used in the Arab Spring and their direct impact on the political environment of the MENA aided in ICTs becoming a catalyst for political reform. ICTs role as a tool for political change, in their ability to facilitate political participation and mobilisation aided in shaping the outcomes of these uprisings.

ICTs play a positive role in political transitions since they can contribute to fostering a public sphere where freedom of expression is exercised without limitation or fear. With the spread of the Internet it has become increasingly difficult for authoritarian states to exercise control over information and public opinion. The Internet allows for “a quasi-instantaneous transmission of information at low cost and free from the typical barriers that confine access to the traditional media” (Michaelsen, 2011, p.14). However, it should be noted that harassment and control of the media is still very active in post-revolutionary countries (Heiss, 2012). Fortunately, cases of this are diminishing due to Internet divergence and growing knowledge of human rights practises and law.

ICTs play a central role in the process of democratic consolidation since they facilitate the circulation of information and opinions so that the populace can influence the political decision making process, previously unavailable to them (Michaelsen, 2011). Furthermore, ICTs help consolidate the gains of democratic breakthroughs by facilitating linkages between new and traditional activism, mobilisation and political debates (Manrique and Mikhail, 2011). When pro-democratic activists effectively use ICT tools they are able to reach out to the general populace and introduce political debates.

New media and ICTs have played a key role in the political formation of opposition towards the Egyptian government since the 2011 uprisings. Social media were used to “energise, organise, and inform public protests” (Lutz, 2012, p.1). Furthermore, social media provided the necessary platform, for Egyptians who were frustrated with the unequal status quo, to voice their opinions and generate support for coordinated protests in real time with international backing. Social media, specifically social networking, fulfilled a number of functions in Egypt’s Arab Spring (Safko, 2010). They provided various platforms where users from across the world could connect, share, educate, and interact about a common cause, the Egyptian Arab Spring. For instance, the numerous *Facebook* pages concerned with the uprising, namely; *We are all Khaled Said* and the *6th April group* (Storck, 2011). Social media platforms also created a space where photos, audios and videos could be uploaded from anywhere in Egypt and accessed by anyone in the world. The microblogging function allowed pro-democratic activists to log their accounts and update followers/users on demonstration details or future protest destinations. The live casting function of social media aided in providing live and continues streams of ‘on the ground happenings’ from across Egypt. Aggregators were commonly used to follow a particular threat concerning Egypt’s Arab Spring or to locate a discussion on a particular topic, for instance the hashtag #Egypt (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012) (discussed further in chapter 5, p.46-52).

Chapter 3: Brief Historical and Political Context of the Middle East - Sixteenth to Twenty-First Centuries

“The Middle East is far from monolithic and homogenous. Its differences have been a source of strength and inspiration and, at times, violent bloodletting” (Kamrava, 2005, p.3).

The Middle East has for decades been one of the most popular regions in the media, whether it is about access to oil, the misuse or illegal use of nuclear power, social and economic factors, popular uprisings, civil conflict or terrorism (Davenport, 2008). However, there is a lot more to the Middle East than meets the eye. In order to understand the political, social and economic factors that underlie the complex nature of the Middle East we see today, a brief definition and discussion of the Middle East is necessary followed by a historical context from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century and a brief account of the Arab Spring Uprisings. The importance of establishing a historical context is pivotal for making sense of the Middle East’s complex state-society relationship.

But first, there is no universal definition of the territories for the Middle East; it is usually shown to extend from Egypt in the west to the Tigris and Euphrates in the east and from Turkey in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south (Goldschmidt, 1983). Whether the Middle East is defined in geographical or cultural terms, and regardless of the exact boundaries, there is no disputing the fact that the Middle East is predominantly Muslim (Kedourie, 1992), albeit with diverse minority groups such as Christians, Jews and so on. Although the term ‘Middle East’ was only coined as recently as 1902, the region has been one of the most significant regions throughout the world for centuries (Lewis, 2005).

3.1 Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century

Three events occurred in the first decades of the sixteenth century that redefined the face of the Middle East forever (Gelvin, 2005). The first significant event that took place at the beginning of the early modern period was the emergence of large-scale and long-lived empires. Three powerful empires emerged during this period. The largest and longest-lived of these powerful empires was the Ottoman Empire (Gelvin, 2005). The Ottoman Empire lasted for more than four centuries until it was dismantled at the end of World War One (WWI) in 1918. The second event that occurred was the commercial revolution in Europe that increased trade between Europe and other parts of the world. The final event was the influence of the Protestant Reformation commonly dated from 1517 when Martin Luther made public his theses which challenged various policies and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church and advocated new ones. It led to a series of religious wars which divided Europe into extremely competitive and highly efficient political units (Gelvin, 2005).

At the same time, Europe’s power grew so dramatically that the rest of the world had no choice but to adapt (Goldschmidt, 1983). Some countries such as China, Thailand, Iran and the Ottoman Empire tried to stay independent by embedding into their traditional societies those Western customs and institutions that promoted

strength and development. Most Middle Eastern states wanted to strengthen their armies and navies, as well as their governments and economies, but not at the cost of their traditions and ancient cultures. Nevertheless, the spread of the modern state system would profoundly influence the Middle East (Gelvin, 2005).

It is generally argued that decline overtook Middle Eastern society during the seventeenth century (Kedourie, 1992). Decline, in this case, is that Western European society was gradually becoming richer, more technically advanced as well as militarily more powerful from around the seventeenth century onwards, leaving the Arab world far behind. Furthermore, decline also meant that economic activity and political and military institutions fell into decay, compared to previous conditions. Commerce and economic activity that had previously been directed at the Middle East had shifted westwards to the New World (the Americas). This resulted in havoc for the Ottoman finances and foreign trade and created stress and discontent in the Middle East (Kedourie, 1992).

Prior to the eighteenth century Muslims had controlled the commercial routes between Europe and Asia and had power over the terms of trade to both (Goldschmidt, 1983). However, since the early eighteenth century, the West had successfully achieved and maintained military, political and economic dominance over the Middle East (Goldschmidt, 1983). This domination was subject to the Europeans selling their manufactured products to the Middle East in exchange for raw materials and agricultural goods.

The eighteenth century marked a new phase in the evolution of not only Middle Eastern history but world history. Two leading proponents have been identified for distinguishing modern history: a world economy unlike and a world-system of nation-states (Gelvin, 2005). On the one hand, the modern period marks the emergence of an integrated world market which binds states together through a global division of labour. On the other, nation-states, a new form of political association, appears on the world stage and achieves dominance worldwide. Both of these systems have affected the economic, social, cultural and political spheres of life everywhere in the world in ways that were unprecedented in world history (Gelvin, 2005).

3.2 Nineteenth and Twentieth Century

During the nineteenth century the rulers of the Middle East, especially the Ottoman Empire, had experienced loss of territory, helplessness, and political inferiority because of direct influence of outside forces and occupation, especially France and Great Britain (Kedourie, 1992). Egypt was invaded and occupied by the French from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1820 Britain established a General Treaty of Peace, the first of many treaties that expanded the relationship between Britain and the Sheikdoms for years to come (Ovendale, 1992).

During the 1850s and 1860s there was a notable growth in Arab national consciousness leading to newly established local societies studying the history, literature and culture of Arab Empire. In 1866 the Syrian Protestant College (later the American University of Beirut) was founded under American patronage in order to promote and encourage Arab nationalism by training Arab elites (Ovendale, 1992). Of all the ideas that the Middle East had imported from the West, nationalism has been the most popular and durable. In the Middle East, shared

characteristics among populations gave positive cause for the growth of nationalism (Goldschmidt, 1983). During the last years of the nineteenth century the people from the Arab world began to develop feelings of nationalism. Rising nationalism was seen as a reaction against the West. But, it was also seen as the result of a century of “western reform, with its enlarged armies and bureaucracies, new schools, printing presses, roads and rail lines, and centralised government power” (Goldschmidt, 1983, p.160).

It must be noted, however, that nationalism was a foreign concept in the world of Islam. Nationalism can be defined as a common “desire of a large group of people to create or to maintain a common statehood, to have their own rulers, laws, and other governmental institutions” (Goldschmidt, 1983, p. 159). This ‘desired political community’, or nation for that matter, is the object of that group’s supreme loyalty. In traditional Islamic thought, a community of believers was at the heart of political loyalty for Muslims. Loyalty meant defending Islamic land and to preserve the Islamic way of life. Yet, Nationalism had taken root and what had followed was the influence of religion. Arab nationalism was seen as the supreme value to which everything and everyone in the Arab world should be subject to and this became the recurring motif in nationalist discourse (Kedourie, 1992).

The twentieth century marked an intense era in the history of the Middle East; it featured the First and Second World Wars, as well as the Cold War and countless economical downfalls – each of which significantly changed the face of history and the Middle East (Ovendale, 1992). By the first decade of the twentieth century the British established their dominance in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and Southern Persia. At the same time Italy invaded and occupied Tripoli and Cyrenaica and Russia started exercising immense pressure against the Ottoman and Persian dominions (Kedourie, 1992). Military weakness and European-power pressure led the Ottomans to concede autonomy and independence to subject populations in Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria (Ovendale, 1992).

Constitutional and parliamentary government was the form of political organisation that the Middle East adopted from the West (Kedourie, 1992). These rulers adopted constitutions and parliaments not because they were imposed on them by Britain or France but rather because the rulers themselves genuinely believed that they would work. However, the constitutional governments in Egypt, Syria, Libya, the Sudan and Iraq became bankrupt respectively through the period of 1951 to 1956.

In February 1913 the French decided to consolidate their presence and influence in Syria and Lebanon. Syrian Arabs deeply disliked the presence of the French and in reaction to French occupation formed a Reform Committee for Beirut in order to decentralise the Ottoman Empire (Ovendale, 1992). Conscious of Arab grievances the French government allowed the first Arab National Congress in Paris. This resulted in the French losing control of the conference but they still hoped to persuade delegates to abandon the idea of Arab autonomy. On 21 June 1913 the Arab National Congress sent a resolution to the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey demanding that the Arabs should be able to exercise their political rights and play a direct role in the administration

of the Ottoman Empire as well as the establishment of decentralised governments in the Arab provinces (Ovendale, 1992).

Decades of intensive military, legal, and administrative reform in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, Tunis, and Iran did not result in greater military security, better or more economical administration, stable or less precarious public finances, or a less restless population (Kedourie, 1992). No amount of modernisation seemed sufficient to preserve Middle Eastern states from military defeat, or foreign encroachment. Furthermore, a process modernisation resulted in significant spending in order to pay for an enlarged bureaucracy, to import costly weapons and armoury, and to carry out numerous enterprises. Domestic taxes were not sufficient to cover the increased outlays and the only suitable recourse led to outside loans. As a result, the Ottoman Empire in 1875 and Egypt in 1876 had to declare themselves bankrupt. Instead of bringing resolve in “amelioration or alleviation, reform seems to have only intensified and complicated the crises it had been meant to tackle” (Kedourie, 1992, p. 47).

In 1914 the British landed an expeditionary force near then Basra (Iraq) in a rush to secure and expand their own supplies in the region (Jones, 2012). At the same time, the Kaiser of Germany prepared to go to war and subvert the British in the Middle East while expressing his desire for Muslim nations to be independent and the importance of maintaining a common interest with Germany (Ovendale, 1992). In August 1914 the Ottoman Empire entered WWI on the side of the Germans (Goldschmidt, 1983). Germany was respected in most of the Arab states for numerous reasons, mainly because of their economic and military might, the fact that Germany built a railway from Istanbul to Baghdad which would aid in holding together what was left of the Ottoman Empire and Germany helped train officers and soldiers on how to use modern weapons in Istanbul.

WWI was truly a world war when German strategists understood that the war was not only being waged in Europe but among rival empires with worldwide interests. These empires “depended on their colonial possessions to maintain their strategic position and economic well-being” (Gelvin, 2005, p. 172). Colonies were also indispensable for the French and British military effort, since both powers depended on these colonies for manpower.

WWI was the most important political event in the history of the modern Middle East. The war brought about a new political order in the region (Gelvin, 2005). The states that had emerged in the Middle East after WWI were created in two ways. In the Levant and Mesopotamia (present day Syria, Lebanon, Palestine/Israel, Jordan, and Iraq) France and Britain constructed states. Directed by the interests and preconceptions of France and Britain and not of the inhabitants of those territories, the Great Powers partitioned what had once been the Ottoman Empire, and created states where none had existed before (Gelvin, 2005).

By 1918 the British had captured Baghdad and ensconced themselves and their allies there and ruled for several decades, strengthening their position in the Middle East (Jones, 2012). In November 1918 the ‘guns in Europe fell silent’ and the world hoped that lasting peace would follow next (Goldschmidt, 1983). American

President Wilson had laid down a set of principles called the 'Fourteen Points' on which he wanted each of the Allies to build the peace once WWI was over. He denounced secret treaties, proposed self-determination for all peoples (especially those who were under Ottoman rule), and called for the creation of the 'League of Nations' to avert the threat of war in the future.

During the 1930s the relationship between the Middle East and United States (US) grew immensely when geologists working for Standard Oil of California discovered commercial quantities of oil on the eastern borders of Saudi Arabia. Middle Eastern oil has enchanted global powers and global capital since the early twentieth century (Jones, 2012). Shortly after WWII it became clear that oil was more than just a desired industrial commodity.

In 1948 the contest for Palestine, better known as the Arab-Israeli conflict, became one of the most popular political issues of the twentieth century (Goldschmidt, 1983). The conflict took place between Zionist Jews and Muslim Arabs. On the one hand, the Zionist Jews believed that the land of Israel would be restored to them and that the Temple would be rebuilt in Jerusalem. On the other hand, the Muslim Arabs believed that Palestine, a territory so long within the confines of Islamic influence, could not be separated from the lands ruled by Islam. The result of the Arab-Israeli conflict led to the Zionist Jews, who were powerful enough to not only oppose Arab rule, but establish their own state, Israel, and countered Arab forces in successive encounters (Kedourie, 1992).

The 1948-1949 war between the new state of Israel and its Arab neighbours was a revolutionary event in the history of the Middle East (Goldschmidt, 1983). To the Israelis the war was a struggle for Jewish independence, fought first against British Imperialism and later against the Arab states. Israel's victory was also seen as a revolutionary victory because for the first time in Middle Eastern history the people of a country were able to overthrow a colonial regime and set up their own democratic government. The war also resulted in the displacement of more than half a million Arabs, who sought refuge in the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The period from 1948 to 1956 was one of adjustment for the whole of the Middle East to the new conditions of the Israeli-Arab war (Goldschmidt, 1983).

Another violent clash occurred between Israel and Arab states in June 1967 resulting in the Six Day War where Israel defeated Egypt and Syria militarily. The period from 1967 to 1973 was one of continued tension in the Middle East. Since the 1970s the Middle East had been rocked by various forms of revolution and a state of permanent war caused by the October War of 1973, when Egypt assaulted Israel and entered its borders (Goldschmidt, 1983).

The pattern of militarism that is evident in the Middle East, specifically the Persian Gulf, in the 1970s has been attributed to American "support for and deliberate militarisation of brutal and vulnerable authoritarian regimes" (Jones, 2012, p.5). Increased and growing weapons sales to oil autocrats and the decision to establish a geo-political military order in the Persian Gulf empowered Middle Eastern rulers. However, this resulted in a militarised and fragile balance of power in the Middle East. From the 1970s onwards oil-producing Middle Eastern

states have been faced with both internal and external threats; including domestic unrest, invasion, and regional or civil war (Jones, 2012).

For most of the late 1980s the Middle East languished outside the mainstream of global change (Heller, 1990). The fall of the Shah, the capture of the US embassy in Tehran, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had thrown the policies of the US toward the Persian Gulf into grim confusion (Kamrava, 2005). The Middle East's declining salience in world affairs can be contributed to two crises at that time. Firstly, a massive Soviet counterinsurgency war in Afghanistan was believed to be the first stage of an aggressive Soviet strategy aimed at the Persian Gulf. Secondly, the Iran-Iraq War which had just begun and threatened to destabilise one of the major sources of the world's oil exports and perhaps, encourage the spread of revolutionary Islam throughout the Middle East (Heller, 1990).

When the Cold War (1947-1989) ended in 1989 it had a varied impact on the Middle East (Gelvin, 2005). In the early 1990s, many statesmen and political scientists argued that the world was entering a new period in which democratic governments would be the rule. However, the same could not be said for the Middle Eastern region: "the idea of instant democratic transformation in the Middle East is a mirage" (Gelvin, 2005, p. 231). The Middle East had become a fortress for authoritarian governments opposed by equally authoritarian parties.

3.4 The Twenty-First Century

The geography and political structure visible in the Middle East in the twenty-first century has been shaped by WWI, WWII, the Arab-Israel War(s), the Iran-Iraq War and the first and second Gulf War(s) (Gokdemir, 2009). The Middle East has for the last few decades, especially during the twenty-first century, become a very important strategic interest for the US (and other global powers) for two reasons. The first and somewhat most important reason is petroleum. It is estimated that 61.9 % of the world's petroleum reserves are located in the Middle Eastern region (Gokdemir, 2009). The second reason is ensuring its influence over the Middle East and keeping the region under its supervision. The importance of the US establishing its hegemony in the Middle East's geography demonstrates the US's desire to restructure the regions politics, economy and security for its own interests (Gokdemir, 2009).

However, the events September 11 drastically changed the relationship between the US and the Middle East (Gelvin, 2005). On 11 September 2001, two hijacked planes crashed into the World Trade Centre in New York, killing about 2 940 people. Another plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing 189 people and a fourth plane, possibly heading for the White House or Capital, crashed in rural Pennsylvania, killing all aboard. In reaction to this, President George W. Bush declared a war on terrorism, whereby American troops entered Afghanistan in search of Osama Bin Laden, his support networks, and operatives of Al-Qaida (Bin Laden's terrorist organisation). The Bush government blamed the Afghanistan government for its responsibility in harbouring terrorists (Gelvin, 2005). The September 11 attacks against the US initiated the commencement of a

number of comprehensive changes (freedom, democracy, and administrative changes) that the US planned to implement in Middle Eastern states (Gokdemir, 2009).

In reaction to September 11 and following the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the 2003 overthrow of the Iraqi government, the US, its coalition allies and the local governments soon faced increasingly violent opposition (Lopez, 2007). In reaction, the US implemented contrasting policies in both Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan, the US expanded its footprint by creating the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) which aimed at providing a military presence in outlying areas, providing security (limited to certain areas) while helping to respond to the needs of the population. In Iraq, the US military in Baghdad and other trouble cities withdrew from the urban areas - garrisoning themselves in armed camps and limiting their activity in the cities. Despite these shifts, by 2005 the violence in both countries had drastically increased (Lopez, 2007).

Competition among the various actors in the regional geopolitics of the Middle East has grown significantly during the twenty-first century (Ersoy, 2013). The competitions between Middle Eastern actors are generally seen as a struggle between the actors over power and influence in the region. In addition to the regional struggle for power and influence, another dynamic has taken prominence as a source of rivalry – that of security. Here actors are concerned “about their security being attacked, subjected, dominated, or annihilated by other actors and in their pursuit for more security, they are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others” (Ersoy, 2013, p.49). Two states whose struggle over power, influence and security has become more palpable with recent developments are Saudi Arabia and Iran. Both states are the two most politically and religiously influential states in the Gulf region – resulting in both states being able to shape developments and influence decisions which is becoming a determining parameter in the course of political, economic, military and social development in the Middle East.

Democratisation has become one of the key concerns when addressing the wider topic of political change in the Middle East (Haynes, 2010). Although some countries in this region lack structural characters conducive to both democratisation and democracy, states are progressing towards a transformation process from authoritative regimes to democracy. Middle Eastern states desire liberal democracy through various processes of democratisation. Democracy to most Arab societies offers greater opportunities for international cooperation, including social, economic, political, environmental, and human rights. During recent years, democratic performance in the Middle East has been affected by various internal structural, cultural and political factors and external factors such as foreign influence (Haynes, 2010).

3.5 The Arab Spring Uprising

*“Throughout 2011, a rhythmic chant echoed across the Arab lands: the people want to topple the regime”
(Ajami, 2012, p.3).*

The Arab Spring Uprisings, initially dubbed as the Jasmine Revolution in the media, had spread drastically throughout the MENA since December 2010 (Murray, 2012). The Arab Spring Uprisings were sparked on 16 December 2010 when Mohammed Bouazizi, a Tunisian citizen, set fire to himself in a popular street in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia (Heiss, 2012). Social and economic events in late December 2010 had resulted in unemployment rates reaching thirty percent in Sidi Bouzid forcing Bouazizi, and other young Tunisians, to sell fruit and vegetables to secure an income. Although the Tunisian government and police tried to conceal Bouazizi’s funeral, over 5,000 people attended his funeral and Bouazizi had thus become the first martyr of the Arab Spring (Murray, 2012). Bouazizi’s desperate self-immolation helped trigger the massive uprising in Tunisia, resulting in a military coup and the ousting of its longstanding dictator, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Heiss, 2012)

The success of the revolution in Tunisia inspired a wave of similar protests throughout the MENA (Moghadam, 2013). Tunisia’s uprising housed an intensive campaign of social resistance which led to the ousting of Tunisian President Ben Ali in January 2011 (Ryan, 2011). The uprising was in reaction to high levels of unemployment, increased inflation, government corruption, abuse of human rights, lack of political freedom and poor living conditions. The protests constituted the most dramatic wave of social and political unrest experienced in Tunisian history (Ryan, 2011). The apparent success of the popular uprising in Tunisia inspired similar movements, casting doubt on the stability of some of the regions longest-standing regimes. Since December 2010, eighteen countries have been affected by similar revolutions classed as forming part of the Arab Spring, including Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Thus far, governments have been overthrown in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen and revolutions continue in a further fourteen, and counting, countries (Murray, 2012).

The Arab Spring relates to a number of popular pro-democratic political revolutions that have occurred across the Middle East and North Africa. The revolutions were primarily in reaction to decades of dictatorship, degraded and undervalued standards of living, high inflation rates, failing economies and high unemployment rates (Murray, 2012). The chants of the protesting populations skipped borders with little restraint, carried in newspapers and magazines, on Facebook and Twitter, and on the airwaves of channels such as al Jazeera and al Arabiya (Ajami, 2012). The youth of the Arab world rose up against their dictator rulers in search of political freedom and economic opportunity. The uprisings were demonstrated by widespread provincial activity and spontaneous protests with a common goal in mind; to raise awareness and increase pressure on the governments to listen to their people (Murray, 2012).

Numerous journalists, historians and scholars have recognised the importance of social media in the Arab Spring Uprisings. Social media played a key role in shaping the political debates of the Arab states (Howard, 2012 in Murray, 2012). In the Arab Spring context social media refers to the websites and other networking applications such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*. Social media was used as a tool to provide vital information and expressions throughout the Arab revolutions. For instance, social media was used by citizens of Arab states to comment on videos or photos that were circulating about what was taking place in these countries (such as state brutality or abuse of human rights). Social media was also used to promote and encourage citizens to attend local events and get involved in the protests with little difficulty. Furthermore, citizens from the Arab states, as well as the rest of the world, could easily read or hear other people's views and ideas, be informed and learn of advances in their country and neighbouring countries, stay aware of national and regional events, and access information on local protests or demonstrations allowing more people to participate in the revolution (Murray, 2012).

Therefore, social media has been described as the catalyst for the revolution, sparking and speeding up the formation of groups and informing populations (Murray, 2012). Citizens from the Arab states were able to use social media to spread evidence of their regime's illegitimacy and in turn raised global awareness of corruption within the governments. Video sharing websites, such as Facebook and YouTube, were used to upload, share and access video footage of the atrocities committed by the Arab governments. Such evidence had clearly undermined the power and reputation of the Arab governments. Furthermore, videos, blogs and posts were shared from other countries highlighting their governments and aspirational regimes. Social media was used to introduce freedom and democracy across the MENA (Howard, 2012, in Murray, 2012). Thus the media is also used to illustrate the possible freedom that is likely to appear after a constitutional reform. This also shows that the revolutions are linked, as suppressed countries have seen the success of previous revolutions and are aspiring to reproduce this success for their own countries.

Chapter 4: A Political Overview of Egypt within the Middle-Eastern and North African (MENA) Context

“Egypt’s 2011 revolution put an end to the political orders that had dominated the country for half a century and which managed to combine social stability with steady decline - Egypt’s revolution will prove to be a regional tectonic shift with significant and far-reaching waves” (Osman, 2011, p.1).

For the last century, Egypt has loomed large in any discussion about Middle Eastern geopolitics (Goldschmidt, 1983), whether it is civil conflict, political instability or human rights abuses. It is argued that Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East (Heiss, 2012). In contemporary time, Egypt presents threats and risks not only to itself but to the rest of the region and the world. For instance, some people believe that the fall of the Mubarak regime in 2011 may pave the way for the emergence of an Islamic state that could possibly destabilise the whole region. Others believe that Egypt houses a ‘population-bomb’ (a population epicentre) that could possibly increase terrorism, Christian and Muslim clashes, or be a base for insurgent solidarities (such as Anti-American protests) (Osman, 2011). Furthermore, Egypt’s location, specifically its location at the intersection of many routes of exchange and the Silk Road that linked Europe to western Asia to India and southern China, made it one of the world’s most important geo-strategic places. Nonetheless, there is a lot more to Egypt than what we read or see in the news. Although Egypt is thousands of years old and embodies a rich history of culture, political and economic elements, the scope of this study is only on modern Egypt.

4.1 A Brief Overview of the Political Leaders of Modern Egypt

4.1.1 Mohamed Ali

In 1798 General Napoleon Bonaparte had been sent by the French revolutionary government to capture Egypt and ensure a French hold over some parts of the Middle East (Lewis, 2005). The occupation of the French caused extensive damage to the social and political landscape of Egypt because many of the reform and development programmes implemented were not in the interest of the Egyptian people (Mujani and Ismail, 2012). The invasion of Napoleon led to three outcomes; it led to the on-going competition for decades over Egypt between France and England, it destroyed the notions Ottoman Muslims still cherished about their dominance over Europe, and it weakened the Mamelukes resulting in a leadership vacuum once the British had withdrawn from Egypt in 1802. The vacuum would eventually be filled by a soldier, Mohamed Ali (Goldschmidt, 1983).

Most historians argue that Mohamed Ali, who ruled Egypt from 1805 to 1849, was the founder of modern Egypt and the creator of its first development program (Osman, 2011). Mohammed Ali was appointed Pasha, founding the dynasty that would rule Egypt until his great-great grandson, King Farouk, was overthrown in 1952 (CIA Factbook, 2011). By manipulating the religious establishment and eradicating the remnants of the

Mamelukes, Mohamed Ali managed to fill the political void and gained control of Egypt. In 1808, Mohamed Ali broke with the Ottoman Empire legacy of four thousand years by confiscating Egypt's land (Osman, 2011). The redistribution process that followed only truly benefited his family and by the 1850s more than half of all Egypt's farmland was owned by them. But, Mohamed Ali's key initiative was his creation of "an independent, modern army based in Egypt" (Osman, 2011, p.25). Mohamed Ali's reign had enabled thousands of Egyptians to benefit from unprecedented opportunities in education, trade, and the rebuilding of national infrastructure.

4.1.2 Khedive Ismael

In the subsequent period Ali's grandson, Khedive Ismael, continued in his grandfather's footsteps by "broadening education far beyond the military sciences and recruiting European technicians to modernise agriculture, the Nile and maritime transport system" (Osman, 2011, p.26). However, Ismael was eager to westernize Egypt and make it an integral part of Europe (CIA Factbook, 2011). It was during Ismael's reign that Egypt's railway and central station, the Al-Mahatta, was built, initially linking Cairo with Alexandria and later with key cities of the Nile Delta.

The epitome of Ismael's efforts to incorporate Egypt in the international arena was with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Although it might not have been a truly Egyptian development, Egypt had by the nineteenth century made the fastest and most significant change of any Middle Eastern country (Goldschmidt, 1983). Despite the development programmes that Mohamed Ali and Ismael had implemented in Egypt, Egyptians were mainly excluded and looked down on by their rulers. Ordinary Egyptians were kept out of the loop (wealth and power) possibly out of a racist disposition or more than likely out of a calculated political strategy (Osman, 2011).

Following Ismael's exile during the 1880s and 1890s the social structure of Egypt was changing. The Egyptian economy was largely in the hands of the royal family, its Turkish-Albanian-European entourage and the thousands of foreigners who had settled in Egypt from the mid nineteenth century. However, during this time Egyptians, and especially influential landowners, were rapidly climbing the socio-economic and political ladder. An Egyptian view of the country started to emerge as a result and this historical moment was further ignited when the British occupied Egypt in 1882 (Osman, 2011).

4.1.3 Foreign influence

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was significantly weakened by the Russian Empire that desired to extend its own territories and influence across the Mediterranean as well as expanding its protection to the Ottoman Empire. Mohamed Ali and his son, Ibrahim Pasha were also trying, at the same time, to extend Egypt's territory to the northern frontiers of the Levant and parts of Turkey. Britain, having expelled the French from the Middle East and not being too excited about the emergence of a new Middle Eastern power, took it upon itself to provide aid to the Ottoman Empire in an effort to push back the advances of Pasha's army. In the

1860s and 1870s Britain's influence started to take hold of Egypt. The relationship between Mohammed Ali's dynasty and the British constituted a subject of mutual interest (Thornhill, 2010).

This resulted in Egyptians feeling alienated and let down by their rulers, resulting in Egyptianism (Osman, 2011). The occupation of Egypt by Britain, and other foreign rulers for that matter, boosted Egyptianism. As a result there were numerous uprisings against the new occupiers, political resistance was rife, and a new political party, the National Party (NP) was formed. These efforts resulted in the 1919 revolution, the largest revolution against Britain in history. However, Egyptians continued to struggle for an independent state and for equality and full representation of Egyptians. To some extent the efforts resulted in Egypt's independence from Britain in 1922 (Goldschmidt, 1983). However, London continued to govern Egypt by proxy until 1945.

At the same time the Egyptian Monarchy (Mohamed Ali's dynasty) realised that they had to accommodate the emerging Egyptianism. King Fuad introduced a constitutional monarchical system whereby all executive powers were in the hands of the government and answerable to a nationally elected parliament (Osman, 2011). The Egyptian political elite, with the support of the Egyptian middle class, helped draft the 1923 constitution. As a result Farouk, King Fuad's son, was the first Egyptian king to come to power via a national constitution in 1936 (Thornhill, 2010).

Furthermore, with the creation of Al-Wafd (the delegation) Egypt's most popular and influential political party came together to argue for Egypt's independence and spearheaded the development of the 1923 constitution. Al-Wafd's mission was to create a representation of Egypt's search for identity. During the mid-1920s and early 1930s Al-Wafd led a spirited campaign in which they promoted the 'supremacy of the constitution'. Al-Wafd participated in a number of electoral competitions and although the new political system was not perfect, it introduced genuine constitutionalism, political pluralism and enshrined democracy and civil rights.

Since the establishment of the liberal-constitution in 1923, there had been an "indigenous power struggle between an autocratically inclined monarchy and a newly established parliament" dominated by the Al-Wafd party (Thornhill, 2010, p.282). Thus by January 1952 as a result of the confrontations between the British army, Egyptian police, and Al-Wafd, a number of riots broke out causing anarchy (Osman, 2011). Thousands of protestors marched downtown to Cairo, breaking into and looting retail shops, cafes, and restaurants and even set some buildings alight. This disaster was dubbed the 'Cairo fire' which effectively signalled the end of the monarchy.

In July 1952 a number of young officers mounted a coup against King Farouk (Thornhill, 2010). In less than twelve months monarchism, the parliamentary system and political parties were completely abolished and in its place the young officers established republicanism. The July 1952 coup quickly turned into a revolution that initiated a new phase in Egypt's history. The officers, chief among them, Gamal Abdel Nasser, launched a transformative political and social project.

4.1.4 Gamal Abdel Nasser

Gamal Abdel Nasser signified the only true Egyptian development project in Egypt's history since the fall of the pharaonic state. Nasser to many, was an Egyptian man who had overthrown the Middle East's most established and sophisticated monarchy and implemented a nation-centred development programme of social justice, progress, development and dignity (Osman, 2011). Nasser made possible the redistribution of the national wealth and termination of the monopoly and exploitation previously exerted by a very small percentage of the Egyptian population (Stephens, 1981).

In a few years Nasser modernised Egypt's political system by incorporating ordinary Egyptians, who represented the will and aspirations of the masses, into political positions (McDermott, 1988). It is perhaps this purpose in facing the modern world that formed part of Nasser's main legacy to the Arabs (Stephens, 1981). Nasser also transformed the economic underpinnings of Egypt. Nasser's combination of land reform and the creation of the public sector resulted in about 75 percent of Egypt's gross domestic product (GDP) being transferred from the rich to the state and millions of small owners.

Yet, more importantly, Nasser's project was not about the growth rates or development programmes that he implemented but rather how he was manifesting himself through the will of the Egyptian people which was demonstrated through the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company (Osman, 2011). By nationalising the Canal, Nasser was identified as both an Egyptian and Arab hero. Thus, to Egyptians and the rest of the Arab world Nasser "imparted a sense of personal worth and national pride that they had not known for four hundred years" (Time, 2013, p.3). Nasser was seen as a revolutionary and stabilising influence in the Middle East (Stephens, 1981).

Nasser and his project put him squarely against US strategic interests in the region (Osman, 2011). The clash between the US and Nasser was inevitable since Nasser played a leading role in terminating the British presence in the Middle East. With the British withdrawing from the Gulf, leaving their bases unprotected, the duty fell to the US military to protect the strategic oil reserves. The US's perception of the threat posed by Nasser was further exacerbated by Nasser's close relationship with the USSR. Nasser had become the bondsman of the Soviet Union (Time, 2013).

If the US viewed Nasser's project as a potential threat, Israel considered it as a direct threat (Osman, 2011). Nasser believed that all Arab land belonged to the Arabs and Israel's intention was to divide the Arab world. Therefore, armed struggle against Israel was not only valid but necessary. What followed was the 'Six-Day War' that initially started with border tension between Israel and Syria, followed by Nasser's rush to support Syria and Nasser's decision to expel the United Nations Emergency Force from Sinai and closed the Strait of Tiran to all ships flying Israel's flag (Osman, 2011).

After Egypt's defeat to Israel Nasser resigned live on television (McDermott, 1988). The defeat had a devastating impact on both Nasser's health and ego. Too late had Nasser come to realise that the solution to the Palestinian and Israel problem could not be resolved through military settlement (Time, 2013). The 1967 defeat had far-reaching implications. Nasser truly represented his people's will and the military setback of 1967 resulted in a blow to the people's and nation's determination. More importantly, the immense damage done to the 'dream of Egypt becoming the leading country in the Middle East' had a lasting impact on the relationship between the Egyptian society and their ruler (Osman, 2011).

4.1.5 Anwar El-Sadat

When Vice President Anwar El-Sadat took over the presidency following the death of Nasser, he was not expected to last long (Hashim, 2011). From the onset of Sadat's rule he employed 'divide-and-rule tactics among the military elite in order to ensure an allegiance to him. Sadat faced numerous challenges in the wake of 1972, namely; the Egyptian economy was in a sharp decline because of defence spending, the high costs of the 'war of attrition' (a war fought between Israel and Egypt from 1967 to 1970) and the Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula (which Israel had occupied since the Six-Day War of 1967).

As Sadat entered his second year of presidency general riots, demonstrations and criticism of the government was rife (Hashim, 2011). However, the greatest threat to Sadat's government came from within the army. In 1972, an officer led a squad of armoured vehicles to the Hussein Mosque in Cairo in order to attack the government because of its inability to wipe out the humiliation of the war against Israel. As a result, Sadat ensured that no one military officer was allowed to gain too much political power so as to result in opposition. Sadat also significantly reduced military representation in ministries which resulted in the depoliticisation of the military as an autonomous institution.

By the mid-1970s, Egypt was yet again faced by perilous economic constraints. Sadat realised that in order to promote reform and modernisation he would have to introduce a policy central to Egypt's complex environment (Hashim, 2011). Therefore, Sadat introduced the *infitah* (opening) policy which promoted major reforms and the restructuring of the economy in order to integrate Egypt in the global economic system. The policy required massive reductions in key subsidies on basic commodities. This resulted in tens of thousands of Egyptians rioting against the policy. The security services and Egyptian police were unable to contain the riots and Sadat and his family fled to Tehran.

Sadat's *infitah* policy also embodied a strategic reorientation in foreign policy and national security (Hashim, 2011). During Sadat's rule the tensions between Egypt and Soviet Russia were increasing. Sadat's desire to wean Egypt away from the Eastern bloc and towards the West, and his claims that Moscow had refused to supply Egypt with the necessary arms during the war, contributed to Sadat's indifference towards the Eastern bloc. The collapse of Egyptian-Soviet relations resulted in a rapid decline in Egypt's operational readiness of the armed forces. This decline had a demoralising effect on the armed forces.

Towards the latter part of 1975 Sadat became fully aware of the threat to his own political position from the officer corps because of further military decline. Sadat was not prepared to go back to the Soviets for arms. By 1979, Sadat acquired a number of sophisticated and modern defence weapons from a variety of sources. Regardless of the increase in weapons, by the late 1970s the Egyptian national security capabilities were in disarray.

Sadat's decision to visit Israel in order to promote genuine Arab-Israeli peace (Camp David accords) provoked mixed responses (Hashim, 2011). Support for his decision came from senior officers as well as the commanders of the Second and Third Armies. However, junior and middle-ranking officers (who also formed part of Pan-Arab, nationalist and mainstream Islamist sentiments) felt that peace with Israel was not worth alienation from the Arab world. Following the signing of the Camp David accords, the Egyptian government realised the need for modernising the armed forces. Sadat's presidency came to an abrupt end when he was assassinated on 6 October 1981 during a military parade (which marked the Egyptian successes during the October war of 1973) by Islamist junior army officers.

4.1.6 Hosni Mubarak

After Sadat's assassination in 1981 and Mubarak's sudden accession to power Egypt went through a period of calm (Saikal, 2011). For most of Mubarak's first term during the 1980s he set out to demolish a number of controversial laws that Sadat had introduced in his later years and he relaxed the censorship of the press to the extent that it was able to criticise any senior regime member. Mubarak seemed pragmatic since he was wholly concerned with Egypt's pending economic problems. During the 1980s Egypt experienced a number of economic initiatives and programmes devoted to upgrading Egypt's infrastructure and other key areas of Egyptian life (CIA Factbook, 2011).

Mubarak's pragmatic focus to maintain stability made him cautious to adopt a potentially disruptive economic-reform programme with far-reaching implications (Osman, 2011). However, in the end, because of falling oil prices in the mid-and-late 1980s, the possibility of the retrenchment of hundreds of thousands of Egyptian migrant workers, the decrease of foreign direct investments and a dramatic fall in the revenues of the Suez Canal, the Mubarak regime had no choice but to apply for a short-term financial plan. In 1991 Egypt was obliged to accept the International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescriptions, whose structural reforms cut deep into Egypt's welfare system, pensions and key subsidies to the poor (Heiss, 2012).

The lack of political reform was also clear, the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) was still under the control of the same devotees appointed at the beginning of Mubarak's rule (Osman, 2011). Furthermore, the slow pace of economic development and little improvement in the standard of living did not help. Egyptians started to view Mubarak's style of rule as lethargic, out-dated and lacking in imagination. A large part of the problem was that Mubarak was unable or unwilling to connect with his people in a more personal way.

Militant Islamism was one of the biggest threats to the Mubarak regime (Saikal, 2011). Not only did it challenge the authority of Mubarak's regime but it challenged the security and peace of the Egyptian society. Egyptians were inherently opposed to militants killing and looting in the name of religion and therefore condoned the regime's attempts to combat militants. Mubarak launched a violent campaign to weed out all suspected Islamists (Heiss, 2012). Furthermore, with an increase in Militant Islamic terrorism Mubarak greatly decreased the amount of permissible political opposition. He closed off and isolated the political system and began dictating the time, place and degree of all political openings (Heiss, 2012).

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was a prime example of Mubarak's inability to take a leadership role in the Middle East. Here Egypt was offered an opportunity to resuscitate Egypt's influence and assert its position in the Middle East once again. However, Mubarak was unable, or unwilling, to take advantage of this opportunity. Instead, Egypt's political purposelessness was reflected in its key objectivity: "convincing the Gulf States and the United States to cancel billions of dollars of its foreign debt" (Osman, 2011, p.187). What had become evident was that Egypt, under Mubarak, was no longer the political powerhouse of the region.

Mubarak did not lack the energy or courage to implement and follow through on the traditional Egyptian project. Instead Mubarak decided to opt out of it, deciding to view Egypt's strategic orientation as part of a grand 'Pax Americana' in the Middle East (Osman, 2011). A number of factors triggered Mubarak's approach. First, the end of the Cold War and the demise of the USSR turned the Middle East's Arab-Israeli conflict from one of the main features of the Cold War into a regional struggle. Second, Mubarak's opting out was an effort at finding a role for Egypt amidst these new developments.

During the late 1980s and 1990s, Egypt was fully aware of the painful economic reform programmes and the different developmental plans that were failing to lessen Egyptian suffering and to lessen the pressure on Mubarak's regime (Banerji, 1991). With an unbridgeable feud between the US and the Islamic revolution in Iran, with Lebanon's collapse into civil war, and the troubled situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan – Mubarak realised that Egypt could relieve the US's desperate need of stability in the Middle East (Osman, 2011). One of Mubarak's key aims was to revive Egypt's leadership role in Arab politics as well as to restore a balance in Egypt's relations with the US (Banerji, 1991).

Thus, it came as no surprise that Egypt was a key participant in the CIA-led international intelligence 'war against terror' (Osman, 2011). Despite Egyptian opposition to the involvement and invasion of Iraq by the US, the US military had full access to some of the most vital Egyptian assets, for instance the Suez Canal. In addition, Egyptian security agencies played leading roles in supporting the US intention of building sustainable security systems and platforms in Iraq. This set in motion a change in foreign policy.

The majority of Egyptians did not support the foreign-policy doctrine. In the 1980s and 1990s, challenging economic conditions forced the Egyptian middle class to direct their money and energy towards meeting the basic needs of living. The gap between Egypt's new foreign policy and ordinary Egyptians denied the doctrine popular

backing. This led to Mubarak effectively isolating himself from the Egyptian people for good and the Egyptian people turning their backs on the Mubarak regime (Heiss, 2012).

Furthermore, the lack of any key event in which Egypt's own strategic interests were put forward - reinforced the separation between the people and foreign policy (Osman, 2011). As a result the Egyptian streets were filled with hostility towards the new foreign policy doctrine. Most Egyptians viewed the US-led sanctions against Iraq, following the 1991 Gulf War, as an act of cruelty against Arabs and a deliberate attempt to weaken Iraq. In addition, Egyptians were sympathetic to the Palestinian intifada that erupted in 2000 following Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. Also, Egyptian students at Cairo, Ain-Shams and Al-Azhar universities took to demonstrations in the wake of Israel's war against Lebanon in 2006.

But it was Israel's illegal siege of Gaza, following the Hamas victory in the legislative elections of 2006, which fuelled the feelings of the majority of Egyptians (Osman, 2011). Israel's war against Hamas rule in Gaza in December 2008 – January 2009 ignited immense anger amongst Egyptians. When Israel decided to drop more than a hundred tons of targeted explosives, rockets and 'intelligent bombs' on the area which led to the death of more than two hundred and fifty Palestinians - the devastation was dramatic.

At a deeper level, the lack of a national project, a combination of ill socio-economic conditions, widespread corruption and increasing gaps between the rich and poor had fuelled the anger of Egyptians against the Mubarak regime. The rise of Islamism drastically radicalised large sections of ordinary Egyptians. Furthermore, Egyptians who had suffered under a coercive political climate for decades had diluted their sense of belonging, their appreciation for their country's identity, role and dignity, and their perception of themselves (Osman, 2011). This anger and frustration created feelings of discontent, restlessness and resentment towards the Egyptian regime and specifically Mubarak himself.

Years of frustration with their government and no likely solution, led to waves of demonstrations – and, at times - violent manifestations of hatred (Osman, 2011). From 2005-2009 hundreds of riots had taken place, in which demonstrators tore down billboard images of Mubarak. Young Egyptians felt that there was a sense of wasted energy and unused potential and that they were being held back by a tired regime. In reaction, Mubarak included his son Gamal Mubarak and a group of young, well-educated, and liberal capitalists in his regime in the hope of rejuvenating it. Mubarak also sought to secure his legacy by installing his son as president after Mubarak left office (Heiss, 2012). However, this development only emphasized what the protestors were feeling: that of a regime unable to provide.

The Gamal Mubarak regime inherited the problem of being caught between strategies of containment, coercion and confrontation (Osman, 2011). The containment was focused on introducing numerous economic development and investment programmes aimed at alleviating some of the pressures experienced by Egyptians on a daily basis and, in the process, earning some goodwill among young and middle class Egyptians. These were placated in 'hints-of-democracy, whereby Parliamentary elections were held to prove the regime's

democratic nature with controlled elections, an unrepresentative multi-party political environment - permitted the Mubarak regime to claim progress and political development, which in turn diffused some of the anger towards the regime (Heiss, 2012). The coercion lay in the regime's ability to suppress any potential challenge (Osman, 2011). This was visible in the crushing of public disorder and strict control over civic organisations and universities. It also manifested itself in the use of torture with some horrific cases reported by human-rights organisations and bloggers. The confrontation lay in curbing the establishment or spread of any new political initiative from within the Egyptian society. Instead of attempting to meet the needs of the Egyptian people, Mubarak engaged in a campaign of violent repression and a complete disregard of the general public (Heiss, 2012).

In reaction, opposition movements started employing various tactics to counter Mubarak's violent campaign. During the mid-2000s the *Kefaya* movement (an Egyptian movement for change) employed creative tactics in order to avoid confrontation with the regime. The *Kefaya* members and supporters used ICTs, such as social media and social networking, to communicate information, publicise news, and mobilise events (Al-Ani et al, 2012). The group also created and directed a number of activist opposition groupings across key professions, such as *Journalists for Change*, *Doctors for Change*, and *Workers for Change*. The Mubarak regime responded by beating, arresting and containing its members. The same tactics were employed against the Muslim Brotherhood (Osman, 2011).

Economic development was proving to be a double-edged sword. Although there were improvements in the living conditions of some Egyptians – the newly empowered businessmen springing up in different sectors were increasingly demanding a bigger say in how their economy and country should be governed (Osman, 2011). Demographics, further, complicated this matter. In the early 1990s fifty percent of Egyptians were under thirty-five years of age – however, by the early 2010s this figure had increased to seventy-five percent (CIA Factbook, 2011). Thus, the demands and ambitions of the restless Egyptian youth compelled the regime to rely heavily on confrontation and coercion.

As a result, a number of violent confrontations took place at some of Egypt's universities. Student groups had complained about the visibility and intense interference of security forces on campuses. Furthermore, Egyptian blogs and social networks were full of stories of students being kidnapped and retained by the police forces (Osman, 2011). New media further complicated the situation for the regime. Through new media, Egyptians were able to follow international happenings, for instance the free and fair elections of neighbouring countries, the use of new media to oust corrupt members of government, provide evidence for human rights abuses and to tell their story to the world (Murray, 2012).

The pressures and resistance of Egyptian society clearly suggested that the regime's tactics of containment, coercion and confrontation were reaching their limits. The Mubarak regime was close to a tipping point after which it would lose control of the situation. The over-reaching question of legitimacy was fundamental at this point. However, the Mubarak regime isolated itself, relying more heavily on the security apparatus and

insisting that Egypt's problems could be solved exclusively by economic reform. As a result, the gulf between the regime and its people reached its breaking point: "the notion that President Mubarak, or the power elite that surrounded him, could lead the country through the troubled waters of political oppression, corruption, economic malaise, sectarianism and widespread fury, had lost its credibility" (Osman, 2011, p.210). This realisation is what fuelled the 2011 revolt to gain major popularity amongst the Egyptian people. During the course of the revolt, Mubarak came across as a reminder of a disappearing age.

4.2 The Arab Spring Uprising in Egypt

"By nature, the consequences of revolutions go far beyond domestic boundaries. They influence, often with great ferocity, prevailing international power relations and the diplomatic status quo. They create power vacuums and opportunities to be exploited" (Kamrava, 2005, p. 169).

The Arab Spring that initially sparked in Tunisia in 2010 and led to the ousting of Ben Ali, quickly spread to Egypt (as discussed above in Chapter 3.5). At the beginning of January 2011, a group of young Egyptian activists, organising themselves mainly through online social communication and networking websites, called for a 'day of rage' on Tuesday 25 January 2011 (Dehghanpisheh, Dickey and Giglio, 2011). The organising groups - led by the *6th April* group and the *We are all Khaled Said* group (which had been formed in reaction to the killing of an Alexandrian blogger, Khaled Said by the Egyptian police in the summer of 2010) – asked their supporters to march to the centre of Cairo (Storck, 2011). The organisers also emphasised the peaceful nature of the protest and through viral emails repeatedly urged potential demonstrators to adhere to a strict and refined code of behaviour throughout the march (Osman, 2011). The aim of the protest was to voice Egyptian grievances and anger against Mubarak (Heiss, 2012). Egyptians revolted in reaction to growing disparities between the rich and poor, political repression, economic inequalities, corruption, high inflation and unemployment (Saikal, 2011).

Thus the Egyptian revolution began on 25 January 2011 when less than 50 000 Egyptians turned out on the streets of Cairo and other Egyptian cities (Sowers and Toensing, 2012). These were relatively small numbers that the Egyptian police could have easily contained. However, Mubarak reacted with extreme apprehension (Osman, 2011). The Mubarak regime, in reaction to the Egyptian demonstrations and the fall of the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, wanted to prove its strength, its ability to control the situation and its capacity to contain the protests without sparking popular anger. Habib Al-Adly, Minister of the Interior (and Mubarak's strong man in the last phase of its fight against militant Islamism in the late 1990s), ordered large numbers of anti-riot and general security police to surround the demonstrators and block their marches. However, Adly's strategy backfired when the nervousness of the police in containing the demonstrations led to clashes. This led to the Mubarak regime coming

across as “defiant, arrogant, and threatening” (Osman, 2011, p.2) not only to the Egyptian society but to the rest of the international community.

By Friday 28 January 2011, millions of protestors had turned to the streets throughout Egypt - from Cairo, to the Suez, Alexandria, and other cities in the Nile Delta (Heiss, 2012). The Egyptian police were overwhelmed by the numbers of protestors and reacted with truncheons, tear-gas, rubber bullets, water cannons and even live ammunition (Dehghanpisheh, Dickey and Giglio, 2011). What became painstakingly clear was that the Ministry of the Interior’s strategy was failing and that his decision making structure was paralysed: “the ministry’s scenario planning failed to be put into action; the chain of command crumbled, amidst poor information, confusion, and [...] different orders from different senior regime figures” (Osman, 2011, p.3). By the end of 28 January 2011, the Egyptian police had completely withdrawn from the streets of Egypt.

The sense of chaos was further augmented when the Mubarak regime decided to shut down Egypt’s access to the internet, mobile networks and imposed a complete shutdown of all wireless communication systems (Dehghanpisheh, Dickey and Giglio, 2011). Hours later television channels broadcast horrific scenes of looted supermarkets and buildings that were set ablaze. In the absence of the Egyptian police, panic started to take hold of Egypt and neighbourhood watch and security groups were left to protect their areas (Osman, 2011). Finally, the Mubarak regime decided to deploy the Egyptian military across Cairo and other large cities to restore order. For many Egyptians the visibility of the military in Cairo, Alexandria and other cities instilled a sense of security and stability.

Egypt’s political Islamists provided the uprising with hundreds and thousands of organised demonstrators (Osman, 2011). Even the outlawed but powerfully organised Muslim Brotherhood, the most recognised group within the Islamic movement, realised the importance of toppling the regime and decided to lend its support (Dehghanpisheh, Dickey and Giglio, 2011). As a result, more than half a million young Muslim Brotherhood members joined the protest and provided the critical mass on the streets of Egypt (Osman, 2011). Members of the Muslim Brotherhood used their organisational skills in order to coordinate groups, providing the different kinds of logistical support, and setting up various checkpoints where protestors would gather. The Muslim Brotherhood made a point of ensuring that its involvement in the demonstrations was registered as little as possible. The Muslim Brotherhood did not want the revolt to be dominated by one single ideology; instead it encouraged a multi-faceted perspective incorporating Egypt’s diversity. Although, it should be noted that the Muslim Brotherhood used this as a smokescreen in order to mask their true motive of ensuring that Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood become the first civilian president in Egyptian history. This resulted in the Brotherhood accumulating too much power which could result in hindering Egypt’s transition to a democratic state (El-Bendary, 2013).

By the first week of February 2011, a new political environment was established in Egypt when hundreds of thousands of ordinary Egyptians from all walks of life decided to join the demonstrations (Osman, 2011). Hundreds of civilians had died in the clashes with the police in the first week of the protests; and these victims

were seen as 'martyrs' for the cause of freedom. At this point in time, Tahrir Square had not only become a symbol of defying the regime, but of undermining the power structure that had been dominating Egypt for decades. The uprising was forming into a representation of the will of the Egyptian people and it was bent on the fall of the regime. Protestors and commentators alike were using the term 'revolution' in order to describe what was taking place in Egypt.

In reaction to this, a pro-Mubarak movement was established and Mubarak also delivered an emotional speech in which he emphasised his military career as a soldier who fought for all Egyptians and did his best to protect the interests of Egypt (Osman, 2011). Furthermore, state television - and some privately owned channels - launched a strategic campaign 'of love for the president'. Various demonstrations were organised to show support for the Mubarak regime. However, all these efforts failed when the protestors insisted on their model of popular uprising that brought down Tunisian dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali - Mubarak's immediate resignation (Dehghanpisheh, Dickey and Giglio, 2011). In confronting millions of Egyptians who expected his immediate resignation, Mubarak had few options (Heiss, 2012). As the crisis unfolded Mubarak tried to shift the focus away from the protestor's demand for his immediate removal and instead promoted a gradual reform (Osman, 2011). Mubarak also promised that he would not apply for a re-election at the end of his term in September 2011 and with his six months remaining as President of Egypt he would supervise the process of the planned reforms. Furthermore, Mubarak's new vice-president, General Omar Suleiman, the long-serving head of Egypt's General Intelligence Agency, designed a forum of national dialogue whereby all political players were invited. However, it was to no avail as the protestors continued to insist on their demands.

On Friday 11 March 2011, Mubarak's Vice-President General Omar Suleiman read a brief statement in which he declared that President Mubarak had stepped down and that the ruling power had been transferred to an interim military government - the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) (Heiss, 2012). Following Mubarak's resignation thousands of Egyptians scrambled for their mobile phones spreading the news, and nearly everyone hugged the stranger next to them. Hundreds and thousands of Egyptian protestors shouted "We are in, he is out!" (Osman, 2011, p.7). An administration that had seemed, to millions of people, to be stable, powerful and resistant to change - had crumbled.

Like Tunisia, Egyptian protesters desired a "political regime that would respect dignity, rights and justice, not trample upon them" (Sowers and Toensing, 2012, p.2). Egyptians were initially relieved that the military had removed Mubarak from power, easing an escalation of the repression and atrocities that was unfolding in Syria, Bahrain, Yemen, and Libya. However, by March 2011, Egyptian activists were becoming frustrated with the Egyptian's military refusing to repeal the Emergency Law, restructuring of the security forces, and the promise of elections. The Egyptian military, an established pillar of the Mubarak regime, continued to use many of the techniques of control and repression which the Mubarak regime used in previous years. For instance, the (SCAF)

criminalised protests and strikes through new laws, arrested and detained protesters and tried civilians in military courts on sometimes vague and often questionable charges of treason (Sowers and Toensing, 2012).

However, this would not contain change in Egypt. The Egyptian military and Muslim Brotherhood wanted elections to be held in October 2011 and to allow the winners to draft the constitution (Lee, 2011). Egyptians feared that this would allow the Muslim Brotherhood to succeed the military as the referee of yet another authoritarian system. At the beginning of June, Egyptians were still protesting in reaction to people dying in police captivity (Lee, 2011).

The beginning of October 2011 marked a new challenge in Egyptian history when Egypt's military ruler Field Marshall Mohammed Hussien Tantawi testified in the trial of the ousted president Mubarak (Demissie, 2011). Tantawi denied that his army was ordered to shoot protesters during the revolution. Mubarak's trial had raised two major implications for the Arab Spring. First, the Egyptian uprising was successful in inspiring many citizens to rise up against their long serving dictators. Second, the Egyptian revolution directly contributed to the struggle for Libyan freedom by breaking Libyans fear of protesting for reform.

Chapter 5: Theoretical Analysis and Interpretation of the Egyptian Uprising

“Egyptians had traditionally been compelled to accept whatever political and cultural orientation was forced upon them; now they were taking the lead in choosing their society’s identity, direction and frame of reference”
(Osman, 2011, p.34).

This study is concerned with discovering the ways in which new media have shaped the Arab Spring uprising of 2011 in Egypt. New media have not only been identified as a catalyst for the Arab Spring Uprising in Egypt, but also in the rest of the Middle East and North Africa. The media has been used for various pro-democratic goals in Egypt (Murray, 2012). As discussed before, these goals can either be constructive or destructive in a conflict transformation process (Reuben, 2010). This study is, therefore, concerned with identifying how new media have been used in Egypt in order to achieve constructive pro-democratic goals ensuring a route towards democracy. A constructive outcome would ensure stability and an adoption of the process of democratisation (Reuben, 2010). The following research questions will be addressed in this part of the study: how have the media, specifically new media, been used for pro-democratic goals/purposes in Egypt; what impact have new media had on the Egyptian uprising and which roles did new media fulfil in the conflict; and what impact, constructive or destructive, did new media have on the conflict transformation process in Egypt. In addition, Conflict Theory and the Mass Communication Theory will be applied.

5.1 The Outcomes of the Egyptian Uprising – Theoretical Applications

The Egyptian mass uprising constituted a largely peaceful popular uprising that involved demonstrations, marches, and acts of civil disobedience and labour strikes against the Mubarak regime in order to highlight their grievances. Millions of protesters from a variety of different socio-economic and religious backgrounds demanded the dismantling of the Mubarak regime and voiced their desire for a democratic state (Murray, 2012). Conflict Theory highlights the importance of national conflict for moving towards a process of democratisation (Reuben, 2010). Egypt, like other Middle Eastern states, has been ruled for decades by dictatorial or authoritative regimes. Dictatorships and authoritative rulers are defined as repressive regimes in which power lies in the hands of a single individual and the elite (Ezrow and Frantz, 2011). Dictatorial or authoritative regimes are usually associated with corruption, injustice, arbitrary rule, clientelism, and severe economic crises such as high inflation, international debt, and high unemployment rates (Zoubir, 1993). The centralisation of power in the hands of Mubarak and his elites, has been sustained through corruption, clientelism and tyranny. However, this could no longer be sustained due to Mubarak’s inability to meet the increasing needs of the Egyptian people (Heiss, 2012).

The desire for a process of democratisation in Egypt, and the Middle East, is in reaction to various grievances caused by their tyrannical regimes. The protests in Egypt were in reaction to police brutality, state emergency laws, lack of free and fair elections, freedom of speech, uncontrollable corruption, high unemployment levels, and food price inflation (Ryan, 2011). Conflict Theory argues that an environment of conflict exists because of a clash of interests within the various spheres of life and that conflict would inevitably be seen as the only source of resolution (Petrocelli, Piquero, and Smith, 2003). Therefore, by 28 January 2011, millions of Egyptian citizens took to the streets and were met by nervous Egyptian policemen (Heiss, 2012). The Egyptian police were both overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of the protestors and most of the police units were given contradictory orders from various senior officers resulting in even further confusion (Osman, 2011). As a result, the police units reacted with force, using rubber ammunition, teargas, water cannons and live ammunition.

Furthermore, Egyptians' desire for Mubarak to resign from office was due to Mubarak losing his authority over Egypt by popular consent. According to Conflict Theory once a society refuses to consent to its ruler's power – that ruler's authority becomes illegitimate (Michalowski, 2011). As a result, the ruler will try and hold onto power through the use of force and repression for as long as possible (Petrocelli, Piquero, and Smith, 2003). This could be seen when the Mubarak regime ordered the Egyptian police forces to take to the streets in order to restore order and protect Mubarak's legitimacy (Osman, 2011).

The protestors' use of the media, specifically new media, had not only significantly changed the scope of the conflict in Egypt, but the role that the media plays as a tool for democratic purposes. The twenty-first century in the Middle East has been shaped significantly by the media, especially newspapers, radio and television (Lewis, 2005). Initially, communication technology was used as an instrument of control – providing the state with an effective new weapon for oppression and propaganda. The Mass Communication Theory argues the media institutionalises existing social norms as depicted by the ruling elite in order to maintain their power (Baran and Davis, 2006). State-run media provided the Mubarak regime with a highly effective means of propagating views favourable to the regimes interests (Heiss, 2012).

For instance, in 2004 when the *Al-Masry Al-Youm* newspapers were launched, the emergence of other non-state run papers and television news channels in Egypt followed (Hamamou, 2011). However these were not independent media, they were rather privately owned media – media owned and controlled by pro-regime businessmen. On the one hand, state-run news media had always been directed in line with government interference and government established practices. On the other hand, even intense state influence over the editorial practices of privately owned news media was evident (Hamamou, 2011). Thus, it had become important to establish whether there was such a thing as independent media in Egypt since there had not been any true platform to criticise the Egyptian government or Mubarak.

For instance, private owned media institutions were unable to provide real protection for those writing against the Mubarak regime (Heiss, 2012). Bloggers were arrested for what they wrote about the regime or for

participating in demonstrations as is evident in the 2007 case where Kareem Amar, a blogger, received a four-year prison sentence for blogging about Egypt's state and the Mubarak regime (Hamamou, 2011). This had effectively curtailed most bloggers and journalists from writing about the Mubarak regime.

However, an end has been put to this trend, at a national level, with the fall of the Mubarak regime in 2011 and, at an international level, with the process of globalisation and advanced communication technology (Demissie, 2011). With the significant advances in communication technology, especially the Internet, it has become increasingly difficult for states to control their societies using communication technology (Lewis, 2005). The changing nature of the media, specifically new media, was further institutionalised with the 2011 popular uprisings in Egypt.

Egypt's desire for popular democracy represented a defining moment for the media, especially in the context of a transformative media landscape (Hamdy, and Gomaa, 2012). New media have fulfilled a spectrum of functions in the popular uprisings of Egypt (Manrique and Mikail, 2011). New media have been identified as a vital tool used for communication amongst the Egyptian population before, during and even after the uprising (Heiss, 2012). The Mass Communication Theory holds that the media are a vital tool for communication as they inform and educate societies about matters that affect them (Ramsbotham et al, 2011). From the onset of the uprising, it was clear that new media allowed news to travel fast through Internet telephony, mobile phones, and other modes of social information transfer, such as *YouTube*, *Twitter*, and *Facebook* (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012).

The above tools played a key role in ensuring the expediency and immediacy of information travel during the uprising. According to the 2011 Arab Social Media Report eighty eight percent of Egyptians get their news from social media tools and rely the least on state-run media for their information (Storck, 2011). Thus, new media helped shape the way Egyptians perceived the conflict; its causes and consequences, and its importance (O'Sullivan et al, 1994). According to the Mass Communications Theory the media plays a key role in shaping the public's attitudes about a given situation, especially conflict (Bractic and Schirch, 2007).

New media also presented a multitude of alternatives for the exchange of information concerning the uprising, for instance the time and location for protest formations, which made the power of the protestors' network supersede the power of the Mubarak government (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). Speed in the Egyptian uprising was a very important factor. It enabled the relevant messages and news to travel quickly, resulting in a promotion of the protest and encouraging new members to join both internally (Egyptian society) and externally (international arena). The use of new media and ICTs and the borderless world it creates, enlightened and awakened Egyptians to their rights (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). When Egyptians needed to communicate to organise demonstrations (which ultimately led to the fall of the Mubarak regime), they went to Facebook as a primary news source. Social media served as a platform for Egyptians to organise themselves and to keep track of the unfolding revolution (Rowinsky, 2011 cited in Storck, 2011). New media helped build a support base for the uprising by reaching and organising substantial numbers of concerned Egyptians (Gaworecki, 2011).

Since the onset of the popular uprising in Egypt, the communications between Mubarak's regime and Egyptians were limited (Demissie, 2011). The protestors used the media to their advantage. The protestors' use of various communication tools during the popular uprising highlighted the reality of the situation on the ground as it was unfolding. Thus, the protestors' use of new media as a communication medium can be seen as constructive. The protestors continuously highlighted their grievances with the Mubarak regime with the help of new media tools (Heiss, 2012). Furthermore, new media were used to communicate their demands for Mubarak's immediate removal and a complete political reformation of Egypt.

New media have also helped provide Egypt, and other Middle Eastern and Northern African states, with information about current affairs that influence their country. It should be noted that, although the media have traditionally helped provide societies from the Middle East with information, traditional forms of the media, such as television, radio and newspapers have been shaped by the interests of the ruling regime and usually produced news in line with the status quo of the regime (Williams, 2003). According to the Mass Communication Theory the media are known to have been used as a tool for propaganda in order to foster a picture created by the ruling elite to mask the true reality to its society (Fourie, 2007). Thus, in the past, Middle Eastern societies were not really conscious of the difference between their states and the rest of the world (Osman, 2011).

However, with the onset of new media, Egyptians were able to follow international happenings, for instance the principles of democracy, free and fair elections in democratic countries and the principles of human rights (Heiss, 2012). New media also offered a platform for Egyptians to oust corrupt members of government, provide evidence for human rights abuses and to highlight their grievances to the rest of the world (Demissie, 2012). Furthermore, politically-minded Egyptians increasingly used new media, specifically blogs and Facebook, as an outlet to express their realities (Al-Ani et al, 2012).

New media have also helped bring to the international community and neighbouring countries attention to the range of the unjust grievances and horrific human rights abuses that was taking place in Egypt during the popular uprising (Hamamou, 2011). As Egyptian state media tried to downplay the size and strength of the uprising as well as the unravelling of the Mubarak regime - new media was able to show to the world the true narrative (Al-Ani et al, 2012). New media were used to express the knowledge and experiences of the local realities which helped supply vital information to the world about the conflict in Egypt which the world was unable to see (Heiss, 2012). For instance, Egyptians were able to provide first-hand accounts through pictures or videos taken on their mobile phones and uploaded to social networks (Al-Ani et al, 2012).

This, further, aided in connecting and creating a context for information which was used to counter the government controlled narrative. Blogs and other social media networks were used to communicate the experiences of Egyptians during the revolution. Counter-narratives were being provided for global audiences, contributing and shaping debates and dialogues and actively delegitimising the Mubarak regime's authority (Storck, 2011). Despite restrictive policies imposed by the Mubarak regime and the shutdown of the Internet and

other communication technologies – the use of new media countered and circumvented the regime’s grip of power (Al-Ani et al, 2012). In addition, Egyptians were still able to take valuable pictures and videos with their mobile phones and information was still able to be accessed. For instance, Google’s Say Now (a VoIP system) provided Egyptians with a phone number where people could call in and leave a voice message. The message would then be transcribed and sent out with the hashtag #Egypt (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012).

Finally, new media were used as a tool or medium by protestors for pro-democratic purposes (Hamamou, 2011). The use of Facebook for social activism in Egypt steadily inclined from the end of 2004 with an increase from 40 blogs to 160,000 blogs in 2008 (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). The increase in blogs for the use of social activism aided in organising and mobilising groups to protest. Three key activists (although there are many more) are identified as playing significant roles in the Egyptian uprising. The first, Weal Ghonim, an ex-marketing executive for Google in the Middle East, started the *We are all Khaled Said* public page on Facebook which became a rallying point to expose police brutality in Egypt. A famous cause on this page was the brutal murder of an activist blogger, Khaled Said, at the hands of two Egyptian police officers in 2010 (Storck, 2011).

The second, Asmaa Mahfouz, one of the founders of the *6th April* group, was both shocked and outraged by the four Egyptians setting themselves on fire to protest the dire situation in Egypt (emulating the Bouazizi incident in Tunisia). In reaction to this, she mobilised Egyptians to rally on 25 January 2011 through video blogs that were posted on YouTube and other social media sites (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). The third, Israa Abdek Fattah, a co-founder of the *6th April* group, was detained by authorities because of her Facebook page where she posted about the need to revolt. Various mainstream international news agencies, such as Al Jazeera, BBC and CNN, highlighted the importance of new media for socio-political movements (Al-Ani et al., 2012). Social media helped provide a platform for the various movements in Egypt to express their pro-democratic goals and desires. In addition, Egyptians made good, efficient and creative use of the Internet to publicise their desire for democracy and political reform (Storck, 2011).

The courage and determination of Egyptians to participate in the popular protests forced the Egyptian military to remove Mubarak from office and to assert direct control over Egypt, resulting in a brief moment of stability (Sowers and Toensing, 2012). For Conflict Theory, stability is only achieved once a dominant group obtains control and restores balance to the society (Michalowski, 2011). When the Egyptian military stood up and removed Mubarak from office and ensured the election of a civil administration – the Egyptian military restored balance to the society even if only for a short period of time. The fall of the Mubarak regime, with the help of new media and a dedicated protesting population, had for the first time in Egyptian history created the opportunity for a transition to a civilian administration, laying the foundation for democracy (Demissie, 2011). The Egyptian demand for a pro-democratic transformation appears to have broken the yoke of dictatorial rule in the MENA (Saikal, 2011).

5.2 The Use of New Media for Pro-Democratic Transition

As mentioned previously in this study Conflict Constructiveness, an element of Conflict Theory, provides a number of benchmarks in order to determine whether the media have constructive or destructive effects on conflict and whether this will compliment or hinder the transition to democratisation (see chapter 2.3.1). Firstly, the communication between the protestors and Mubarak can be viewed in two ways. The media were used as a tool to communicate between the parties and to outside sources. The media, specifically new media, were used to provide a platform for protestors to communicate to one another about the realities in Egypt before, during and after the uprising. The protestors used new media as a platform to promote and encourage Egyptians to rise up against Mubarak and his regime.

Secondly, the tactics used by the protestors can be seen as constructive to the conflict transformation process of Egypt (Reuben, 2010). The organisers of the protests emphasised the peaceful nature of the protest and through viral emails and updates on *Facebook* pages, repeatedly urged potential demonstrators to adhere to a strict and refined code of behaviour throughout the march (Heiss, 2012). However, the tactics employed by the Mubarak regime were destructive. The Mubarak regime regularly used containment and coercive methods to subdue protests against his regime (Osman, 2011).

Thirdly, the outlook of the protestors was constructive in the sense that they used new media in order to highlight their grievances with the Mubarak regime (Osman, 2011). The protestors also used new media as a tool to communicate to the world their desire for a process of transformation to a democratic state (Heiss, 2012). Conversely, when Mubarak decided to shut down Egypt's access to the internet and imposed a complete shutdown of all wireless communication systems Mubarak instilled a destructive outlook which had a negative impact on the possibility of a peaceful political transformation process (Osman, 2011). However, it should be noted that not all conduct by Egyptian protestors was constructive during the popular uprising. For instance, there was a case where Lara Logan, a South African journalist and war correspondent for CBS, was violently assaulted and raped while she and her team were covering the celebrations of President Mubarak's resignation (Kingsley, 2013).

Lastly, the social bonds between the protestors and Mubarak were clearly highlighted during the popular uprising. There was a clear distinction between the protestors' and Mubarak's desire. On the one hand, the protestors demanded the resignation of Mubarak and definite political reform (Demissie, 2011). On the other hand, Mubarak desired to remain in power and preserve his legitimacy (Osman, 2011). Both parties instinctively used new media tools in order to voice their desires (Heiss, 2012). New media were used by the protestors in order to provide evidence of Mubarak's illegitimacy as a ruler, further widening the social bond between Mubarak and Egyptians. Mubarak used state-media in order to propagate the role he played in Egypt and the necessity of keeping him in power.

5.3 Conclusion: an Assessment of New Media for Conflict Constructivity

The Arab Spring Uprising in the MENA has attracted considerable attention from the media since its inception in Tunisia in December 2010 (Demissie, 2011). The Egyptian uprising began on 25 January 2011 and was marked by a number of peaceful protest demonstrations across Egypt (Heiss, 2012). The Egyptian uprising was in reaction to decades of oppressive rule, political repression, social and economic inequalities, and unemployment (Saikal, 2011). The popular uprising led to the resignation of long-standing president Hosni Mubarak on 11 February 2011. This effectively marked a complete shift in the political landscape of Egypt (Osman, 2011).

One of the central tools used by the pro-democratic protestors, in order to obtain their goals of political reform, social justice and economic viability, was the media, specifically new media (Al-Ani et al, 2012). Though the international debate on new media's role in the revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt and whether social media tools are causes or tools that enriched and accelerated these revolutions are already bountiful (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). New media have been identified as a key tool used by protestors in order to achieve their pro-democratic goals and to express their knowledge and experiences of local realities which supplied vital information to the world about their conflict (Hamamou, 2011). Millions of Egyptians turned to new media for information and updates on the status of the uprising (Hamdy and Gomaa, 2012). New media were also used as a tool to communicate amongst the population which effectively shaped the way the public perceived the uprising, its causes and consequences, and its importance (Manrique and Mikail, 2011). New media also brought to the international community's attention the true range of the grievances that Egyptians were experiencing (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). The Egyptian revolution sparked various discussions about the power of social media as a catalyst for socio-political change (Storck, 2012). Mainstream news outlets highlighted how important the use of new media was for the socio-political movement in Egypt (Al-Ani et al, 2012). New media helped shape how Egyptians felt, how they planned their involvement and how they documented their involvement in the protests (Tufekci and Wilson, 2012).

The Egyptian uprising fostered a constructive outlook by providing budding dialogue about the role of social media and networking as a key tool for political mobilisation towards regime change, political reform and pro-democracy movements (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). Despite repression from the Mubarak regime, Egyptians utilised new media tools, such as blogs and social networking, for platforms of free speech. Here, opposition to Mubarak's authoritarian regime was gradually promoted, legitimised and organised (Al-Ani et al, 2012). By adopting and combining various new media tools, such as social media and networking, political activists were able to create platforms of opposition. New media were not only used as a valuable tool during the 2011 uprising to inform and report on matters, but to connect the Egyptian people to a bigger cause. Egyptian protestors skilfully used new media in order to get their message out and gather momentum in their struggle to topple the Mubarak regime (El-Bendary, 2013).

The Tunisian uprising might have provided the initial spark but it was the Egyptian uprising that changed the very nature of the political environment in the Middle East (Saikal, 2011). The extraordinary gains made by the Egyptian protesters, and their tenacity in protesting for months, opened up possibilities for systemic institutional transformation in the months and years to come (Sowers and Toensing, 2012). As Egypt evolves into a more democratic state, new media will become increasingly vital for public narrative and the media landscape will continue to develop resulting in a process whereby new media can assist conflict constructively (Hamdy, and Gomaa, 2012).

A further study of the use of social media and the functions that they fulfilled in Egypt should be considered for future research on this topic. Identifying the functions of social media and providing examples from the Egyptian case might provide some insight into how the role of social media has directly been linked with the establishment of new political parties or civil groups in Egypt. Political parties and civil groups have proven themselves to be forces that are much more willing to criticize authority and demand change. This dissertation emphasised the influential role new media played in generating political mobilisation, which ultimately led to the fall of the Mubarak regime and political reform in 2011. Given the reshaping of the political landscape since then, including the deposition of Mohamed Morsi in 2013, further critical scholarship is required to gauge the impact of social media on Egypt's current political and civil spheres.

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