

**After the Arab Spring: An Analysis of the Future of Journalism in
the Middle East.**

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Master

2016

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A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Communication Studies (MCS)

2016

Pacific Media Centre, School of Communication Studies
Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

Abstract

Journalism in the Middle East has long suffered from the effect of autocratic and corrupt political regimes, which see control of the media as being vital to their continued ability to exert power over their nations. However, following the so-called ‘Arab Spring’ uprisings, there has been a marked increase in the number of governments willing to give their press freedom to report, even to the point of criticising the actions of the current government. This has removed one of the most significant factors influencing the quality and objectivity of journalists in the Middle East. However, there are still other significant issues which remain, including the volatile political situation, the subtle influence of political parties or what is referred to as “deep state”, and the level of conflict which exists in the region as a whole. This thesis will examine the extent to which the Arab Spring and other recent developments in the Middle East have influenced journalism in the region. A qualitative approach was selected in order to provide a deeper level of analysis, and fuller conclusions about the direct and indirect influences of the Arab Spring on journalism. The analysis method used was a form of narrative content analysis, obtained through face-to-face interviews with eleven journalists from four Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. External reports from international organisations such as Freedom House, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), and The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) were used to judge participants’ commentaries or evidences. Findings show that considerable challenges still remain even after the end of the Arab Spring events. It is clear that the Arab Spring altered the social climate of all of these nations in one way or another, however the positive impact this may have had on press freedom is inconsistent, when comparing all four nations. Political power fluctuations, deep state, absence of government, and civil institutions’ role have contributed to empowering or denying journalism and press freedom in Middle East since the end of the uprisings. Measuring shifts that have occurred in media, as a civil institution after a social revolution, will be a crucial factor on deciding whether such revolution has achieved its ultimate goals.

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Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping loop followed by a series of smaller, more defined strokes.

Date: 21 November 2016

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am grateful to The Almighty Allah for providing me with all needed help and hope to complete this thesis.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my academic supervisor Professor David Robie, the director of the Pacific Media Centre and professor of journalism and media in Auckland University of Technology's School of Communication Studies, for his guidance, support, and advice which made this thesis completed. I really appreciate giving me the honour to be under his supervision. I am grateful to him for supporting me all the way and assisting me to overcome all obstacles that I faced during the time of writing this thesis.

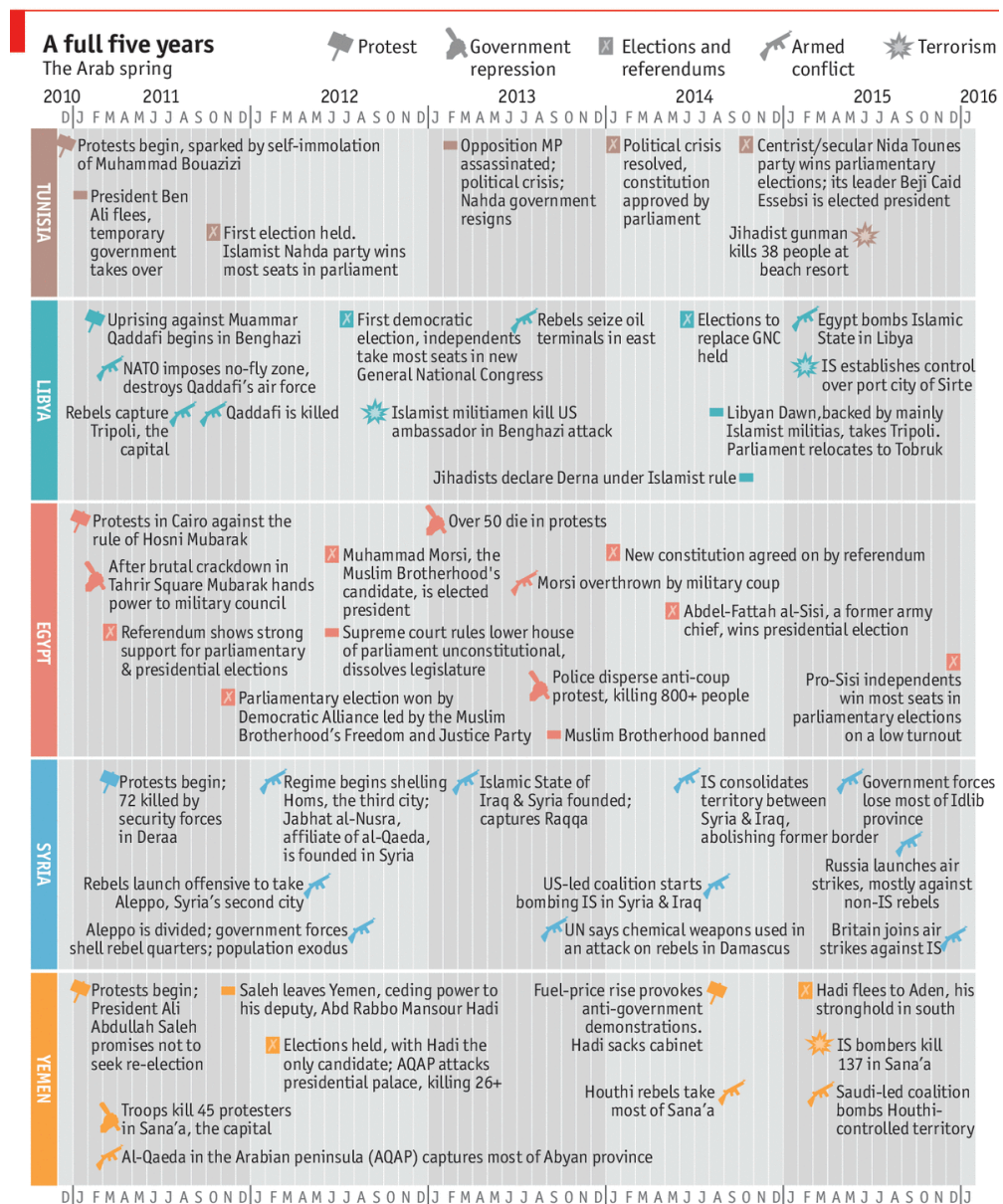
I also express my thanks to Dr. Allison Oosterman, Senior Lecturer in Auckland University of Technology, for her support and advice during the early stages of writing this thesis.

I owe deep thanks to my wife, Hasna, for being always next to me and providing best homely atmosphere to write this thesis by taking care of our two beautiful kids, Tala and Ali.

Ethics Approval

This research has obtained ethical approval 13/77 from Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 25 June 2013.

Infograph1: A summary of major events occurred in the Arab Spring countries (2010-2016). The Economist.



Chapter One: Introduction

Research background

1.1. Statement of the problem

Journalism in the Middle East has suffered for decades from blatant interference by governments and the effect of totalitarian and corrupt political regimes, which see controlling media as a crucial requirement to extend their ability to exercise power over their nations. This certainly has a negative impact on the freedom of the press in the region, which in turn has made Middle East one of the few regions which has “the least press freedom” (Eko, 2012, p.360). This lack of freedom was interpreted by the constant occupation of the region by the Ottoman Empire, Britain, France, and Italy until the mid-twentieth century, which forced various repressive laws on the media. Even after independence, governments continued to impose many tougher restrictions than what were there during the colonial era. Arab governments spread the idea that, unlike Western developed countries, Middle Eastern developing countries “did not have the resources to indulge in the luxury of the liberal watchdog journalistic model of the Western countries” (Eko, 2012, p.362). As such, according to them the major emphasis was put on the distribution of information that would reinforce nation-building and ensure national security, on the one hand, and social stability, on the other hand. In view of complex socio-economic conditions of Middle Eastern countries, press freedom was regarded as less important than national unity (Eko, 2012, p.362). In 1960, for example, President Jamal Abdel Nasser nationalised the Egyptian press to support and back the Arab nationalism and Islamic identity (Eko, 2012). The press was completely controlled by the successors of Jamal – Anwar Sadat and Mubarak- who were military commanders. During their rule of the country, journalists were not permitted to criticise government policies. Thus, journalists became at the disposal of the government and their job was to favour and foster the state’s achievements (Amin, 2002, p.128). They became the government mouthpiece. These repressive laws in addition to the dictatorial regimes have made the media landscape in the Middle East, a landscape where basic principles of journalism cannot exist.

The miserable situation of the media in the Middle East continued until the last decade of the twentieth century. The media landscape in the region started to improve with the appearance of international satellite TV channels, such as CNN, which were introduced into the region to cover the Kuwait liberation war in 1990-1991. These channels occupied the region to cover military events, and this in turn led to the proliferation of

satellite channels in the region. The proliferation of satellite channels with the evolution of digital communications at that time contributed to the liberation of the Arab media from the grip of governments. Consequently, governments are no longer the sole controlling authority on information and news broadcasting. New horizons have been opened up for the peoples of the region to express their views in regards to governments' policies. This in turn contributed positively to media freedom in the region. This does not mean that media in the Middle East has been fully liberated from government intervention and restrictions on journalists, but to create alternatives for people and journalists in the region. Governments did not stop the enactment of repressive laws that limit freedom of the press. Trial and imprisonment of journalists is something journalists got used to it. According to a 2008 Press Freedom Campaign report issued by the International Federation of Journalists, "governments of the Arab League adopted a charter that mirrors repressive laws already in place in some countries which limit expression and permit the persecution of journalists who criticise their governments" (IFJ, 2008, p.4). The findings of the 2010 report of Freedom House were consistent with IFJ 2008 report. Analysing press freedom in 2009-2010, Freedom House pointed at the significant decline of press freedom in the Middle East (Karlekar, 2010, p.1). In these regions, according to the report, government restrictions were imposed on "all conduits for news and information" (Karlekar, 2010, p.1). The report of Freedom House specified that the main reason behind the decline of press freedom in the Middle East was the reluctance of Arab governments to weaken the existing laws and regulations. In this report, Libya was mentioned among the world's ten worst rated countries which restrict press freedom. Libya acquired this position because of the lack of an independent press, poor access of citizens to fair and unbiased information, and different kinds of repression against Libyan journalists. Overall, as the report concluded, the Middle East "continued to have the world's poorest regional ratings in 2009... led by declines in the legal category" (Karlekar, 2010, p.9). As such, Middle Eastern journalism before the Arab Spring, according to the report's findings, greatly suffered from extremely severe laws which were used to accuse journalists of libel and insults against political leader. Pintak (2009, p.208) also points at the fact that "virtually all Arab journalists operate[d] under some degree of overt censorship, psychological pressure, threat of physical violence and/or corporate strictures". Besides such an overt censorship, Arab journalists collided with other challenges, such as the shortage of professional training in journalism and low salaries (Pintak, 2009, p.208).

Journalists, who believe in the crucial role of journalism in effecting changes in all levels of society, politics, and economy, have made several attempts to reform the press situation in the Middle East but, these attempts were met with repression, and journalists were imprisoned. Protecting national security and social cohesion are standard reasons governments use to justify their reaction (IFJ, 2008, p.4).

Political pressure on media in the Middle East does not come from the local governments in the region only, but even from foreign governments which have political ambitions and work to justify their policies in this rich part of the world. Therefore, it is difficult to find a journalism that is committed to the basic principles such as neutrality, objectivity and accuracy in a region that suffers from political instability resulting from these interventions. As Shackle (2012) notes, many journalists have admitted that it is unattainable for them to be completely impartial when covering wars or reporting from conflict regions where defenceless people are killed. In the Middle East, this issue is aggravated by political pressure, either from local governments which repress the media, so as to keep controlling their countries, or from external sources, such as the US government during the presidency of George W. Bush. At the time of Bush's presidency, Arab media was substantially criticized for being biased against the US, which in turn, added more pressure on Arab journalists (Pintak & Ginges, 2008). Indeed, these criticisms resulted in Arabian news channels, such as Al Jazeera, being marginalised in the US, thus making further pressure on Arab journalists to show pro-Western opinions in order to gain the approbation of Western nations (Pintak, 2011a). For example, service providers in US were urged to not air Al Jazeera, after calls from conservative and pro-Israel camps to boycott Al Jazeera channel, claiming that the channel is against US policy in the region (Pintak, 2011a). The survival of any form of journalism depends on its adaptability, as social and political dynamics continue to constantly shift. We may observe this in the way Arab journalists may necessitate the representation of pro-Western perspectives, in order to retain media penetration in the US. Herein exists a difficult paradigm of compromising accuracy to maintain social presence – even within a democratised nation where the philosophy of freedom of the press is widely preached.

Apart from political obstacles, media in the Middle East suffers from social, cultural, economic and professional difficulties as well. When discussing the cultural obstacles, we must address the differences between the different cultures regarding the concept of the freedom of the press and the differences in the practising of journalistic ethics

worldwide. Compared to maintaining privacy, freedom of the press in the Middle East may not be sacred to the same extent as in the West. Unfortunately, the Arab governments have exploited privacy protection which is entrenched in the Arabian culture to limit freedom of the press. In regards to the social constraints, the religious and ethnic intolerance which exists among some groups led to the existence of a media climate that lacks objectivity and impartiality, which in turn provided the Arab governments with a reason to impose many laws that allow them to restrict media. In addition, economic obstacles are not less important than other barriers, the hard economic situation faced by media firms and journalists, made it easy for governments to control the media landscape and to force their conditions in front of media figures. A detailed review of these kinds of constraints can be found in the literature review chapter.

The proliferation of satellite channels and the resulting emergence of private ownership of media parallel with government ownership, in addition to the evolution in digital communications, as well as the widespread use of internet at the beginning of the new millennium, all contributed to the stimulation of the Arab peoples in general and journalists in particular, to confront the government oppressive laws. As time passed, the consciousness of the Arab peoples about their political and civil rights has increased due to the significant role which has been played by communication technologies in informing people and exposing them to the experiences of others. This has led to increased demonstrations against Arab governments to obtain these rights, but most of these uprisings were met with repression.

The rising democratic movement to sweep the Middle East since 2010, otherwise known as the 'Arab Spring', sought to protest against the ridged political regimes that govern social institutions and media organisations. The democratic movement, which involved the mobilisation of citizens willing to demonstrate civil resistance against politically dominated social and economic conditions within the Middle East, is a revolution that has significantly impacted on the political arena. This was a liberation outcry of Middle Eastern people, an attempt to prompt political and social reforms and destroy their dark past with democracy. Poverty, unemployment, corruption, powerlessness, high inflation, and poor governance were the main drivers of these uprisings, Arab peoples could no longer bear the difficult living and working conditions, and the tyranny of Arab governments (Althani, 2012). They fought to live in democratic states where they would have better opportunities to obtain their rights.

Arabian TV channels such as Al-Jazeera and Al Arabiya, have had a great influence on the emergence of these liberation movements. Under the impact of the Arab Spring uprisings, a number of Arab governments decided to give the press more freedom to report, monitor, and criticise the actions of government. This decision has a subsequent impact on the quality of journalism produced over the last three years, and the level of objectivity able to be readily expressed by journalists in the Arab world.

These liberation movements have unleashed further reforms in all levels of society, politics, and economy. As Eko (2012) asserts, whatever the situation of the media in the Middle East is going to be after the Arab Spring, it certainly will be a lot better than before; the revolutions in the region have led to more freedom than the region has ever enjoyed. However, despite these clear positive changes, press in the Middle East is still not completely free. There still exists some boundaries, many consider risky to cross, areas of restriction that Arab journalists still can't overcome. In the Middle East, for example, all media organisations face some limitations forced by funders and the hosting country where the organisation is located. For Al-Jazeera, the channel is not allowed to discuss the Qatari foreign policy, as the Qatari government funds and hosts Al-Jazeera, this can be clearly observed on Al-Jazeera's coverage of issues related for example to Egypt, monitoring its coverage reveals that there is a continuous fluctuation on its discourse toward Egypt depending on the Qatari government relationship with the ruling government; for Al Arabiya, issues like terrorism and religion are not freely discussed (Pintak & Ginges, 2008, p.194). Moreover, while journalists are optimistic about a better future for the freedom of the press in the Middle East, there are still other significant issues affecting journalism in the region.

To gauge an accurate understanding of the current social climate that has emerged from the years following the Arab spring, further in-depth research must be obtained, wherein journalists themselves are the focus of attaining such data. The value of an inside perspective offers a more accessible means of exploring journalist culture and perceptions of the influences that continue to shape and restrict the practices of Arab journalists, regarding the fulfilment of ethical journalism as their moral responsibility.

1.2. Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of the Arab Spring in enhancing press freedom in the Middle East. Drawing on the specified purpose, the following research questions are addressed in the present research:

- 1) Has the Arab Spring reinforced truth, objectivity, and ethical reporting in the Middle East?
- 2) In what ways has the Arab Spring changed reporting styles and tendencies among Arab journalists who report on political and social events in the Middle East?
- 3) To what extent is freedom of the press allowed and supported by Arab governments which came to power after the Arab Spring?
- 4) Have new obstacles or constraints emerged as result of Arab Spring events?

1.3. Scope and significance of the research

The scope of the present research extends to the analysis of the impact of the Arab Spring on press freedom and journalism in the Middle East. The research will focus on the Arab Spring events from December 2010 till March 2014. Close scrutiny of the existing literature has demonstrated a gap in this particular issue. Due to such a gap, a body of evidence acquired in the prior studies is limited; there is a paucity of empirical evidence on the issue of press freedom after the Arab Spring. The present research will provide a deep insight into a significantly neglected area of Arabian journalism and will thus bring to the fore a number of crucial issues which need to be addressed to reinforce press freedom in the Middle East.

The significance of the present research is that it will generate more profound understanding of the impact of the Arab Spring on press freedom in the Middle East. While prior studies (e.g. Pollack, 2011; Althani, 2012) sufficiently covered the causes of the Arab Spring and its consequences for people, and the role that has been played by social media in fostering these demonstrations, this research will attempt to extend the scope and draw parallels between the Arab Spring uprising and press freedom in the Middle East. Information acquired in this research will be significant in assessing the extent of press freedom in Arab countries before, during and after the Arab Spring. This research will add to research knowledge by identifying the factors that continue to hinder freedom of expression in the Middle East at present. By approaching the issue of press freedom from the perspective of Middle Easterners (but not from the perspective of Westerners), the research will look at Arab journalism from a different angle. It is anticipated that the findings from the primary research will produce more subjective and accurate data and thus will help understand the probable future of journalism in the Middle East. A significant benefit of the research is that it will be conducted while the events of the Arab Spring are still progressing in the Middle East and the researcher

appears to be very close to these events. On the basis of the acquired evidence, it will be possible to define the most effective ways for improving press freedom in Arab countries and for increasing professionalism of Arab journalists.

1.4. Thesis Structure

Following this introductory chapter discussing research background, research purpose and research questions, and scope and significance of the research, chapter two highlights and discusses certain concepts and definitions related to the purpose of the current research. Additionally, chapter two provides a theoretical ground for this research by reviewing press freedom theories from different perspectives.

Chapter three is a literature review of the situation of press freedom in Middle East in two different periods; before and after the Arab Spring events. Chapter three also focus on obstacles that hinder the Middle Eastern press from achieving international standards.

Research design is presented in chapter four, including the methodological considerations of primary data gathering, the decisions made to choose research types, and the evidence gathering methods.

Chapter five includes key findings for each country, generated from data gathered from participants working and living in that country. At the end of chapter five, three main trends were highlighted to reflect three significant findings.

Chapter six discusses key observations, derived from findings analysed within chapter five with reference to the research questions.

Finally, the conclusion chapter is presented in chapter seven, it considers the implications of the findings, contribution of the research, limitations of the study, and also offers some suggestions for future researches.

1.5. Summary

This chapter has outlined the research background and statement of the problem including a very short review of press freedom in Middle East. It also introduces the significant and scope of the present research, and highlights the research questions.

The next chapter will focus on basic concepts and definitions related to press freedom, and press ethics and standards. Furthermore, it will introduce general regulators that control the delivery of press content, and how they are used by governments to serve their policies.

Chapter Two: Journalism and Press Freedom

2.1 Journalism: definition and concepts

Journalism is discursive practice heavily entrenched in socio-cultural, political, legal and economic factors that shape both its form and content. Journalism practices are highly reflective of the values, attitudes and social culture that exist within a nation, and are diverse and complex in the way they navigate ethical practices. Due to these considerations, it is challenging to isolate or formulate a singular definition of journalism that encompasses its various forms and functions (Borden, 2007, p.49). Zelizer (2004) goes even further by arguing “although one might think that academics, journalism educators, and journalists themselves talk about journalism in roughly the same manner, defining ‘journalism’ is not in fact consensual” (p. 13). This lack of singular definition can be interpreted by the lack of evaluative systems that may be applied to journalism as a practice, as it would work against accuracy to attempt to divorce journalism from its context and factors that construct it (Jones & Salter, 2011). Contexts in which journalism exists are constantly evolving due to constant shifts in social contexts within a geographic region, nation or population. Additionally, given that over the past fifteen years digital media has played a significant role in expanding the borders of journalistic practice, the lines that define categorisations of journalism practice embedded within nation and regional socio-cultural frameworks have become even more blurred. As a result, our understanding of journalism as being contextualised only by what we perceive as static socio-cultural factors, spatial or temporal borders, can be deemed a very limited understanding of both what contemporary journalism is and the contexts in which it is entrenched. Globalisation and mass communications have thus added further abstraction to the definition of journalism (Muhlmann, 2008, p.1). It is perhaps a more accurate approach to view journalism, in its current form, as the result of an on-going process whereby the means and mode of information dissemination has (and still is) experiencing significant change.

The particular relevance of examining the role of journalism at various points in its evolution is ignited by the confluence between politics, freedom of speech, and the need for media to offer a safe space for public discourse. Although a clear or fixed definition of contemporary journalism may be challenging to pinpoint, many scholars agree that it is more relevant to focus on the power journalism is able to wield, what its role should

be, and what its function currently looks like. What may be observed as a consistent occurrence across scholarly inquiries into the function of journalism, is that such an inquiry is often pursued in the event or presence of significant social conflict within societal collectives (Dahlgren, 2005). From independent journalist and media educator David Robie who's career has followed social movements and political conflict within the Asia-Pacific region for the past 35 years, to the more recent work of Jürgen Habermas in 2005 debating the unity of European nations following the Iraq war – social conflict or political debate seems to be the consistent spark that ignites a renewed focus on the role of journalism (Robie, 2014). Similarly, social and political shifts in the Middle East cast light on the role of journalism. However, there are variations in journalism practices between different parts of the world.

In order to begin forming a useful understanding of the role of journalism in the Middle East, it is important to look at normative theories of the press as a start point for understanding these variations between regions. Normative theories of the press refer to the four types of press, outlining ways in which social and political structures are reflected in journalism practices and approaches to the press within a nation (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956). What is problematic about using normative theories of the press as a framework, however is that it assumes the static nature of social and political systems, and bases reflections of journalism practices from this assumption. It is then also important to move beyond this framework as a typology that relies on the static nature of a political and social climates, and look at models that focus on shifts in journalism practice during times of social and political change. Nonetheless other scholars such as Zelizer (2004) who proposes examining journalism through different perspectives: sociology, history, language studies, political science and cultural analysis in order to understand journalism and its role and practices. Zelizer is co-editor and founder of the journal *Journalism: Theory, Practice, and Criticism* (Sage), the vision of the journal includes “to study journalism in all of its contexts and in so doing embrace a wider range of theoretical perspectives, cultural and historical circumstances, and research methodologies” (Zelizer 2000, 12). What Zelizer is demonstrating here is that to establish a comprehensive theory about journalism, we need to study it from all of contexts where it exists. Both Habermas (2005) and Robie (2014) situate ‘change’ in the political and social spheres of a nation, as being central to developing their theories towards understanding the nature and function of the press within a nation.

In order to begin thinking about the use of typologies in relation to journalism, it is useful to look at the relationship between social collectives and the function and relevance of journalism, and how this has evolved within social contexts over time. In the 15-16th centuries, journalism as a practice, was largely enabled by the invention of the printing press, as the start of mass communication media designed to inform a particular populous. This system was based on public communication traditions and practices that served simplistic objectives and catered for a smaller population of readers (Conboy, 2004, p.1). As Conboy (2004) discusses, during its history, journalism has transitioned through what can be thought of as four stages: the printing or advertising of events, to publishing of opinion, to reporting of news and finally to the varied and diverse representations of narrative and ideology, tailored to particular bodies of readership. As we are able to observe, journalism has never, and most likely will never be, steeped in static contexts or functions. The theoretical frameworks we have in order to form working conceptualisations of journalism, are merely generalisations that indicate a beginning of an inquiry into the overall complexity that is contemporary journalism practices.

In consideration of journalism practices and theoretical frameworks being non-static, the only consistent element of journalism that has remained clear to its definition, is that it has always been (in some manner) confluent with political, legal, religious, cultural, and economic institutions (Jones & Salter, 2011, p. viii). Change in these structures are almost always reflected in journalism, in some form or another. Considering this notion, the definition offered by Adam (1993, p.11) can be viewed as useful to defining journalism in its varying context, stating that: "Journalism is an invention or a form of expression used to report and comment in the public media on the events and ideas of the here and now". Centrally, the core of this definition suggests that journalism can be seen as a tool for shaping public consciousness by openly addressing citizens' needs and concerns. We must take care to not mistake the term 'openly' for transparency of intention here. It is important to note that the term 'openly', when referring to addressing a public concern, is used in a manner to merely suggests that it is published in the public forum. Latter discussion within this chapter will examine the distance between ideologies of journalism and its function, and the reality of journalism practices that operate within different normative theories of the press. For this reason the term 'openly' must be treated with both caution and suspicion, left for further examination in the chapter. Furthermore, it is important that journalism is not minimised as a stylism of

writing, or an outlet for public opinion, but as an important mode of address that we can discern from Jones and Salter's viewpoint. Journalism carries with it the weight of a society's values and principles, and is reflective of the relationship between citizenship, politics and commercial involvement within a population. It reveals culture and social belief based on what is represented, how it is represented, whom it is represented by, what is denied representation and the motives behind revealing and concealing matters of concern to the public. Based on these concepts, journalism is best viewed as performing two main functions: informing the public about important matters of concern, and engaging citizens (whom otherwise would not gain representation) in discourse.

To begin an inquiry into normative theories of the press, and how they can be initially helpful when thinking about the way politics and social climate is reflected in journalism, we can look at the key framework of four theories of the press (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm. 1956). Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) outline what has come to be known as the normative theory of the press, presenting a Western perspective on the typology of journalism. Even though, these theories may appear somewhat dated and have received several criticisms, they still can be used to recognise what is problematic about applying such typology to an analysis of Middle Eastern media in the wake of social change. Firstly, Peterson and Schramm identify the four theories as: 1) the authoritarian theory, 2) the libertarian theory, 3) the social responsibility theory, and 4) the Soviet communist theory. An understanding of these frameworks will illuminate a need to go beyond them, in order to accurately analyse the impacts of recent social and political change on Middle Eastern journalism. This approach suggests that journalism can be broken into four distinct types: development journalism, investigative journalism, utilitarian journalism, and citizen journalism. These types of journalism can be seen as spread widely throughout both developed and developing nations. For the sake of accuracy, we must acknowledge that such brash and conclusive categorisations of journalism is limited in its applicability. Of course, these four distinct types of journalism are not merely bound by geographic boundaries and restricted to borderlines of nationhood. They are simply a good place to start when examining how and why critical frameworks have been used to provide rational explanations of how journalism functions, depending on the social context from which it emerges.

Development Journalism

Firstly, the categorisation of journalism that has received much criticism as a critical framework, is Development Journalism. Development Journalism supports government incentives and aims to contribute to the support of national policy (Ottoo & Jacobson, 1995, p.153). However, this type of journalism has different interpretations; some scholars believe that development journalism can perform a critical role. Here, when discussing development journalism, I discuss it according to the use of journalism by most of non-democratic governments such as Middle East countries, not according to the role journalism should perform. The central role of this type of journalism is to fortify citizens' support of the existing government and its policies. In this line of journalistic practice, press are heavily regulated - or even restricted- to maintain and support the relationship between government, national policy and citizens alike. Restrictions enforced, such as explicit control, regulations, or imposing censorship on press are part of the structure that supports development journalism. In these countries, development journalists are limited in their ability to criticise government or question national policy. It would be reasonable to state that development journalists are largely at the disposal of the government and favour its achievements (Amin, 2002). Development journalists are not primarily concerned with the monitoring of public interest, or representing public voice, but serve to influence public opinion in the interests of present government. According to Harbor (2001, p.56) development journalism is merely press control, although it is 'dressed' differently. The theory of development journalism is often met with the criticism that governments themselves serve the populous they govern, hence the press supports citizens by supporting government and reducing civil unrest. The duality of this argument is explored within other frameworks in the development of this chapter.

Investigative Journalism

The second type of journalism belonging to the four within this theoretical conceptualisation of frameworks, is known as Investigative Journalism. Investigative journalism can be seen almost in opposition of Development Journalism, in that it is primarily concerned with investigating issues of public concern. Some scholars prefer to use critical development journalism instead of investigative journalism to consider democratic countries whether developed or developing countries. Investigative journalism aims to expose corruption, matters of equity and unfair representation,

emphasising a need to make transparent the social abuses of the ruling government (Harbor, 2001,p.56). Within democratic countries, investigative journalists often have more power to criticise government structures and political incentives than in developing nations. Investigative journalism plays a significant role in informing the public, representing freedom of speech and revealing social injustices that conflict with the moral and ethical norms of society. Investigative journalism attempts to limit the unfair actions of the elite, uncover powerful collectives within the government whom may be working against the best interests of individuals or society (Aggarwal, 2006, p. 220). Overall, the dominant perception of investigative journalism is that it is an effective tool for promoting democracy and maintaining greater equality between the state and the public sphere (Aggarwal, 2006, p. 220).

Utilitarian Journalism

The third type of journalism is known as Utilitarian Journalism. In general, Utilitarian Journalism can be described as journalism that endeavours to satisfy the needs, desires and demands of the majority (Harbor, 2001, p.60). Responsibilities and freedoms which do not conflict with these needs, are the fundamental elements of Utilitarian Journalism. This type of journalism lies in between Development Journalism and Investigative Journalism, suggesting that the government has the right to restrict media in some cases and context. Usually this restriction is done under the claim that national security is threatened. However, Utilitarian journalism is allowed to criticise government to a fair extent and to shed light on aspects of corruption, on the basis of sufficient evidence or public concern.

Citizen Journalism

The final identified type of journalism, known as Citizen Journalism, depends heavily on citizen participation to explore, analyse, and disseminate information independently (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009). In comparison to other types of journalism, Citizen Journalism can be seen as the most disliked by governments and government establishments, as it is the most difficult to control, and is the most unregulated form of journalism. The presence of digital communications also allows citizen journalism to be published in the public forum with considerable ease. Communication platforms, such as Twitter, blogs, social networking sites, free broadcast platforms, and other social media forums, allows digital journalists an

impressive opportunity to freely articulate their opinions and make their voices heard. It is the most accessible means of promoting democracy through public discourse (Jones & Salter, 2011, p. Vii). More so, this form of journalistic practice encourages heavy public participation, and even the ability to remain anonymous (to a certain degree), while participating in discourse. The other side of this conceptualisation of Citizen Journalism being the freest outlet for democratic journalism, is the argument that a saturation of freedom of speech devalues the quality of Citizen Journalism. In an environment where anyone can say anything, a lack of editorial assessment and the verification of credibility has led to Citizen Journalism receiving a less reputable stance than other forms of journalism.

An observation of normative typologies that tie journalism to political and social structures, encompasses the four theories of the press. Where these frameworks are problematic when analysing shifts in journalism practices in the Middle East is that they are all dependent on a static understanding of politics and social climate operating within a nation. It can be suggested that to provide a more intricate understanding of journalism and the way in which shifts in political and social climates influence it, it is important to look beyond the four theories of the press. What we are concerned with for this analysis, is the way journalism emerges in diverse and non-static forms, adapting to socio-cultural shifts and political change, as stated by Conboy (2004). As a public institution, journalism has survived a multitude of influences, and emerged in a range of forms, all shaped by the contexts in which discourse is generated from. Journalism has, and will continue to be, fluid as opposed to static. Each context from which journalistic practice arises from has stemmed from the previous, rooted deeply in the political, social, economic and (relatively recently) technological evolution of media within a populous. Robie (2014) provides perhaps the best framework for looking beyond normative theories of the press, and focusing on the key issue to arise out of these typologies that still remains problematic: the relationship between freedom of speech and media ownership within a nation. Furthermore, Robie (2014) emphasises a focus on nations experiencing significant change to their social or political structures. In later chapters we approach an analysis of qualitative data that examines the social climate and treatment of freedom of press, after civil demonstrations demanding change in Middle Eastern nations. It is then crucial that we look towards the approach of Robie that pinpoints various degrees of freedom of speech occurring within clusters of nations that share geographical closeness. The bottom line of this approach focuses on the

degree to which journalists are intimidated or empowered to resist cultural, political and financial pressures, locating 'objectivity' as their aim, and increased social justice as their ideal outcome. Perrottet and Robie (2011) reflect on a "regional freedom matrix" (p.154) tracking aspects such as killings, abductions, assaults, formal censorship, police arrests, criminal libel, media council and media collectives, in Pacific nations to compare restrictions against and support systems towards, freedom of speech in journalism. In later chapters, a qualitative analysis of commentary from journalists in Middle Eastern nations will follow a similar approach – looking at agents which have emerged from social change that support or restrict freedoms of speech for journalists with an acknowledgement of the variation between nations that have existed as cultural, political and social climates.

2.2 The role of journalism

Journalism is seen as an important force in providing an outlet for citizen communication and participation. Miller (1995, p.27) identifies the main task of journalism as to "enable public communication in the public interest". Therefore, journalism can be seen as a tool for shaping public opinion, attracting and involving people in numerous socio-political affairs, and guiding them toward a particular course. The Western ideology of journalism outlined by Merrill (1999) as consisting of objectivity, authenticity, responsibility and ethical independence. Coined "existential journalism", Merrill (1999) contributes a model of journalism ideology based on the principles of working democracy and a culture of citizen participation. However, linking democracy to journalism when studying journalism has over-extended its shelf life (Zelizer, 2013). Journalists provide the public with insight that goes beyond their encapsulated personal experience, opening up to them a world of information which they have previously had little access to (Kennedy & Moen, 2007). The moral dimension attached to journalistic practice is that it maintains loyalty to serving the interest of citizens, ensuring that their concerns and needs are sufficiently presented in media. One of the primary ethical concerns of Western ideologies of journalists is the obligation to reveal the truth and present information to all citizens. At its core, journalism focuses on delivering verified reports to the public, based on the intensive search for accurate facts. In ideology, journalists should be held accountable for publishing the truth to the best of their ability - even if doing so directly conflicts with an individual or policy of national interest. At the core of its ideology, journalism

should not shy away from conflict, but seek to present it as objectively as possible. Journalism should be personally detached from the reported events, not entrenched in bias or one-sided opinion, but focus instead on presenting objectivity. Journalists should avoid any personal preconceptions about the events or with people they report about, as in this way, they are able to present a true and unbiased report or story. As far as credibility is concerned, journalism should rely on credible witnesses and sources of information, operating to rely on these as closely as possible. Verification of events, details and personas involved should ideally be verified by journalists and backed by credible witnesses. However, this only reflects the ideal role or practice of journalists but not always the reality.

What we must take care with, is not to bluntly attribute Western ideology to nations that do not have roots in Western notions of democracy, upholding it as the pinnacle of a functioning political system, social structure or approach to journalism. In a deeper analysis of Middle Eastern media, it is important to understand both history and culture that shape ideologies and frameworks about the function and importance of the media. Eksterowicz (2000) suggests that journalists serve as the mediators of discourse between the state and citizens, and social institutions. In one consideration, this positions citizens as supporters and initiators of social and political reforms, and likewise, positions government authorities as being accountable for addressing such reforms. To think about the dialectic of this role, it locates journalists as having the social responsibility of ensuring and facilitating communication between politicians and citizens. It is representing the topical issues that will affect all parties involved. It does not require full participation, nor does it require complete objectivity or an undermining of the role that cultural perspectives and religious beliefs hold within a nation.

The model of understanding Eksterowicz (2000) proposes aligns itself much more accurately to the framework Perrottet and Robie (2011) use to articulate degrees of freedoms across nations that share close geographic relationships. Perrottet and Robie (2011), like Eksterowicz (2000), recognise that culture matters. The ideology this proposes is that uniformity across nations is not necessary, that objectivity as an ideology of a democratic system may not ideally suit journalism steeped in cultural and religious contexts. It suggests rather, that self-regulation within the context of individual social climates is valuable to striking a balance between state regulation and freedom of speech. This proposes a more 'by the people, for the people' approach. Ideally, in this understanding, journalism still facilitates communication between citizens and

politicians reflecting the needs and concerns of a population, but it is not homogenous or based on the Western ideal of the treatment of objectivity, removed from cultural or religious context and understandings. Eksterowicz (2000) identifies that to serve a population under the influence of culture, citizen journalism “violates the concepts of objectivity that ensures a journalist’s separation from people and institutions” (p. 4). Journalists are located as being part of, influenced by and integrated into, the population they represent. In this understanding, it is more important that the voice of citizens be framed in their dialect of understanding, to represent their perspectives and needs – rather than establishing complete objectivity. In later analysis chapters, there is made mention of how influential region is to understanding journalism practices.

A further dimension important to the function of Middle Eastern journalism, is the understanding that it should serve to monitor the maintenance of public interest. Hanitzsch (2011) argues that journalism should fulfil a watchdog role, whereby journalists should work as independent watchers on behalf of public, protecting citizens from unfair actions and exposing illegal behaviour of the national elite. To perform this task, little, if any constraints should be imposed on journalism, to regulate the practice of reporting public concern. Professional standards should be maintained by independent associations or media councils, as well as by self-regulation practices, separate from state-owned services, employed to manage and ensure the quality of journalism – not restrict the manner in which it addresses public concern. Public concern should be the focus, as it is under-represented in Middle Eastern nations (Hanitzsch. 2011). Reflecting on this perspective, to perform these tasks, journalism must enjoy a degree of freedom; freedom from government control, and commercial interest of owners. In the organisation of priorities regarding the journalism needs of the Middle East, objectivity falls further down the line than journalists positing themselves as being the voice of the civil collective.

A consideration of re-organising the attributes of good journalism practices according to priority, leads us to discuss the issue of freedom of press. The concept of press freedom is ambiguous and somewhat also hard to define. Even though it is discussed widely by media and public, it is not holistically understood by both of them as a simultaneous understanding based on similar terms and ideologies. This is applicable for both Western and Middle Eastern conceptualisations of freedom of the press. Conflicting definitions of press freedom is often only made visible when confronted with conflicting perspectives about what can, and should, be presented to the public. Press

freedom is often reduced to the concepts ‘freedom of speech’ and ‘freedom of expression’, which does not encompass the weight of the social responsibility carried by the practice of journalism (Ingelhart, 1987, p.1). However, such a contiguity of concepts is indeed disputable or debatable because speech means, or at least refers to, content - while press means a delivery form. In understanding, it is better to treat freedom of speech and freedom of press as separate concepts, even though their meanings are sometimes heavily linked. Indeed, if we were to further analyse this link between freedom of press and freedom of speech, it is perhaps arguable that journalists themselves represent (or carry the burden of) being a pillar of freedom of speech. As argued by Robie (2014), Journalists are expected to be the most public advocates of freedom of speech, acting sometimes as both the voice of the masses and the voice which informs the masses. Freedom of speech is recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as a symbol of maintaining a humane society based on principles of equality and diplomacy – qualities also to be embodied ideally by journalism as a practice under whichever framework is applied to it.

Contrary to such a clear ideology of freedom of press, remains the question that asks ‘Does freedom of press need to be absolute? – or should it be subject to regulation at particular times of social tension or dispute, such as during times of war and social unrest’. It would be perhaps unrealistic to imagine that any society that has grown accustomed to a degree of press censorship, would respond completely positively to a significant paradigm shift regarding total freedom of press. Freedom of press only operates as a positive social force (and serves the population it caters for), when it respects the social and cultural boundaries of that populous. Government itself is represented as a force which regulates social boundaries and enforces behavioural restrictions on individuals, with the intention of maintaining social harmony. What becomes ever-more apparent about the dualism between government regulation and complete freedom of press, is that neither exists without the reflection of the other. Instead of examining each in its absolute, regulatory forces and freedom of press exist as a tension created by two polarities that construct a paradigm. This paradigm consists of the tension held between a need for freedom of press, and a need for regulatory bodies, which are often in some way related to political governance. Hanitzsh (2011) asserts the “realities of the journalistic field in non-western countries”, suggesting that during times of social and political tension or transition, regulation of the press is important to ensure accurate representation of the public voice.

Fourie (2010) asserts that a certain degree of regulation from a form of governance is needed, to maintain the fair and equal representation of individuals within the practice of journalism. Furthermore, Schultz (1998) states that total freedom of press without any form of regulatory governance leaves the power of representation completely in the hands of journalists themselves, whom are also subject to bias, cultural and personal perceptions that shape (even slightly) their treatment of an issue. Perception and a degree of subjectivity can never be fully removed from an individual whom has been raised within a cultural context. As these cultural contexts inevitably impart something upon the formation of perception, the journalist as an individual can never be fully objective or fully exist outside of their own subjective perception. Schultz suggests that industry standards, regulatory forces are necessary to prevent journalists having all of the power of representation, and little or none of the responsibility of fair representation of citizen voice. It is for these reasons that identifying freedom of press as a paradigm held between the tensions of ultimate freedom and ultimate regulation, is perhaps the most accurate way of understanding it in its current complexity.

To develop this working paradigm of press freedom, it is important to return to the function of the press itself, and reflect on the societal function it serves. What is important to note is that individuals who make up what we call 'the press' are also ordinary citizens of the society they operate within. They are subject to the same degree of corruption, biases, intimidation and vulnerabilities as all other citizens. They belong to organisations that operate heavily within, and around multiple areas of the public sphere. It would be naive to assume that the role of the press as watchdog of the political, economic and commercial spheres is without the concept of compromise, influence, or ownership. Merrill (1993) challenges the idea of the press as the forthcoming social servant that serves the needs of informing the public. Here, Merrill identifies the press as 'of' and 'within' the social structures that govern a populous and raises an important point here: that regulation of the press is just as necessary as the monitoring of political action. Where there is power to direct and influence the public, there is power to misdirect and manipulate. The press, if not serving its ideological role as outlined earlier, can be just as menacing as the forces it should ideally be keeping in check. Furthermore, the press does not transparently belong to the public, nor can it protect the public against its government. Bennett and Serrin (2005) identify that the power of the press is "unevenly institutionalized within news organisations" (p.169), stating that media ownership and the degree of vested interest in the press by secondary

institutions prevents the consistently objective and functional freedom of press. Bennett and Serrin identify that both at an individual level, and at an organisational level, there is no way to guarantee freedom of press from political and corporate interest. Again, we are able to return to this tension between press freedom and press regulation, to better understand its complexity and the need to see it accurately as a paradigm that rests between two extremes – both necessary for the press to operate in societies that locate themselves within specific cultural and political histories.

There are several media systems not included in the classifications defined by scholars and theorists (Biagi, 2010). In many situations, media systems may most accurately be perceived as a mixing of elements gathered or taken from several theories. As social dynamics shift as a result of immigration, economic change, and global communications, the most accurate perspective can be gained by recognising the flexibility and interchangeable nature of these related theories. The only constant in the paradigm of tension between regulation and press freedom is the element of change. We approach a time where, more than ever, press relations are often not theoretically isolated to any geographic region or seen as only applicable to a specific populous. Media practices are subject to influence and subject to change, and moreover, reactive to and reflective of change. Fourie (2008) goes even further by arguing that no country's press system can be described by one theory as every journalist and every media implement different tasks and different roles. As Christians et al. (2009, p.ix) assert that to understand the concept of press freedom, it is necessary to understand its two main aspects: normative and factual. The normative one depends on the above discussed theories which describes how press freedom can be enforced or restricted. The factual aspect exposes the actual status of press freedom in different socio-political realms. One thing agreed upon is there will be always vast contradiction between theory and the real situation. This is because press freedom can only be achieved when all its components are realized. These components include press pluralism, elimination of criminal defamation, journalist's protection and their discharge from imprisonment (Stationery Office, 2007, p.102) following specific ethics and standards by journalists and media organizations, and well understanding of the cultural, social, and religious values. As long as there exists this gap between ideology realised and reality actualised, there will still exist the paradigm of tension between press regulation and press freedom, neither fully realised nor actualised.

2.3. Ethics and standards of journalism

In contemporary contexts, journalism experiences heavy criticism from politicians, celebrities, religious individuals, and the general public (Hargreaves, 2005, 1). Often, we may observe that these criticisms have originated from a failure on the part of individual journalists to follow and uphold ethics and standards of journalism. Returning briefly to points discussed earlier, these ethics are defined in short as a responsibility to report on the concerns of individuals and the public, with as much objectivity as possible exemplifying fair and equal representation of all parties involved. A rational approach to examining these ideologies about ethical journalism, in light of the varied and diverse theories and philosophies of conduct journalists operate in, often makes the definition of 'ethical' problematic. Remaining ethical proves time and time again to an issue entrenched in a degree of ambiguity, dependent on the social context and individuals of interest involved. An example of this is where ethical standard may conflict with the dominant and current rules and practices of press being exercised within a nation. Dixit (2010) provides a useful perspective regarding guidelines for journalists who ideally locate themselves as the voice of citizens, for the citizen collective. Firstly, it is important to note that Dixit (2010) argues that beyond typologies, there is merely "good and bad journalism" (p4). Good journalism is outlined as focusing on issues concerned with "the environment, people, poverty and injustice" utilising "professionalism, depth, authority – and passion" (p.4). To be fair, Dixit aligns this approach heavily with the ethics of Investigative Journalism from a social democratic perspective. What is particularly useful in what Dixit presents is the focus on independent regulation versus self-regulation and journalists as individuals with social responsibility. Dixit argues for the prevalence of independent regulatory bodies ensuring journalists present fair representation of the people's voice, on subject matter that prioritises attention to the most vulnerable members of a society. Difficulty upon applying this practice to journalism in Middle Eastern contexts, is the lack of consistency of standards between regions, or systems which keep changing with the passage of time.

Moreover, these standards are affected by the social and cultural context where national boundaries and boundaries between populations cross over. For instance, globalisation has produced a number of ethical mysteries within the journalism realm (Hafez, 2002, p.226). The previous ethics and standards cannot be applied in the era of globalisation because mass media communication through the world wide web transcends boundaries

of nationhood and political ideology. Globalisation has made it easy for people to be exposed to different cultures and traditions. Thus, new ethics and standards should be developed to correspond to this phenomenon and not inconsistent with the values of each country; what is acceptable in the West might not be acceptable in the East. What is accepted in one region of the Middle East, may be rejected by its neighbouring region (Hafez, 2002). The findings of a study carried out by Limor and Himelboim (2006, p.282) have shown that the institution of journalism, through its codes of ethics, has failed to provide intelligible, accurate, or clear guidelines in light of globalisation and mass communication practices.

To further explore what managing ethical boundaries may look like in light of globalised communication, Hafez (2002, P.227) categorizes five main codes of journalism:

- 1) Single media codes devised and formed for specific publication.
- 2) National official codes established and devised by state-controlled media councils.
- 3) National independent codes formulated by independent professional bodies and agencies.
- 4) Regional official codes designed by multilateral authorities.
- 5) Multinational codes created by international organisations.

Among these five codes, only multinational codes are popular in both Western and Eastern countries. The other four codes vary according to the nature of the political system and the cultural context for each country. The difficulty lies in the interpretation of these codes in an accurate way to formulate a balance or consensus between them. Sometimes, it is difficult to determine what is more significant – to maintain privacy or reveal truth, to present a certain point of view freely or hide it in favour of public interest. It can be argued that this depends on the understanding and appreciation of the values and ethics held by different cultures around the world. For example, in Middle Eastern countries, protecting privacy is regarded as crucial value, while in Western countries the right of the public to be informed is more important than maintain someone's privacy. In most developing countries, there is no dividing line or a clear distinction between these values and the most basic standards of journalistic ethics such

as truth and objectivity. Unfortunately, one could suggest that these values are often used as a reason to violate the ethics and standards of journalism. For instance, in Arab countries, governments often use "means of legitimizing ethics of privacy" to protect a corrupt politician from being tried (Hafez, 2002, p. 232). This means the elite's rights are given more importance than the rights of the public. There is a transparent divide here against whom the press serves, that may not be present in the press practices of Western Nations. Bennett and Serrin, (2005) raise a relevant point about the degree of privacy maintained by the media as being somewhat problematic at both ends of the scale. It is stated that:

The lack of journalistic codes which is able to clearly determine the level of interference into public and private affairs has led to varying reactions by both the public and elite members. If intervention is too intrusive, this may lead to a negative reaction from either elite members or public. In contrast, if little criticism is used, this may affect the quality of public debate and weaken the accountability relations between government institutions and the public. (Bennett & Serrin, 2005, p.127)

Acknowledged in national, regional, and multinational codes, freedom of expression as an ethical aspect of journalism is often violated by the very bodies that structure it. A working example of this can be found in the Algerian code of press conduct, where it is indicated that freedom of expression is one of the main cornerstones of journalism - however in reality the Algerian government imposes "various and contradictory kinds of restrictions" to prevent journalists from exercising this right (Hafez, 2002, p.233). In developing countries, freedom of expression, as well as other codes of journalism, tend to be in conflict with the journalists' and media owners' interests (Limor & Himmelboim, 2006, p. 268). It seems that despite theories and philosophies of press regulation being not fully realised or actualised, they do hold definite relevance when examining individual nations and their policies surrounding press regulation and approaches to press freedom. Here is where, if we reflect on Dixit (2010), the simplicity of good and bad journalism holds some weight. If journalism, in its ideal form, represents the voice of the citizen collective, prioritising social injustices and environmental concerns, then regulation is not enough to ensure this prioritisation as a journalistic practice. As Hafez (2002) identifies, regulation and reality are two very different realities. Independent

regulation, separate from both state and journalist unions, is required to strike a balance between total freedom of press and self-regulation, and state-controlled journalism. Regardless of the paradoxical nature of national policies surrounding press freedom, the unique national peculiarities, the central ethical codes are balanced, diverse point of views, and responsible journalism is located as paramount in developing better journalism practices. This is particularly important when examining journalism across a regions of the Middle East, comprised of varying clusters and groups of citizens with varying cultural and religious practices. The homogenous strand that rubs through these arguments about developing frameworks for understanding ideals of journalism practices that are applicable across Middle East regions, arise in the form of representing the under-represented, and is entrenched in certain principles such as balance, accuracy, public interest, and fairness. As mentioned by both Robie (2014) and Dixit (2010), there exists over-arching understandings of journalism that span cultural diversities and are even applicable to journalism practice in times of social and political change. Responsible journalists work towards dealing with complicated ethical mysteries, which may appear due to the need to abide by controversial (in some cases contradictory) ethical codes in different countries with different socio-political systems. These interpretations of ethics constitute our best working conceptualisation of ethical journalism practice, as it is negotiated across regional and cultural contexts in the Middle East.

2.4. Constraints of press freedom

Across a range of nations, government censorship is largely perceived as being one of the main constraints of press freedom. Government censorship of the press occurs in a myriad of different ways, in order to monitor how the press may challenge dominant ideologies or report on matters that conflict with national policy. Depending on the political system, the approach to press censorship takes on different forms. Authoritarian regimes may impose a more explicit means of press censorship for the purposes of protecting the authoritarian regime itself from any threat of social unrest or political revolution. Governments in democratic countries may apply a more in-direct approach to censorship, arguing that the press misrepresents concerned parties or that their approach to the issue impinges on other social liberties. Perhaps the best example of this is that in order to protect the notion of national security, and preserve the wellbeing of all citizens and their civil liberties, the press must be censored (Czepek,

2009, p.38). In either case, government may justify monitoring and watching journalists and editors, creating a direct link between the ethics of journalism and the political sphere in which it functions.

It has been observed that some governments may use harsh defamation charges against journalists, in order to impose more restrictions on press. For instance, according to Freedom House (2009, p.291) because of high defamation charges, journalists in Singapore have turned to self-censorship – or the practice of being decisive about what they themselves select to report on, and the way in which controversial issues are framed. However, focussing only on governmental or political constraints has led to neglecting other constraints (Czepek, 2009, p.37). As Czepek (2009) argues, the involvement of “subsystems” such as the political sphere, religion and economics, are inseparable from the media (p.38). In light of this the need for self-censorship, press freedom regarding the investigation of self-censorship practices have not been deeply investigated. There now lies an area of complexity that rests somewhere between the threat of defamation charges and the self-preservation practices of journalists: The cost of self-censorship on the accurate and ethical practice of journalism. In both developed and developing countries, journalists are always in conflict with the constraints forced by media firms. Editors for example may avoid publishing material or reports that affect the firm’s profitability. Media companies are heavily dependant on several market policies that force them to set some limitations on journalists reporting. Whether it be specifying time limits when broadcasting news in order to limit the attention given to controversial matter regarding that which concerns citizens, or arguing that reporting on a controversial issue may put an individual or social group at risk, policies placed on the press are can often be traced back to political motives.

Even when governmental control is limited, commercialisation may also produce a considerable constrains to the exchange of information within the public or society (Czepek, 2009, p.37). To compete and gain profit, media organisations (especially ones which are private owned) find themselves compelled to allow certain space for advertising. This is especially apparent in print news media, such as newspapers and magazines. It would be naive to recognise that advertising merely limits the space of the press content that is reported on the page –as what is perhaps more relevant is the ideologies that these advertisements encourage, how they direct the readers attention and concern. Advertising is a key factor in the design of a print media product, as it shows great concern for targeting reader demographic, providing a good indicator about

the assumptions behind readership. It can be argued that newspapers, considered as an icon of citizenship and public communications, appear to be heavily influenced by the presence of advertisers and the ideologies that convey. Exemplary of this is the case of *Rand Daily Mail* which is intended for a readership demographic largely consisting of coloured African readers who “represented the market with a small per capita disposable income” (van Heerden, 2010, p.89). As the readership demographic did not hold priority for advertisers as a group able to expend disposable income, the newspaper was closed after losing its advertisers. Effectively, this community and the journalists who wrote for the publication were robbed of their voice, due to a lack of commercial interest by advertisers that funded the publication. There now exists an area of under-representation in this community, after the removal of *Rand Daily Mail*. What this tells us is that commercial interest also plays a role in prioritizing who’s views are represented and whom is considered a priority to remain informed, across the citizen demographic. Commercialisation removes all notion of true democracy from the ethical practices of fair and equal journalism, which is designed to represent the needs and concerns of all citizens within a populous. Under the impact of economic and political forces, journalists and editors may make decisions against their own values.

Thirdly, however, are the social and cultural constraints that also influence a journalist’s ability to report objectively on pressing issues. As mentioned earlier, journalists exist as citizens within the very society they cater for. This means that often, their own perceptions and moral understandings are shaped by the society in which they function. Subjectivity needs to be constantly renegotiated when it comes to the practice of reporting from an objective stance and allowing individuals to represent their viewpoints. Where the greater complexity arises, is when two or more cultural or religious groups function within one nation, each desiring fair and equal representation of their given civil liberties. An example of this is the reporting on the legalisation of homosexual marriage in some nations such as New Zealand, France and the state of Hawaii. In this case, most nations are founded on the basis of Anglo neo-Christian and Roman Catholic (in the case of France) systems of social morality, however the democratic policy within these nations also supports civil liberties concerning courtship and personal associations with others. The result is a divide between conservative parties and the demand for fair and equal rights for all citizens. Two different ideologies thus exist within the practices of one democratic populous – and journalism in its ethics should ideally represent both. In New Zealand in 1996, the conservative political party

National argued against the pictorial reporting of the annual gay pride parade in the city of Auckland. Journalists could report in text form, but the pictorial features of the event were to be limited, as they conflicted with the conservative values promoted by right-wing political leaders (Brickell, 2001). As protesters took to the streets, opposed to hosting the parade in the iconic (and very public) city centre, journalists could report on this event without the degree of censorship that they had faced when reporting on the parade itself. Here is a case of a social constraint influencing the approach to objective reporting expected within journalism practice. There exists a heterosexual ideology which is dominant in neo-Christian liberal democratic New Zealand during the mid-1990s, which directly conflicts with the rights and civil liberties supported by democratic practice itself. Herein lies the complexity of two social practices within one populous, governed by one political system – which in this case is democratic. Herein also lies the complexity of reporting objectively and offering fair and equal representation, in light of conflicting ideologies, that both argue the issue of what is to be censored and why. The presence of social and cultural constraints brings us to discuss how regulation is negotiated.

2.5. Regulators

According to Fourie (2010) two types of regulators control the press, and must be recognised as shaping the practice of reporting in very different ways. These two types are identified as external and internal regulators (Fourie, 2010, p.51). External regulators refer to government enforced laws about press content, and the means by which the press is monitored to protect citizens. This kind of regulation is claimed to be important in the protection of citizens from different ideologies, cultures, beliefs and faiths that is not the basis for dominant social practise exercised within a nation. Ultimately, this is for positive social preservation of the way of life promoted by moral values held within that nation. By doing this, the government is fulfilling the gatekeeping role. This means all journalists' materials "passes a series of checkpoints ('gates') before being finally accepted as news material" (van Heerden, 2010, p.76). Government as a content source can regulate media by blocking them from accessing some information. This can be done for several reasons inclusive of preserving national security, or maintaining social stability. In support of this, courts and legal institutions also serve or act as external regulators, to ensure that press laws are not violated.

On the surface, this approach may seem to embody the socially responsibility ethic whole-heartedly, but there are also several less visible benefits from performing this role. Government regulation in this manner prevents media from being monopolized by few firms, which significantly reduces “the chances for other groups to voice their opinions and interests” (Czepek, 2009, p.39). There is a limit that commercial interest can dominate whom is represented and whom is under-represented, whom is included in readership and whom is excluded. In addition, cultural and religious groups explicitly and implicitly place different types of pressure on journalism practice, to prohibit publishing certain materials. It is largely understood that these groups may maintain very strong relationships with politicians and media owners to achieve their purposes. According to Baggott (1995, p.167) groups that adhere to a stringent ideology claim that by using their impact on citizens, they “represent the public”. However, this representation is highly distorted as the most of the leaders of these groups are from the elite, or aspiring elite, thus this representation can be seen as not fully democratic. Their main aim is to use media to gain public support (Baggott, 1995, p.174).

Exemplary of how ideology and its representation is negotiated by media regulators, is the case where in 2007, the newspaper Rapport was dismissed after being boycotted by offended readers (van Heerden, 2010, p.87). The article in question, discussed ‘Satanism’ as a faith among other faiths operation within the nation. As a result of public uproar over this claim, a variety of leaders from organised and recognised religions discouraged readership of the publication. The power exerted by such public icons of morality, also belonging to the social elite, had a drastic impact on the publication. This example shows how gatekeepers have the power to “set the audience agenda” (Kwansah-Aidoo, 2005, p.44). They publish what they think is important to citizens and exclude what they perceive as not. In other words, their influence plays a role in shaping public opinion, and eventually how the press is regulated to represent particular ideologies, schools of thought, and social practices.

Internal regulators fulfil a similar role to external regulators by exercising gatekeeping. As a non-statutory media organisation, an internal regulator sets its own standards and ethics. By formulating these standards, media firms attempt to assure that journalists working with them adhere to the highest level of professional practice. Additionally, these norms add to the tasks of editors, to prohibit publishing contents that are seen as inappropriate. Editors may improve or edit journalists’ reports to ensure that it is compatible with the media policies, guidelines, and standards of the media organisation

which are formulated by the directors board. Media owners can do the same task. Internal regulation is required to ensure that press is respecting the moral values, believes of the society, and following the journalistic ethics. In doing such, internal regulators strengthen the concepts of responsibility and disinterest of journalists and media owners (van Heerden, 2010, p.74). Internal regulation can be seen as beneficial and very important, as it allows some self-autonomy as opposed to experiencing government regulation. However, once again the issue of power is brought into this equation of self-autonomy, as editors or media owners may slant news, refusing to publish news that is consistent with their point of view. Internal regulation is seen as being the least monopolising approach to holistic media regulatory practice, “so long as it is not used consciously to obscure facts or slant the perception of the media users” (van Heerden, 2010, p.114). As discussed earlier, the final and most internal layer of regulation is when journalists themselves serve as an internal regulator by refusing to cover issues that are not consistent to their ethics or to their values. They practice what may be considered as the third type of regulatory - self-censorship. Self-censorship may be derived from a consideration of both internal and external regulation guidelines. Van Heerden (2010, p.74) asserts that “although as much freedom as possible is needed, internal regulation of the media is and will always be required”.

Journalism practice and the structures and ideologies that embed it as an essential component in communication within and across a nation, face multiple complexities in the attainment of best practice. As it has been discussed, there are multiple and varying influences exerted on the ethical practice of journalism, no matter which social or political context it is viewed in. There currently exists a lacking in our understanding about how self-censorship practice is exercised in journalism, as the most internal form of press regulation that we can currently identify. In order to grasp the most accurate understanding of contemporary journalism practices and the diverse influences that shape it within a specific context, the issue of self-regulation must further be explored.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Press Freedom in the Middle East before and After Arab Spring

3.1. Introduction:

In order to gain a succinct understanding of how self-regulation occurs within journalism practice, it is essential to analyse how this practice has emerged from a specific history and context, by concentrating on a region that has experienced significant social change. For this reason it is useful to examine press freedom within the Middle East, both before and after the social movement known as the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring refers to a wave of civil demonstrations across Middle Eastern nations, exercised since 2010, in an attempt to restructure political rulership. The controversy surrounding these demonstrations presents further complexity for journalists, reporting on issues of civil interest in a time of deep civil unrest. The examination of journalistic practice surrounding the Arab Spring provides an opportunity to examine the complex and shifting nature of ethical journalism practices, as they are rooted deeply in the political, social and cultural history of a region. In reflection on the myriad of theoretical frameworks applied to journalism practice, the examination of journalistic ethics prior to, during and after the Arab spring provides context for analysing these frameworks. As a starting point, it is purposeful to briefly discuss the history of journalism in the Middle Eastern region, so as to progress to an examination of the forces that shape contemporary journalism in this area of the world. Furthermore, issues such as obstacles to press freedom, personal journalism ethics, and the practice of self-regulation, will be examined through research conducted in order to gain rich and relevant accounts of journalistic practice surrounding the event of the Arab Spring. This research provides opportunity to analyse theoretical frameworks against contemporary data, in order to develop an accurate and in-depth understanding of journalism practices embedded deeply within a complex social and political context.

3.2. Brief historical Background:

Journalism practice and the structures and ideologies that embed it as an essential component in communication within and across a nation, face multiple complexities in the attainment of best practice. This has been acknowledged in previous chapters by looking at the way culture and politics exert influence over the content journalists can engage with. As it has been discussed, Perrottet and Robie (2011) propose an

acknowledgement of civil voice restricted by political intimidation, and Dixit (2010) locates this as the primary barrier between journalism serving a society and performing its function. Furthermore, culture counts: for Middle Eastern journalism to report on the needs and concerns of the population, journalists may see existing in the context of culture and social collective, as something which is beneficial, rather than prioritising complete objectivity, as featured in the four theories of the press. An essential step to understanding influences exerted over journalism in the Middle East, is gaining a succinct understanding of the social, political and economic history behind a regions approach to journalist practices, allowance of press freedom and approaches to regulation. Ayalon (1995) offers a detailed study which discusses the history of press in Middle East. The research initiates with the observation that “as with so many modern innovations in the Middle East, launching newspapers was, at first, the exclusive prerogative of governments”. Ayalon locates the direct link between politics and journalism, rooting journalistic practice in political incentives, from their origin. Framing journalism in the Middle East from such a premise provides a strong basis from which to analyse the influence of politics on contemporary journalism. Ayalon states that governmental bulletins were the first periodicals published in the Middle East and that even though these printed publications were not common among people, they were important inventions that paved the way to the disseminations of ideas in the region. In fact, the first periodical in Middle East was written in French and was called *Le Courier de L’Egypt* (Ayalon,1995, p.12). According to Ayalon (1995) there is some evidence (even though not from reputed sources) that the French occupier used to publish some news in Arabic. These published materials were published as daily news and were named ‘*al-Hawadith al-Yawmiyya*’ in Arabic. They were directly targeting the Arab population, circulating news of current affairs from the perspective of the French occupation . In these early days of news media beginning to function as an instrument of constructing public institutions, the circulars were published irregularly, where they can be seen as the start of an organised model of news media circulation. (Ayalon, 1995, p.13). Ayalon provides the strong argument that these publications were used as an important tool to control and shape public opinion. He later develops this argument to illustrate how these origins have shaped news media and journalism in Middle Eastern regions, as we now know them today. Distribution was also an important factor in the early conceptualisation of news media as an instrument of constructing national identity. According to Ayalon (1995,) and Biagi (2010), the first paper written in Arabic

appeared in 1817 and it was called *Jurnal al- Iraq*. It can be speculated that during that time this paper was also published in Turkish, and was attached to the governor's house walls to be seen by the public. Two years later, 1819, printing houses were opened in the region and were, according to Ayalon (1995, p.14), owned completely by the government, which believed on the importance of newspapers to strengthen their power over the public. This form of extremely limited ownership and means of production, occurred before the mid 20th century, prior to when the press fell largely in the hands of independent national governments. Before that time, it was controlled by colonial powers who imposed several restrictions on the press, including licensing and censorship. Any journalist trying to criticise the existing ruler was arrested and the newspaper that published this criticism was closed (Biagi, 2010, p.365).

As the formation of smaller, new national governments had formed around the mid 20th century, these new national governments which had recently gained power and independence, continued to control the press and restrict press freedom (Norton, 2003, p.23). Colonial control of press in the Middle East was replaced by national control. National governments justified their interference in press by claiming it a bid to protect the economy of the country and maintain social order Norton (2003, p.23). The majority of the governments whom took power after independence, were derived from the military who declared that they were only the ones who knew the truth, and thus prevented other voices from gaining representation through the press or any other means of communications (Ayalon, 1995, p.244). What we are presented with here, is a strong example of a historical context, where political forces strongly and explicitly shape the way the press is able to function within regions across the Middle East. Norton identifies that the basis from which conceptualisations of press function operates, has been derived from political structures holding fast to the locus of control – both ideologically and culturally. The claim that only one perspective holds accuracy, relevance or 'truth', has been a powerful foundation on which the approach to press restriction has been built. What is even more captivating about these claims of singular perspectives holding ultimate relevance, is the argument that this right to power over the press and singularity of representation, will serve to ultimately benefit the populous and prevent social discord. The Middle East is a condensed context wherein the relationship between politics, social change and journalism is evidently confluent.

Given the confluence between these aforementioned forces, Khouri (2011) suggested that the 1950s witnessed the beginning of Arab journalists calling for professional, and

independent media institutions over government control. Subsequently, these calls from journalists led to the appearance of some journalism charters in pockets of the Middle Eastern region, during the 1970s. What is important to note here, is the significant length of time between the initial voicing of concerns from the journalism world, and the initiation of legislated action. Hafez (2002) provides very relevant information about the charters constructed in response to legislated action, taken to enable media institutions to exercise some power over journalism. According to Hafez (2002), the first charter appeared in Lebanon in 1975, and was developed by the assembly of the Press Syndicate. It aspired to strengthen freedom of expression. However, contrary to the initial vision of what these charters would enable, almost every charter to appear in the 1970s and 1980s, applied cruel restrictions on press instead of guaranteeing press freedom Hafez (2002, p.236).

Progressing to the 1990s, the appearance of satellite broadcasting across Middle Eastern regions illustrates a time where media began to enjoy some freedom from the grip of governments and restrictive charters, according to Sakr (2001, p.1). Sakr (2001) argues that this was a very important step - not only to bypass many different governmental restrictions such as censorship - but also, it reduced the government's monopoly of satellite broadcasting. The technology proposed potential new freedoms and assisted to reduce the pressure on the media by the government, which at the time, allowed many of the commentators and even ordinary citizens to express their views. According to Sakr (2001) Saudi Arabia, was the first country that used satellite in the Middle East - and it was used for governmental purposes only. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 attracted the attention of various media organisations, which contributed to the arrival of many satellite channels, such as CNN, to the region. These channels occupied the region to cover events of military and civil conflict, and this in turn led to the proliferation of satellite channels in the region. Regardless of the massive proliferation of TV channels during the nineties, the emergence of Al Jazeera channel paved the way to the increase of the margin of media freedom in the region Sakr (2001, p. 13) by broadcasting political and ideological programs from a variety of perspectives.

Satellite television in the 1990s had begun to shift the paradigm of media restriction in the Middle East, however the development of digital communications to explode during the early to mid-2000s, would increase media saturation and civil participation considerably. The dispersal of mass communications, through digital sources such as the internet, has played a vital role in enhancing media in the Middle East, changing the

scope of whom is able to access and participate in journalistic discourse. Digital communications can be seen as bringing Middle Eastern regions one step closer to a more democratic participation in journalism, where citizens themselves can discuss, provide feedback, and reflect on the media representations they have engaged with. This movement towards decentralised mass media communications through digitisation, has positively impacted on the reach of press freedom throughout overlapping regions of the Middle East. This change in the power climate of restrictions placed on media has inadvertently altered the perceptions and practices of news journalists operating in the region. This is not to say that restrictions and regulatory charters do not still play a significant role in shaping journalism, but rather that journalists operating in the region were able to identify the possibility of paradigm shift, as the boundaries between freedom and regulation were re-contextualised as an ever-shifting tension.

3.3. Press role as seen by Arab journalists:

Research in the area of press freedom in the Middle East, following what many called the ‘digital communications revolution’ in the early 2000s, focused on how the Middle Eastern journalists perceived the role of the press and their role as journalists. According to Mellor (2008, p.466), previous studies often focused on the gatekeeping role of the Arab press, rarely discussing the wider role of the press. Moreover, this body of research did not reflect the diversity of the Arab world as a whole, which at times makes it difficult to understand the contexts in which pockets of journalists were operating at any given time. The research presented in the chapters to follow endeavour to explore this aspect of diverse representation, by inviting eleven key Arab journalists from four Middle Eastern countries- Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen. These four countries have been chosen specifically, as they have experienced involvement in the Arab Spring events. Each nation has recently been involved with political unrest and civil dispute over governmental policy controlling its regions. It is expected that this diversity among the range of journalists selected, will reflect different perceptions of their roles and responsibilities as journalists.

Diversity among represented regions of the Middle East provides a more accurate means of collecting data, in order to gauge the social climate among journalists that operate in its different regions. Previous (but not comparative) studies reveal general differences illustrated across understandings and perceptions of journalistic practice in different Middle Eastern regions. Mellor (2008) reviews several studies discussing the

role of press in certain countries in Middle East. Tash (as cited in Mellor, 2008), interviewed Saudi journalists who were well educated and young, and found out that they identified their main role as gatekeepers who manage and control how and what information released to public. Alternatively, in another study conducted by Abdel Nabi (as cited in Mellor, 2008), the researcher concluded that after he interviewed a group of Egyptian journalists, they themselves found it difficult to determine their role or the role of press in society. Their ambiguity about their contributions, duties and restrictions were in marked contrast to that of Saudi Arabian journalists. Abdel Nabi (as cited in Mellor, 2008) described that as a 'crisis' in Egypt's press. Kirat (as cited in Mellor, 2008), interviewed a group of Algerian journalists and according to him, they saw their role as spreading the Algerian social revolution and as supporters of the national development. Again, this is in marked contrast to both Saudi Arabian journalists and Egyptian journalists, given the perceived role of the press with regards to both informing citizens and acknowledging the political dimension of press operations.

To further progress this inquiry into diversity, research into groups operating within the same region revealed further differences between perceived roles. Bekhait (as cited in Mellor, 2008) conducted a research on two groups of Egyptian journalists. The first one represented the national press, and the second one represented the opposition press. In this study, the researcher found that the relationship between the journalists and the state, in both group, had a significant impact on their perceived role and function. Those who worked for the national press saw their role as producing positive news about government and highlighting the achievement of the state, while the other group saw it as their duty to publishing oppositional news about the state and less news about the government's success. The key strength of these studies is that they were one of the earliest studies concerned with the role of journalists in Middle East. However, the weakness of this study is the discussion of individual states as if they stand alone, as isolated from the larger media collective that is the Middle Eastern media context. The study failed to present the duality of over-arching communications enabled by digital media and fluidity within media practice, surrounding the regional contexts that each group operated within. The more accurate means of examining the duality of both region-specific and overarching contexts of press communication, is needed to progress this inquiry.

To gain the most accurate understanding of the diversity in perception that exists between journalists operating in regions of the Middle East, it is important to identify

the factors which most greatly influence these perceptions and shape their perception of the role of journalism in society as a whole. According to Pintak (2009), in some cases personal identity and affiliation to one's country and sense of patriotism, is one of those significant shaping factors. Pintak identified that Arab journalists in particular, tend to have a lower sense of citizenship or nationalism, and identify themselves more readily as either as Arab or Muslim journalists. Thus they perform their job to maintain the values and needs of the community to which they belong. According to Pintak and Ginges (2008), this perception influences their sense of loyalty and duty, and guides their affiliation. The findings of Pintak and Ginges (2008) reveal that Arab journalists with this intersection of identity fulfil two primary roles: The first group of journalists saw themselves as change agents, trying to promote a social, political, and economic reform in Middle East. The second group of journalists saw their role as defending Arab societies and acting as guardians of these societies, from the negative external influences of the elite.

In light of the overall scope of the study, Pintak and Ginges (2009) concluded that Arab journalists are facing serious challenges to exercise freedoms, as media organisations in Middle East face significant restrictions. The study conducted towards this finding, by Pintak and Ginges (2008), mentions various challenges that Arab journalists face, and reflect how this is preventing these journalists from acting as change agents, or as guardians of civil rights and values. The study acknowledges that freedom in Western journalism is much more compared with Arabian journalism. Further analysis of the findings, as outlined by Pintak and Ginges (2009), showed that most journalists described levels of professionalism in Arab journalism as being poor. This lack of professionalism, or consistent practice informed by pre-established guidelines, is further illustrated by the lack of training provided to journalists within the field. It can be argued that this is done as a conscious measure to prevent Arab journalists from exploring and performing one of the most fundamental roles of the press: Investigative journalism. The Arab press, during most periods of its history, has and continues to play the lapdog role, and this is what has led to difficulty in finding Arab reporters who practise (or even know) how to professionally administer the watchdog role of the press. Further commentary in support of the claim that a lack of professionally defined guidelines, principals and monitoring occurs among Arab journalism organisations is the factor of bribery. The study featured commentary from journalists suggestive that journalists and editors normally focus on stories that they receive high payment for,

when they publishing them. Some of the surveyed journalists acknowledged that the ‘envelope’ culture spreads among Arab journalists, wherein unofficial bribes are offered, notably preceding and during election periods.

Reflecting upon these different challenges that face the scape of Arab media, operational contexts and political influence, Pintak and Ginges (2009, p.174) conclude that “Arab journalists are still carving out their own role and struggling to define their mission”. The importance of this research and analysis conducted by Pintak and Ginges (2008), is that it compared Arab journalism with Western journalism. What made the research both helpful and distinctive, was that it presented the comparison from the perspective of Arab journalists themselves. The further analysis in this area of a study conducted by Pintak and Ginges (2009), focus on the more specific journalistic practices and norms in Middle East, and how Arab journalists compare their specific characteristics with those of US journalists. Both studies contribute to forming a more accurate understanding of perceptions and practices in the area of Middle Eastern journalism, however, the studies still feature some areas of disparity regarding the methodology of data collection. Pintak and Ginges rely on a quantitative survey to provide quantifiable data, in order to shape the bigger picture of the social climate among Arab journalists. For the context of the study, this methodology lacks the rich description of qualitative studies and personal narrative, so crucial to gaining an in-depth understanding needed to enhance the accuracy of the study. There currently exists a gap in the key literature on Middle Eastern journalism, where qualitative data would be best utilised to form more accurate and reliable understandings of exactly how journalism in this region functions (or malfunctions). The research presented later on in the chapters to follow will contribute to filling this gap, by using carefully designed qualitative methods to explore the state of the Arabian press after the events of the Arab spring. The objective is to gain in-depth data about the social climate journalists operate in, and to gauge their perceptions of their function as part of the press.

Al-Obaidi (2003) suggests that Arab journalists hold a strong belief in the Fourth Estate function of press. This suggests that the press should act as the watchdog, representative of the needs and concerns of civilians of the nation. According to Al-Obaidi (2003), Arab journalists argue that, for the press to act as a Fourth Estate, it must be independent from government interference, from economic pressure, and from social constraints. However, as Al-Obaidi puts it, the Fourth Estate nowadays is in the hand of few media organisations who are heavily privatised and are looking for profits only. It

becomes clear from the scope of studies that have been discussed, that Arab journalists find it difficult to identify their role and the role of press as well. Constraints such as governmental interference, challenging economic situations, and the seeming ambiguity of identified loyalty (based on adhering to a sense of national identity), have driven Arab journalists away from enjoying the freedom to practise journalism in a professional manner.

3.4. Constraints on the press in Middle East: governmental, economic, religious, social constraints:

A closer analysis of the specific factors that constrain the Arab media, will assist in furthering an understanding of how these impact on journalists themselves. Mellor (2005) acknowledges that since its appearance, Arab media has been inseparable from the realm of politics. She explains this confluence between politics and journalism, as exemplified by the way in which governments exercise strict control over the flow of information. Historically, this control was imposed by colonial powers, and then later by national governments. Even in the age of digitisation, where we face perhaps the most democratised version of media freedom and decentralisation, the government still monitors and controls the channels of information. Amin (2000) argues that by forcing these restrictions, Arab governments created an arena for promoting and spreading their political agenda and mobilising public, in order to gain civil support. The political elites in Middle East utilized these regulations to even protect their own personalities; in most if not all Arab states criticising rulers or their family members is considered as a crime. According to Khazen (1999, p.88), carrying out such a criticism is just like “signing your own death memo”. Individuals or groups are not allowed to launch a channel or publish a newspaper without getting a licence from government (Fandy, 2007, p.9). What is interesting to note here, is that Middle Eastern governments cannot fail to recognise the power of civil support, as opposed to civil unrest. Furthermore, to illustrate the close relationship between elite control and journalism practice in this region, Fandy (2007, p. 9) comments that the majority of media owners in Middle East are not only close to the political elites (either by ideological positions or by self-interest), but also by family relationship. Based on what has been mentioned above, the distinction between private and public media in the Arab world is blurred to the extent where it is a detriment to journalism performing its full civil function.

A closer look at the obvious or visible control over media, exercised by Middle Eastern governments, reveals that there is much depth to the nature of this structure between politics and how journalism operates. Mellor (2005, p.29) suggests that there are less visible forms of integration, where the line between politics and journalism blur. Due to the difficulty of competition, and the complicated economic conditions existing in this region of the world, media owners find themselves compelled to rely entirely on government subsidies and payments received by government members –who in turn, utilize this need to push media owners to broadcast programs in their favour. Economic factors play a large role in the censorship and content restrictions that occupy Arab media. What is even more compelling about the depth to which economic control runs in Arab media, can be exemplified in the case where words of some of the executives of Arab media, who participated in the 2009 World Economic Forum, the Arab Media established their place on this platform of discourse, not to gain profits, but to generate political propaganda (Fenton, 2010). Khazen (1999, p. 88) also suggests that the elite members of Arab society maintain close relationships with political figures, in a bid to promote business and brand name, through successful association with a political figures occupation of disseminated media. Furthermore, as the study of Pintak (2011b) indicates, Arab journalists tend to be more easily bribed, due to the low salaries they get paid. There is a tendency for economic factors to influence Arab journalists on a more micro scale, as a relatively modest sum of money can be used to influence the acceptance of news or stories that portray a political person in a positive light. In consideration of the various and entrenched practices that restrict freedom of press and professional practice among journalists in Middle Eastern media, it can be identified that a deep understanding of how this functions is needed to understand the perceptions of Arab journalists. Journalism in the Middle East has become, as Mellor (2005, p.31) puts it, "a mere mouthpiece for national governments".

Digital communication of the 21st century propose that government control, to the extent it is exercised over many other major media channels, wanes in the arena of containing journalism that operates on the internet. The dissemination of information in a decentralised manner, is partially responsible for forces that resist (or at the least undermine) the Arab governments' ability to control discourse. Regardless of licensing, constraints on launching newspapers, and aspersion laws, the government's ability to censor and monitor the published news is not as powerful as what it was in the recent past. In contrast, one may argue, it only serves as an example of the abuse of power

(Norton, 2003). However, as Norton (2003, p. 23) points out, national broadcast media hold power in its established legitimacy, as it is perceived by the public. Broadcast media is a national institution and often holds weight in the battle to shape and influence public opinion, public understanding and public awareness. The internet is not the saving grace of democracy journalism, as it does not hold as much legitimacy as broadcast media, as perceived by the public belonging to a nation state. It is for this reason, that Norton (2003) proposes that, in order to reduce this ability of governments to control media, Arab journalists must show greater resistance. As he argues, such resistance in the form of progressive negotiations, is still weak. Due to the fear of independent voices, and the threat of social disruption, Middle Eastern governments still exercise many explicit and implicit pressures on journalists working within oppositional parties.

In an interview documented by Pintack (2011b), Al Arabiya news executive Nabil Khatib asserts that governments in Middle East were not reluctant to reduce their pressure on media organisations, even during the Arab Spring uprisings. According to Khatib, this unwillingness was evident when the Egyptian minister called him to stop covering the uprisings in the country, while warning him that the Egyptian government is not responsible if something wrong was to happen to them. A few days later, the Cairo office of Al Arabiya was attacked by Mubarak supporters and they closed it pending safety concerns. The research of Pintak (2011b) has shown that the situation did not change even after the overthrowing of Mubarak's regime. After the military took power in the country, some journalists and bloggers were arrested for criticising the military. In addition, media editors were asked officially not to disseminate any news about Arab Spring uprisings without obtaining a permission from the military. Similarly, this type of control was also exerted in Libya and Yemen, not to mention other Middle Eastern countries which bore relation to the events surrounding the Arab Spring (Pintak, 2011b). Again, to grasp the complexity of what it is like to operate as a journalist in such strained social and political contexts, qualitative methods of data collection is needed to present a fuller picture of the tension between freedom of press, and (at times) blatant and entrenched censorship of the media. The events surrounding the Arab Spring have altered the social relationship between Middle Eastern politicians and the civilian opposition forever, fuelling a further need for a close analysis of Middle Eastern journalism that encompasses personal narratives and captures informed perspectives. It is important that the data collected is free of assumptions, which may

limit the depth of the study or discourage the address of controversial issues initially unknown to the researcher. A qualitative approach will allow for a more thorough inquiry into potentially controversial barriers that Middle Eastern journalists have experienced, regarding their ability to undertake professional journalistic practices.

In his study of mass media in the Middle East, Rugh (2004, p.2) mentions that mass media responds to and reflects not only the existing political realities but also economic, cultural, and other factors. Rugh (2004) has aimed to address this issue of depth in his study, where he explores the surrounding factors that influence the state of Middle Eastern journalism. As he states, after World War II governments in the Middle East imposed several restrictions on mass media to ensure the social 'well being' and maintain the cohesion of the multi-ethnic community (Rugh, 2004). Rugh presents valuable research that resists the need to point fingers at political regimes, in explanation of restrictions placed on media in the Middle East. Instead, this research looks at the surrounding factors such as the need for cultural co-existence, the distribution of wealth and class separation, all unified under the umbrella of media as a national institution, a force which – if regulated properly - could provide cohesion among peoples. What is identified as the undeniable factor in these considerations, is the element of determinism: If regulated media is a unifying force, then the unified should experience some degree of control over the representations they bear witness to, that shape their perceptions of their nation state. Political participation has been identified, by many contributors, as one of the aspects of democratic practice that is largely identified as an indicator of press freedom. Rugh (2004) presents a disempowered citizens collective, unprotected, under-funded, and in stark contrast with the confrontational and often blatant censorship force of the state.

To illustrate the extent to which citizens and journalists in the Middle East lack the ability to participate fully in controversial discourse, it is useful to examine a more democratic model of media distribution. Scheufele, Nisbet, and Brossard (2003) study the relationship between the cognitive dimension of religion, and mass media use and political participation among two Christian communities in the United States. Media in general and the press in particular, is an essential medium where citizens can express their own opinions on political affairs. According to the findings of their study, frequent church attendees are more likely to engage in political participation. However, they also point out that the interpersonal political interactions outside church had a stronger effect on political participation than church-based interactions. Although this study is focused

on Christians inside the US, it reveals the significant role played by religion in encouraging or discouraging civic engagement among citizens. Religion becomes a basis for a more democratic public forum, as there is a social culture of greater equality among individuals and individuals with the power to represent the collective. This model, in contrast to Arab media, serves to display the way in which intra-national social collectives and political participation, may offer an alternative, more democratic model of media representation. Scheufele et al., (2003) illustrate how this can be functional, maintain social cohesion and create a greater sense of collective, as democratic participation does not necessarily result in the degradation of elective systems of representation, or cause a demise of respected systems of representation.

In support of this ideal, using a survey of Arab youth in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Golan and Kiouisis (2010) attempt to "present a model that identifies the complex and multidimensional relationships among religion-based variables, media credibility and individual assessments of democracy" in the Arab world (p. 84). The research results show that citizens with high level of religious affiliation have a high assessment of media credibility for both domestic and international media. Commenting on this result, further studies derived from two highly traditional Islamic societies (Egypt and Saudi Arabia), where people largely rely on centralized governmental and religious institutions in their daily lives, found that there was a positive relationship between domestic media and support for democracy. In contrast, the same study found a negative relationship between international media (internet and satellite) and support for democracy. In their explanation of this unexpected result, the researchers refer to "the nature of the content shown on the two types of media" (p.95). Furthermore, there is a "positive relationship between support for fundamentalism and attitudes toward democracy" (p.95). Golan and Kiouisis (2010) state that "one possible explanation may be that Arab youth do not find a contradiction between a respect for their religion and their interpretation of democracy" (p.95). This study shows the wide variation in peoples' understanding of democracy and the role of religion in support of democracy; as these results, according to the researchers, "seem counterintuitive but also almost impossible to some people living in the United States" (p.95). We may understand this relationship between religious affiliation and control by centralized government, as supportive of one another, in the perspectives of Middle Eastern civilians.

Tessler (2002) examines the impact of Islam and religious orientation on attitudes toward democracy in four Arab countries; Palestine, Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt. The

research to follow acknowledges previous studies where scholars such as Choueiri (1996) have claimed that democracy and Islam are inconsistent, hence we are able to view a less democratic approach to media representations in the Middle East. However, Tessler argues that most of studies about Arabs and Islam “are most often based on impressionistic and anecdotal information” (p. 337). He also emphasizes that “some analyses appear to be influenced by Western stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims” (p.337). In consideration of both points, the research in the following chapters points out that studies on democratic transitions and democratic consolidation recognize two analytically distinct concerns; the first one involves political institutions and the second one involves citizen attitudes and values, (often referred to as ‘political culture’). Tessler argues that for the Arab world to experience more fully formed models of democracy, democratic governments and democratic political culture need each other (p.337). According to Tessler (2002), “Islam plays a critical role in shaping political culture” specifically during the last quarter century (p.339). In Tessler’s (2002) findings, he states that, “Islam should not be reified when attempting to explain Arab political orientations, and, in particular, it offers evidence that support for democracy is not necessarily lower among those individuals with the strongest Islamic attachment” (p.348). Additionally, it is stated that “support for political Islam does not involve a rejection of democracy, and that those with a more favourable view of Islamist movements and platforms are no less likely than others to favour political competition and to desire mechanisms to hold leaders accountable” (p.349). At the end of his study, Tessler (2002) claims that “Islam is not the obstacle to democratization that some Western and others scholars allege it to be” (p.350). This is an important consideration when approaching qualitative research that is both accurate and contemporary, as past assumptions about Islamic nation states by researchers, have shaped the perception that Islam is a natural opposition to models of democracy. There exists a necessity to differentiate between Islam as a religion, and the understanding and practice of Islam by Muslims - as well as the manipulation of Islam by politicians to serve their own political purposes. As supported by Tessler (2002) there is no direct reason democracy cannot thrive alongside Islam within the same governed nation state. Additionally it is important, as emphasised by Robie (2014), that democracy and Western ideologies about journalism is not held against Middle Eastern journalism to illustrate its disparity. In support of Dixit (2010), issues such as social injustices and environmental concerns, journalists being of the people and for the peoples’ representative, can exist as ethics

that overtake typologies and scales of measuring journalism established by normative theories of the press. The research to unfold within the next chapters is approached with both an internal knowledge of Islamic practices, and an understanding of the perceived relationship between these practices and democratic freedom of press. Exercising a degree of cultural sensitivity entrenched in the study design, alongside a necessary degree of objectivity needed to analyse the potentially controversial subject matter of the data, we are able to work towards a thorough critical examination of the contemporary state of Middle Eastern journalism.

Chapter Four: Research Design

4.1. Introduction

The direct and indirect influences of the Arab Spring on journalism and press freedom in Middle East, is indicative of the shifts in attitude and social climate that has occurred in the world of journalism. An analysis of the types of specific pressures placed on Arab journalists due to the regimes under which they operate, indicates that these pressures tend to influence their ability to report in a free and impartial manner. Comparative perspectives exploring the state of Middle Eastern journalism before, during and after the Arab Spring, have established the point of departure for this study. In order to capture an internal perspective on the climate of journalism through range Middle Eastern regions, a qualitative approach was selected to best contribute to a deeper understanding of Arabian press freedom before, during, and after the Arab Spring events.

The investigative and exploratory nature of the aim of the study, and the comparison inherent between the media landscape previous to, and following the Arab Spring, are matched by the qualitative approach to data gathering and undertaking analysis, which allows for comparison, flexibility and the inclusion of complex and contradictory experiences, concepts and opinions (Cresswell, 2009). This approach seeks to most accurately compare contemporary perceptions of journalistic practices with the most commonly shared ideologies of news media practices, described as “Truth, accuracy and objectivity” (Hafez, 2002, p.3). Thus, this research will consider these ideologies as guidelines for evaluating contemporary Middle Eastern journalistic practice, to determine the ways in which the Arab Spring has been responsible for challenging or re-enforcing these practices.

This chapter engages with the methodological considerations of primary data gathering, firstly describing the decisions made regarding research types and the evidence gathering methods or techniques in order to ensure consistency, high quality responses and ethical procedure. Secondly, the strengths and limitations to the method implemented will also be discussed. Then the interview procedure will also be outlined, including interview samples, interview questions, and conducting the interviews.

4.2. Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach from individuals participating in journalism within these temporal constraints allowed for high levels of detailed comparison, and for the inclusion of personal experience and the nuance of individual expression and opinion. Given the nature of this data, the analysis method used was a form of narrative content analysis (also called ‘narrative analysis’ or ‘narrative enquiry’, obtained through interviews with experts and professionals active in the media and journalistic field in the Middle East, which offered several advantages to the researcher.

This method starts with the assumption that there is no definitive, objective external reality but that individuals construct reality subjectively, and researchers must then use an interpretive/constructivist paradigm to understand the stories that people tell (Crotty, 2003). This approach was selected because the subject matter of this research project is not suited to positivist approaches.

Narrative content analysis depends upon dynamic interactions between individuals within wider social, political, economic and religious contexts and this means that there are multiple layers of meaning to be found (Esin, Fathi & Squire, 2014, pp. 203-205). It is particularly effective in yielding information from detailed and nuanced personal expressions of individual experience and opinion, and provides valuable historical and cultural insights over time (Palmquist, Carley, & Dale, 1997). This makes it extremely suitable for the deconstruction, taxonomy and comparison that is necessary in the comprehensive analysis of varied and complex responses, in which the freedom and flexibility of personal response and experience has been prioritised and captured by the researcher (Kim, 2015; Kohler Reissman, 1993). As Cresswell has commented, “narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals” (Cresswell, 2009, 55). Narrative analysis also takes into account the wider context of the individual and their situation, making it highly suitable for the investigation of wider, cultural phenomena (Pinnegar & Danes, 2007). The aim of this narrative research is to order and analyse the multiple stories of individuals by showing them as unfolding within the chronology of their experiences, and within the personal, social, cultural and political context of their creation. As such, in combination, this method is revealing of key themes in the state of journalistic freedom in the Middle East, and the narratives are capable of showing significant similarities and differences between the experiences of those within the field.

These narratives are highly expressive of the influencing and causal factors related to the Arab Spring, indicating the relationship between social and political climate and this feeds into journalism practices.

As the interviews were being conducted, they were also labelled and transcribed, in order to create a body of narrative in a form that can be analysed. The frequent reading and careful transcription of the interviews gives the researcher an insight into recurring themes and these are then coded with colours. Initial coding took place at the same time as transcription. Once the interviews were completed, transcribed and translated, all of the material was reviewed. At this stage the codings were radically altered. The initial plan was to analyse the material thematically, following the four research question topics, but after reading the transcripts it was decided to code according to a before/during/after time frame and to maintain a country-by-country structure. This decision was taken in order to study the range of opinions on the Arab Spring against the background of each country's evolving context and to ensure that the researcher's own preconceived ideas did not intrude too much on the presentation of data.

4.2.1. Interviewing as a data gathering method

Interview is a verbal communication process used by an interviewer to collect certain data from an interviewee. Kvale (as cited in Kajornboon, 2005) treated interviews as “... an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data”. In research, there are three broad types of interview methods: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Qu and Dumay (2011) defined structured interview as where the interviewer asks questions prepared in advance, providing a limited number of responses to interviewee. "All interviewees are asked the same questions in the same order to elicit brief answers or answers from a list." (Qu and Dumay, 2011, p. 244). While in semi-structured interview, there is more flexibility in how and when questions are being asked and how interviewees respond. The researcher normally follows an interview guide that has a list of questions and topics need to be discussed (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

In the unstructured interview, according to Edwards and Holland (2013), "the researcher clearly has aims for the research and a topic of study, but the importance of the method is to allow the interviewee to talk from their own perspective using their own frame of reference and ideas and meanings that are familiar to them". Here the researcher reacts

according to the interviewee's responses and might change or adjust the content of the interview and the focus of the research depending on issues that emerge from the interview.

In this research, semi-structured interviews used to allow participants to present their perception and interpretation about the situation of journalism before and after the Arab Spring using their own expression and allow the researcher to control the information flow process.

This chapter defines interview method used to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Has the Arab Spring reinforced truth, objectivity, and ethical reporting in the Middle East?
- 2) In what ways has the Arab Spring changed reporting styles and tendencies among Arab journalists who report on political and social events in the Middle East?
- 3) To what extent is freedom of the press allowed and supported by Arab governments, which came to power after the Arab Spring?
- 4) Have new obstacles or constraints emerged as result of Arab Spring events?

4.2.2. Weaknesses and strengths of interviewing and semi-structured interviews

Like any research method, interview has some limitations and strengths that need to be considered when conducting an interview. Time consuming, expensiveness, concerns regarding validity and reliability, and hardness to generalise and analyse are examples of difficulties that a researcher needs to overcome. To conduct a successful interview, the interviewer must retain interviewing professional skills. These skills include the ability to adjust questions or asking new ones during the interview, avoidance of bias and keeping personal pre-judgment away when conducting the interview. Moreover, the interviewer should know how to recognise statements that some interviewees tend to use to brighten themselves or their workplace (Qu & Dumay, 2011). As a student with no previous experience on conducting interviews, I did my best efforts to learn how to perform professional interviews by watching online training and then practising what I have learned with some of my friends who work as journalists. Further, before conducting an interview, the interviewer needs to build a good rapport with the interviewee “that hopefully will lead to depth and honest truth telling ” (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p. 259). To establish this kind of relationship with participants, I utilized my friendship with an Egyptian journalist who assisted me on reaching Egyptian journalists. After telling him the purpose of meeting them, I asked him to connect me

with predetermined journalists whom were chosen by me. This way made it easy for them to trust me and welcome participating in my research. For the other participants, I contacted them directly through their emails explaining the purpose of my research and provided them with official proof from Auckland University of Technology. None of the participants asked for proof but I sent research information in advance, as this would encourage them to accept my invitation.

The use of video camera to record an interview might make participants feeling nervous. As all participants in this research are journalists, this kind of limitation did not cause any problem because they are used to talking in front of camera. Recorded face to face semi-structured interview method was selected in this research to gather data from participants because it saves time for both researcher and participants. This method is superior to email or paper questionnaires in this kind of research because it allows for more open-ended questioning, and encourages narrative rather than formulaic answers (Creswell, 1994). However, note-taking technique during interviews is useful as a backup if something goes wrong with the recording camera. Moreover, semi-structured interview allows the topic of the study to be covered from different angles and helps in discovering new horizons related to approaching research aims. Furthermore, this type of method as mentioned above, provides opportunity to participants to use their own perceptions about the study topic with their own expression and words.

4.3. Interview Procedure

This section will cover the criteria used to select the interview sample, the interview questions, the procedure used to conduct interviews, and the steps that have been taken to meet AUT Ethics Committee requirements.

4.3.1. Interview sample

The sample of participants consisted of eleven experts and professional journalists active in the field of the media or journalism in the Arab world. This professional experience spans four countries, Egypt (six respondents, three of them are female), Libya (two respondents, one of them is female), Tunisia (two respondents) and Yemen (one respondent). They were selected based on the eligibility of their professional role and experience, their nationality and ethnicity and the location of their role and experience within the Arab region. All of them are from countries that encountered Arab Spring events. One more important criterion was to select journalists from different

affiliations and from different media types and platforms. This breadth was also intended to reduce the potential for bias in the findings of this research (Kim, 2015). The respondents were identified and approached individually for the research and invited to contribute to the project. For the Egyptian journalists, I set a list of journalists according to the criteria mentioned above, and I asked an Egyptian friend to facilitate reaching them, then I contacted them one by one until I got a sufficient number of participants. For other journalists, I chose journalists based on criteria aforementioned. Then I contacted them through their email addresses that were published online, with an email sent to them, I attached an invitation letter with the information sheet for them to read and get full information about their role in this research. After accepting the invitation, we agreed on the interviewing method and on the time and place of interviews. All of them accepted the use of face-to-face interview and we agreed to conduct the interviews on February 2014.

4.3.2. Interview Questions

The ultimate goal of this research is to study and understand the role played by the Arab Spring events in influencing press freedom in the Middle East, and addressing the factors that prevent Arabian Journalism from being at the highest standards of journalism. Thus, the interview questions were evolved to serve the research aim and questions. The interview questions are included in Appendix D. As the research is focusing more on getting thick description and opinions about press freedom in the Middle East, interview questions were designed in an open-ended question form to allow interviewees enough space to express their opinions.

Initial interview questions were broad seeking information about background, history, and general perspectives of press freedom in the region and Arab Spring events. Then facts and opinion questions used based on interviewees' answers. I did my best efforts to ask neutral questions unless when I found an answer was contradicting a proven fact. Enough questions were being asked to fulfil answering every single question of the research questions.

4.3.3. Conducting the Interviews

As participants were working in different countries and the researcher was studying in New Zealand, the interviews were conducting in two different forms. I chose January 2014 to conduct these interviews because it was the available time to travel to Middle

East and was suitable for participants too. The participants were divided into two groups; the first group was for those who could be met physically face-to face and the second group was for those being interviewed by communication medium Skype. I was not able to travel to Libya and Tunisia on January 2014 due to safety reasons, so I decided to use the Skype program to conduct the interviews with the Libyan and Tunisian journalists. For the Yemeni journalist, we agreed to meet in Egypt instead of Yemen as Yemen at that time was not secure.

Each interviewee was provided with enough information about the purpose of the study, participant's role in the research, and her/his rights as a participant. Then she / he was asked to sign the consent form before starting the interview. The average time of interviews was 80 minutes and all of them were recorded in video format. The interviews transcript was translated from Arabic to English.

4.3.4. Steps that Have Been Taken to Meet AUTECH Ethical Requirements

This research was approved by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 25 June 2013 with ethic application number: 13/77 after meeting AUTECH's ethical principles, which are in accordance with the Operational Standards for Ethics Committees in New Zealand. AUTECH's ethical principles were adhered; principles of partnership, participation, and protection; social and cultural sensitivity; informed and voluntary consent; respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality; minimization of risk to participants, researcher, institutions; truthfulness and limitation of deception; avoidance of conflict of interest; respect of property. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, their role in this study, and the procedure that will be taken in regards to the storage of the information and transcripts collected from them. They were also provided with information sheet and consent forms. Information sheet and consent form are included within this thesis in Appendices B and C.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Findings

5.1. Introduction:

The following table summarises the details of the respondents.

Table 1: Summary of respondents' details.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Nation</i>
<i>Ms. Amal Ewida</i>	<i>Deputy Managing Editor and journalist</i>	<i>Ahram Newspaper (state-run press)</i>	<i>Egypt</i>
<i>Ms. Hala Fahmy</i>	<i>Researcher and journalist</i>	<i>Almessa Newspaper (state-run press)</i>	<i>Egypt</i>
<i>Mr. Mohammed Abdulqadous</i>	<i>Board member Chairman of Freedoms Committee</i>	<i>Journalists' Syndicate</i>	<i>Egypt</i>
<i>Mr. Hesham Younis</i>	<i>Journalist and Council member</i>	<i>Ahram Newspaper (state-run press) and Journalists' Syndicate</i>	<i>Egypt</i>
<i>Mr. Magdy Samaan</i>	<i>Journalist and Correspondent</i>	<i>Daily Telegraph Bureau (independent press)</i>	<i>Egypt</i>
<i>Ms. Nada Elkholy</i>	<i>Journalist</i>	<i>Shorouk Newspaper (independent press)</i>	<i>Egypt</i>
<i>Ms. Hind Ali Mohamed</i>	<i>Journalist and Editing Coordinator</i>	<i>Al Mar'a Magazine</i>	<i>Libya</i>
<i>Mr. Mohammed Karkarah</i>	<i>Journalist</i>	<i>Quryna Newspaper (semi-independent)</i>	<i>Libya</i>
<i>Mr. Mongi Khadraoui</i>	<i>Journalist</i>	<i>Freelance</i>	<i>Tunisia</i>
<i>Mr. Mahmoud Dawadi</i>	<i>Journalist and Director</i>	<i>Tunis Centre of Press Freedom</i>	<i>Tunisia</i>
<i>Mr. Mohammad Al Latefi</i>	<i>Journalist</i>	<i>Algomhoria Newspaper (state-run press)</i>	<i>Yemen</i>

This chapter engages in analysis by dividing the participants by nationality, in order to show how the context, experience and situation of the participants and their narrative is representative of the Arab Spring's impact on journalistic freedoms in each nation. The data is then analysed to highlight commonalities and observe differences, between and within the nations discussed. This form of personally and contextually rooted analysis is key to the narrative analysis method and allows for a holistic and comparative approach to the findings (Cresswell, 2009; Kim, 2015).

Six of the respondents, three female and three male, lived and worked in Egypt. Two worked in Libya - one female and one male. Two worked in Tunisia, and one in Yemen. Their narratives can be read comparatively to show change over time before, during and after the Arab Spring social political movements in each country, allowing a picture of journalistic freedoms in each to be built up respectively.

5.2. Journalism and Press Freedom in Egypt

Infograph2: The most important events in Egypt (2011-2016)



5.2.1. Before the Arab Spring (1952-2011)

Since 1952, Egypt has been under the rule of military dictators (Abdulnasil, Sadat, and Mubarak). Military rules are not the ideal environment for the operation of the media. As a result, the press suffered seriously in Egypt during the period between 1952 and 2004. As Abdulqadous confirms, the dictatorial rules in Egypt eliminated parties and political life from the public sphere (M. Abdulqadous, Personal communication, January 22, 2014). President Mubarak also adopted dictatorial form of control over the media. Though he upheld the private ownership of media houses by the opposition, the lack of true democracy, support for the opposition parties, and high illiteracy levels in Egypt, hampered the success of the publications in impacting the society and influencing opinion. Even those who could read held the newspapers with contempt, as they saw them as a tool for merely passing party propaganda. The newspapers lacked credibility. As Ms. Hala states, there were limits that a journalist was not supposed to exceed in the reporting, even when that meant to suppress some truth against the government (H. Fahmy, Personal Communication, January 19, 2014). Mr. Abdulqadous also adds by saying that the few private newspapers allowed during President Mubarak's era were meant to satisfy international pressure but they were not really free to report (M. Abdulqadous, Personal Communication, January 22, 2014). The argument is furthered by Ms. Ewida when she says that there was partial freedom of the press, but which was rarely utilized. Most media personnel tread the safe path for their safety and to retain their jobs (A. Ewida, Personal Communication, January 19, 2014). Also there was continued harassment, targeting, assault, arrests, detention, torture and imprisonments of journalists.

Ms. Amal Ewida argues that most of the journalists, especially those working for the state-owned media houses, were biased towards the government from which they received numerous hand-outs. The private newspapers were the major receivers of the mistreatment by the government. The government used various means to "strangle" them. Ms. Ewida gives the example of *Al-Dostour* newspaper that was stopped and its editor, Ibrahim Isa, was temporarily imprisoned - even though he was later released after the intervention of other journalists (A. Ewida, Personal Communication, January 19, 2014).

However, due to international pressure, in the last decade of President Mubarak's rule, he was forced to soften restrictions on the media, journalists and activists. As a result, media organizations were privatized, satellite televisions channels were introduced, and

opposition controlled newspapers also substantially grew (Atia, 2006). The access and use of the new media also improved. The satellite channels were uncensored and were not regulated by the government. Mr. Magdy Samaan of *The Telelgraph* says, “...*the satellite openness gave freedom in criticizing some religious matters which were not allowed to be criticized previously.*” (M. Saaman, *Personal Communication*, January 22, 2014).

The government control also did not include to a larger extent websites (mostly owned by the media organizations), blogs, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Through such fronts, the people could freely present their views, ideas, opinions and criticism against the “evils” committed by the government.

The situation in Egypt before Arab Spring was much better than other Arabian countries, Ms. Awida attests,

Since 2010 we were able to speak and criticize the president and there was great discontent among opposition. At the same time when I visited Tunisia in 2010 my friend could not express her opinion and criticize till we go to the sea as she was afraid to be heard by anyone. To be clear, the condition in Egypt was better than it is in Tunisia, Yemen, and Syria in particular as citizens cannot speak about politics or religion. (A. Ewida, Personal Communication, January 19, 2014).

The newly found media outlets thus offered a reliable source of news, although they were not completely free from the influences from other forces such as the owners. The new media were vital at the beginning of, and during, the revolutions years (Samuel, 2012).

5.2.2. During the Revolution (25th Jan 2011 to 14th Feb 2011):

The Revolutions began in Egypt on January 25, 2011. People were protesting against the leadership of Hosni Mubarak. It is evident from the data that the media was and still is largely biased towards the government. They published contents that were supportive of the ideas of the government, and that did not directly criticize the authority. Ms. Ewida says that even criticisms were offered in the form of advices to the military (A. Ewida, *Personal Communication*, January 19, 2014). However, different from other Arab countries, the availability of information especially through new media such as the internet and social sites was a contributing factor to the occurrence of the uprising. Despite the suppressive nature of the environment in Egypt, the press in the country

defied the odds and managed to pull off the restrictions and obtain some level of freedom. On the other hand, Egyptians used the independent media to pass on their frustration and anger with the government due to the many social, political, economic injustices committed. They were mainly utilizing the social media, especially Facebook, websites and blogs. The people had had enough of the misdeeds and therefore it was time to speak out and act for change. Magdy Saman of *The Telegraph* says new media is more largely utilized than the traditional media (M. Saman, Personal Communication, January 22, 2014). Therefore, people are conscious about their rights concerning access to information and they move towards attaining it. Ms Nada asserted that they largely utilized social media to reach out to people. For example she says. “...there were instructions in Khalid Said page about the way of dealing with gases used by the military forces against us” (N. Elkholy, Personal Communication. January 22, 2014). The protestors were also informed on the way to communicate to bypass government spies. Even though it is out of this research scope, it is appropriate to remember the crucial role that has been played by social media outlets in supporting rebels during Arab Spring revolutions.

During the period, the state-owned media houses still passed on propaganda in support of the government. The biased media came under fire from the public as a result of portrayal of the truth by the transnational satellite channels such as Al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera gave a more comprehensive and unaltered coverage of the harassment and torture of the protesters by the forces. As a result, the Mubarak regime was furious and denied the channel access to transmission through their satellite, Nilesat. However, the channel still broadcasted in Egypt through Arabsat and Hobtbird satellites (Khamis, 2011). However, its offices in Cairo were closed and its bureau chief was detained. Here again we shouldn't overlook the hidden agenda of some Arabian TV channels such as Al-Jazeera and Al Arabiya even though they provided sympathetic coverage to the rebels. Al-Jazeera for example has been always against the Egyptian foreign policy even before the beginning of the Egyptian's revolution due to the conflict of political interests between the Qatari and the Egyptian governments. Nabil Khatib, Al Arabiya's executive editor. “It's not about trying to act as a political party who's trying to be activist rather than to offer information.” Al Jazeera according to him is “trying to be part of the conflict.” (Pintak, 2011b, p.24). The same argument can be applied on Al Arabiya when it comes to the Foreign policy of its funders. Proving this needs a complete content study that analyse the contents of such channels before, during, and

after Arab Spring.

The state press was thus criticized due to the lack of credibility, which led to the people calling for the abolishment of the Ministry of Information. They called for the creation of an independent media council that would justly regulate the press. During that period, the government also did shutdown the internet and cellphone services for almost a week. However, the people, and especially the youths, were resilient as they sought alternative means of communication to bypass the restriction (Ishani, 2011).

5.2.3.The Transition Period (14th of Feb 2011 to 30th of Jun 2013):

The victory of the media against the suppressive rule of Mubarak did not match the political development in Egypt. The media revolution grew and realized benefits faster than the political uprising. However, after the removal of President Mubarak, some core journalism ethics and standards completely disappeared. Ms. Nada suggests this when she says, “...*this is due to moving from a specific political regime to another completely different regime.*” (N. Elkholy, *Personal Communication, January 22, 2014*). This was specifically in reference to asking her about the reason for the breakdown of professionalism in journalism after the ousting of President Mubarak.

A few weeks after the resignation of Hosni Mubarak, a number of privately owned satellite television channels and newspaper firms emerged. Additionally, it is important to recognise that at this time, formerly conservative state-owned media began to air free reports on various social issues without restrictions or marked favouritism. They even started to openly criticize leaders. Ms. Hala Fahmy of *Al-Messa* newspaper says that after the revolution they had the right to criticize the military, the police, and their performance. She adds that,

The governmental media institutions allowed that because prohibiting it is no longer feasible. People know everything through Internet and new media and hence these governmental institutions were convinced that if citizen does not find what he wants through newspapers or governmental satellite channel, he will find it through other media. So it is the interest of the newspaper and the governmental channel, in order to attract viewers and readers, to be affiliated to readers not to the government. (H. Fahmy, Personal Communication, January 19, 2014)

The military that took power after the ousting of Mubarak in February 2011, adopted the same authoritarian rule that people were fighting against. By April of the same year, it was evident that the military was reorganizing and restructuring the state-owned media to resemble that of the Mubarak's regime, but with the use of new logos. The state TV channels, radio stations and newspaper firms once again started to observe the red line that they were not to cross. That means that they used to overlook the negatives of the military rule, and no criticism against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces could surface.

Even when some complaints against the mismanagement of the transition process were aired, they were directed at the interim authority and not the Executive Military Council. However, even such accusations were rare. The media also greatly condemned any demonstrations that were staged after February 11 by describing them as 'evil'. By condemning the protests and the revolutionary movements, state-owned media aimed at aligning themselves with the counter-revolution. Mr. Hesham of the state-owned *Al-Ahram* newspaper mentioned that,

After the revolution, we moved from being hypocrites with regimes to being hypocrites with revolution and rebels. When the media started in turning its back to the revolution, it returned to appeasing the past regimes and being hypocritical towards them. The media is still hesitant about supporting real values, which lead to an authentic leap in Arab societies. The capital still plays a role and money overlapping with politics represents an obstacle. (H. Younis, Personal Communication, January 22, 2014)

In this period, as shown by Mr. Hesham Younis, the most lack of observance of the code of ethics in journalism was seen during the period. He says professionalism was low whereby even the trained journalists did not apply it (H. Younis, Personal Communication, January 22, 2014). The gulf between the state-owned and the private media was at its widest at the military era, between April and December 2011 (Iskander, 2011).

When Mohamed Morsi was elected, the freedom of the press showed marked improvement, as shown by the independent journalists interviewed. Mr. Magdy Saaman points to the ability to establish media outlets without restrictions, with respect to laws in order to guarantee the journalist freedom of their work (M. Saaman, Personal Communication, January 22, 2014). Ms. Nada Elkholy also attests to the presence of freedom of the press during Morsi's era (N. Elkholy, Personal Communication, January

22, 2014). However, those who were working for state-run institutions contradict what independent interviewees have expressed regarding their increased freedoms. According to Ms. Amal Awida, Morsi did not commit to free the Egyptian press from government control. Instead, he replaced all the individuals whom played key roles in media in such stations, with his own loyalists so that they could manipulate the information to be aired in order to suit his image and the policies of his rule. Ms. Amal Awida said, *“When Muslim Brotherhood came to power, they began in repeating Mubarak mistakes and appointed people loyal to them in the national newspapers, including the editors and administration heads.”* (A. Ewida, Personal Communication, January 19, 2014)

The Morsi government also unfairly targeted journalists. Those who criticized authority, such as Hesham Younis of the *Al-Ahram* newspaper were unfairly targeted. Mr. Younis says, *“I was transferred unfairly from Al-Ahram newspaper to Al-Ahram gate (an online supplement of Al-Ahram newspaper)... my dues were deducted and my job rank was reduced.”* (H. Younis, Personal Communication, January 22, 2014). These claims made by Mr. Hesham were verified personally when I met him in his office inside Al-Ahram newspaper. I saw him working in *Al-Ahram gate* and was prohibited from writing. Furthermore, nothing has changed after the removal of Morsi, as his writings are still not allowed to be published at the time when I met with him on January 22, 2014. Regarding what Ms. Ewida mentioned above, I had reviewed editors and administration heads names in state run institutions and found some of them were supporters of Morsi government, both before and after their appointments.

The newly found freedom of the media in light of political shifts, had given way to the industry experiencing a chaotic time in terms of reliability and validity. These were times in which any individual or organisation was able to freely make criticisms aimed at whoever they felt deserved it, with many such allegations being unconfirmed. The social reaction to such a shift towards deregulation in the media was very destabilising. Moreover, political polarization increased during Morsi era. Ms. Nada Elkholy of *Al-Shorouk* newspaper said, *“...when there is good atmosphere for freedom, you will find the person who has no specific opinion tends to the side which he prefers and disagrees with the other sides. This happens because of the political polarization and this is considered a natural condition after the revolution.”* (N. Elkholy, Personal Communication, January 22, 2014). Elkholy had mentioned Basem Yusuf, an individual who had aired mocking comments, in an encroachment of other people's rights, including President Morsi, and was offering sexual suggestions live on air. This

was an example of the widespread lack of focus in the side of the media and the freedom margin enjoyed by private institutions. The sense of climate here suggested that there was loss of objectivity, accuracy, neutrality and other journalism codes of conduct. Each TV station or newspaper firm was reporting the things that would be favourable to their owners or sponsors (political parties), especially through live talk shows. Channels were openly criticizing each other on the basis of the way each was conducting its business. The opposition of the media and the public against Morsi's government owes to the inability of the regime to run the nation and bring the much anticipated changes. Instead, Morsi just extended Mubarak's authoritarian rule, and the people were not willing to take it lying down (El-Sherif, 2014).

5.2.4. 30th June 2013 till February 2014:

After the removal of Mohamed Morsi on 3 July 2013, Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's regime closed down most of the media houses associated with the Brotherhood and other Islamist groups. Ms. Hala agrees with their closures as she argues that they were airing biased and extreme materials. She said, *"...as an Egyptian, I was wishing to close them myself because there was encroachment and incitement on particular persons and so they should be punished. This is considered giving commands inciting murder through these channels."* (H. Fahmy, Personal Communication, January 19, 2014).

Most of the media personnel, including chief-editors, editors, producers, journalists, and camera people were arrested. Ms. Hala Fahmy says, *"...nothing changed whether in Mubarak era or after his fall. There are still detentions. The only difference is that in this period when a person is arrested and his charge is not proved, he is released immediately."* (H. Fahmy, Personal Communication, January 19, 2014). However, in direct contradiction to this positive statement regarding the use of arrest to silence dissenters, Mr. Abdulqadous who works as Chairman of Freedoms Committee in journalists syndicate stated that *"the coup of June 30 returned Egypt to zero once again and maybe to a worse condition than in the Mubarak era. Now there are many prisoners of conscience and a lot of shed blood and there are arrested girls for the first time in history of Egypt. I think that we need another Arab Spring"*. He added *"Anyone comes by elections leaves by elections. It is not accepted to come by elections and be isolated by tanks. This has great impact on the freedom of press. We do not have media nowadays. How can we have media under the rule of military?"* (M. Abdulqadous, Personal communication, January 22, 2014). The following dialogue

presents a comparison of freedoms conditions during Morsi era and after 30 June 2013, in the view of Mr. Abdulqadous:

Abdulqadous: In Morsi era, the margin of freedom was very high and there was public criticism of the president. The existence of prisoners of conscience was exception and demonstrations were allowed. All of this has vanished now.

Majid: What do you mean by exception?

Abdulqadous: I mean that they were arrested, referred to judiciary, and then released.

Majid: Were they arrested for days or months?

Abdulqadous: For a very short time while now there are at least ten thousands prisoners of conscience. Even in Mubarak era, there was limited period of preventive detention and could not be extended unless for a specific period. But now, detention period is limitless and may reach to one year without directing any accusation.

In assertion of what has mentioned above by Mr. Abdulqadous, Mr. Magdy Samman, *Telegraph* correspondent says : “*In Muslim Brotherhood era, freedom of expression was a paradise compared to what is happening now*” (Mr. Samaan, *Personal Communication, January 22, 2014*). Freedom House 2015 report supports what has been said by Mr. Abdulqadous and Mr. Samman.

According to Ms. Nada Elkholy “... *in Morsi era while you were riding in the car and listening to the radio, it was not necessary for the newsletter to start with news about President Morsi*”, but after 30 Jun 2013 “*We reached to an extent that the mass media began with news about the president then news about his family followed by news about the government officials and it did not display the problems which people were facing.*” (N. Elkholy, *Personal Communication, January 22, 2014*).

Ms. Nada made a noteworthy point that has always been used by Arabian governments to justify their repression of press, which is endangering the national security that “*formed to any content or subject they want*”. However, Mr. Hesham Younis justifies that reaction of the current government by saying, “*Media restrict themselves because of a fear that ‘criticizing the present regime serves the goal of the Muslim brotherhood’*” (H. Younis, *Personal Communication, January 22, 2014*) which suggests that the media is currently caught between two extremes.

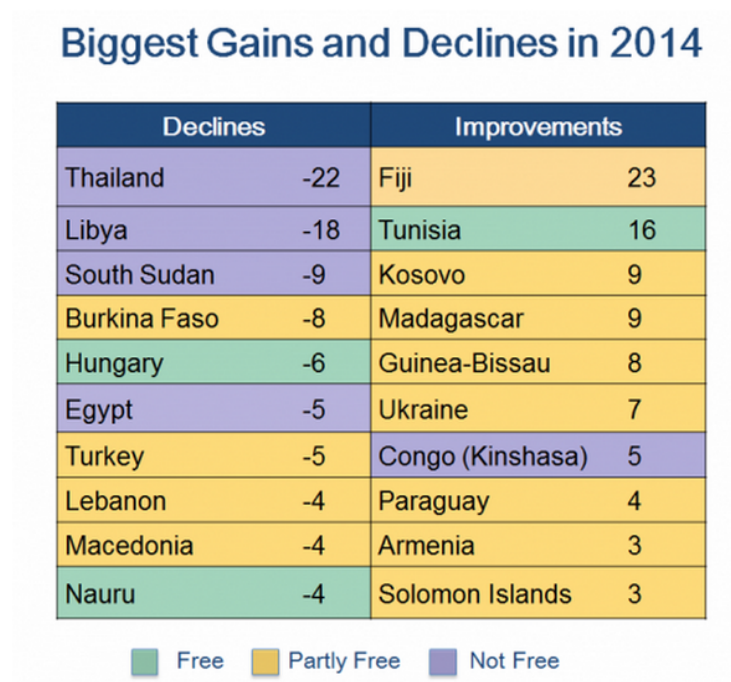
Yet, the situations are bound to change since the president is deprived of first-hand control of the press through governmental means. In February 2014, the newly passed Constitution had approved the creation of National Media Council that would oversee the activities of the press and that would be responsible for drafting and enacting the journalism Codes of Ethics to apply in Egypt. The new constitution also called for the privatization of the state-owned media organizations.

There are also numerous privately owned media houses that cannot be easily comprised by the authority (Chang, 2015). Ms. Hala also says that during this period, they were free to write and air their opinions about Al-Asisi. She says, “...*there are channels against Al-Sisi.*” (H. Fahmy, Personal Communication, , January 19, 2014)

Mr. Hesham Younis after reading the first constitution draft summarized this period by “*the legislative environment is much better ... but as for the practice there are conditions which are still bad*” (H. Younis, Personal Communication, , January 22, 2014).

In regards to whether new obstacles have emerged since the Arab Spring events, the six Egyptian interviewees agreed that no new obstacles have arisen except the ones related to politics and government interference into the media landscape which were existed before the revolution.

Chart 1: Egyptian press freedom was one of the biggest declines in 2014, according to Freedom House.



5.3. Journalism and Press Freedom in Libya

5.3.1 Before The Arab Spring

Similar to Egypt, the media landscape in Libya before the Arab Spring was “*under the grip of the ruling authority*” (H. Ali, Personal Communication, June 25, 2014). As a result, the media channels were used to pass government propaganda and opinion-dominated content. There were only three major newspapers available: *Al Jamahiriya*, *Al Zahf Al Akhdar* and *Al Shames* (M. Karkarah, Personal Communication, June 5, 2014).

Ms. Hind described Libya as “*closed country*”.

Ms. Hind added “*the Libyan citizen is still not concerned with reading newspapers. He is not a good reader... he is a good observer of audio and visual channels but when we talk about printed journalism in its current form, it doesn't have the power to influence public opinion.*” What the difference from the situation in Egypt is that people in Libya have had little interest in the media - especially in print media. Therefore, journalism has had minimal influence on the situation in the country. This statement shows the difficulty for journalists working in a field in which they are marginalised not only by the political influence of power but also by the disinterest and illiteracy of the citizens they are attempting to educate and inform. Libyans thus lost trust in the crucial segment of any modern society. Ms. Hind says,

When you enter the journalism department, you will not practise your profession worthily, or may because of disapproval of this job by people. The number of readers is very few; whoever enters journalism is like a person who enters a world not important for the Libyans. Journalism in the other countries means much, but in Libya it doesn't represent anything. (H. Ali, Personal Communication, June 25, 2014).

The Libyan society is also highly conservative, which means it is less open to influence from other regions, especially the Westerners, which accounts for the slow progress in achieving media freedom (H. Ali, Personal Communication, June 25, 2014).

In Libya, there was also harassment of journalists as Ms. Hind attests,

Journalists were arrested, and the regime detained and imprisoned them, and they were annoyed and their jobs restricted. For example, I was prohibited from electronic publication for a period of time and was threatened that my salary may be suspended, and I was suspended from work for a while then I returned (H. Ali, Personal Communication, June 25, 2014).

Mr. Mohammed Karkarh - claims that he is working for an independent newspaper, even though it was owned by Seif Al Islam Al Gadhafi, son of the President, has a different view, as he argues that Quryna and Oea Newspapers had some form of contradiction freedom in their reporting though it was censored. He says that they used to criticize corrupt leaders but not the president. However, the media was also largely biased in favour of the Gadhafi administration, only seeking to paint a positive image of him and his administration. According to Mr. Mohammed, between 2004 and the uprisings, “*journalists were not pursued as before*” and that this period was relatively free from abuses of journalists and the press. Nonetheless, Quryna was slammed with a reduction of the number of publications to weekly on that period for exceeding the limit of their freedom (M. Karkarah, Personal Communication, June 5, 2014). The previous comment from Mr. Mohammed shows a kind of contradiction as he described the period between 2004 and the uprisings as free from abuses of press, but at the same time he mentioned that Quryana was forced to reduce its publication.

There were few TV channels before Arab Spring, all of them are owned by government. “*We had a Libyan channel owned to Al Ghad Company that differed in its discussion of the Jamahiriya TV which was state owned in terms of the type of topics and quality of image and media professionalism*” (M. Karkarah, Personal Communication, June 5, 2014). When I asked him whether Al Ghad is a private or a state owned company, he replied “*It is owned to the Libyan Development Fund where government owns the largest part.*”

In summary, Libyan media before Arab Spring was largely biased towards president, with no objectivity or neutrality, and media and journalists witnessed harassments.

5.3.2. During Arab Spring uprisings

During the revolution, the security instability fell hard on journalists. There were detentions and anonymous assassinations that could not be traced back to any perpetrators (Cottle, 2011). As a result, journalists were afraid of presenting the facts even when they had them. Ms. Hind agrees to these allegations by saying “*There was an attempt to arrest me, but I fled, and they ordered my brothers to surrender me to the police station within 24 hours, but fate served me when Benghazi City fell into the hands of the rebels ...*” (H. Ali, Personal Communication, June 25, 2014). Mr. Karkarah also attests to this by saying, “*In the first five days, with the security forces, we couldn’t advocate the revolution because there was no one to protect us; our address*

was known to the security authorities and its staff were targeted but, thanks to Allah and to the efforts of its staff, it gradually turned to advocate people in their revolution.” (M. Karkarah, Personal Communication, June 5, 2014).

There was a geographical split in the amount of media resistance, with newspapers in Tripoli remaining loyal to the president, and “*Revolution newspapers*” that began to emerge in the eastern province of Benghazi, at the astonishing rate of “*more than 60 newspapers issued every week*” (M. Karkarah, Personal Communication, June 5, 2014).

Mr. Mohammad pointed to the finance difficulties they faced during this period:

We received about 400 dinars from the Libyan treasury and it was delivered to us every two or three months. Afterwards, this amount was suspended.... most revenues of these advertisements are directed to the payment of rent of the newspaper amounting to LYD 2500 per month and the remaining part is paid to the employees as benefits. We often receive LYD 400 and sometimes LYD 300, and sometimes LYD 150. This amount doesn’t suffice us, and we insist on the Quryna Newspaper as if it is our house for which we struggle. (M. Karkarah, Personal Communication, June 5, 2014).

Also he mentioned the instability of media during the early months of the revolution.

5.3.3. After Arab Spring uprisings

There is a general consensus among the Libyan journalists that the present situation is still very much in flux and likely to remain that way for some time: “*The case of change is followed by drawbacks and setbacks, so it will not be a successful and good transition. There will be stages to reach distinguished and successful image*” (H. Ali, Personal Communication, June 25, 2014).

Moreover, journalists are still not secure, according to Mr. Mohammed, after the uprisings, journalists have lived in fear of assassination and abduction, which is regular and that the threat level has been increased significantly.

The problem for me is that before the revolution we didn’t have freedom. We hoped that the Arab Spring would bring freedom, justice, security and welfare but this unfortunately didn’t happen... you can criticise the Congress of

President of State but you can be threatened with assassination at any time...
(M. Karkarah, Personal Communication, June 5, 2014).

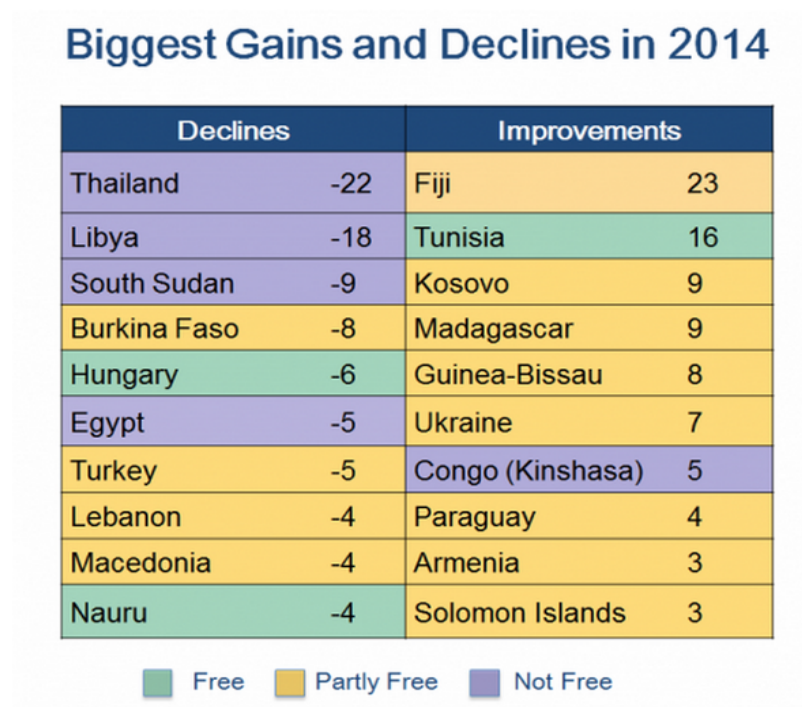
He adds *"Freedom is now open, but we shall be cautious. I can't criticize any one and can't disclose any lawsuit of corruption for example, because if I did so, it wouldn't cost more than one bullet to assassinate me."* (M. Karkarah, Personal Communication, June 5, 2014). Ms. Hind asserted this absence of security faced by journalists; assassinations of journalists are common, often by unknown assailants who come in from abroad.

Both of the Libyan respondents' narratives display a great sense of malaise and disappointment, with the journalistic profession and its progress and with the opportunities and hopes which had been perceived as flowing from the Arab Spring uprisings and social movements. This heightened sense of fear, confusion and uncertainty is also found especially in the discourse of Mr. Mohammed who speaks openly about the threat of assassination, and also about the lack of predictability regarding these attacks; *"in the past we didn't encounter harassments because we knew what was required from us and what the allowed topics for discussion were"*. In contrast to this, he gives as an example of the current situation the recent assassination of a female journalist of *Al Wataniah*. In response to the question "why was she assassinated?", he replied, *"I don't know. No one asked about the reasons for her assassination. She was not famous and didn't oppose any particular authority or group, but she was assassinated"*. The language and tone of the participant's narrative is deeply expressive of fear and pain at this point. This can be seen in the repetition of the word 'assassinated', which is the object of fear and the source of unpredictability. The words 'assassinate' or 'assassination' is spoken by the respondent nine times in several early lines of the data.

Ms. Hind added another type of restriction; the journalists are still not secure from all types of restrictions starting from the people that they work for to the government. Ms. Hind is slightly more optimistic in tone about the impact of the uprisings, although her attitude to the changes effected on journalism by the Arab Spring is ambivalent at best, *"each period [before and after the revolution] has its positives and negatives that I can't define"*, she says. However, she noted that as a person in the media, her writing has significantly improved over the years (H. Ali, Personal Communication, June 25, 2014).

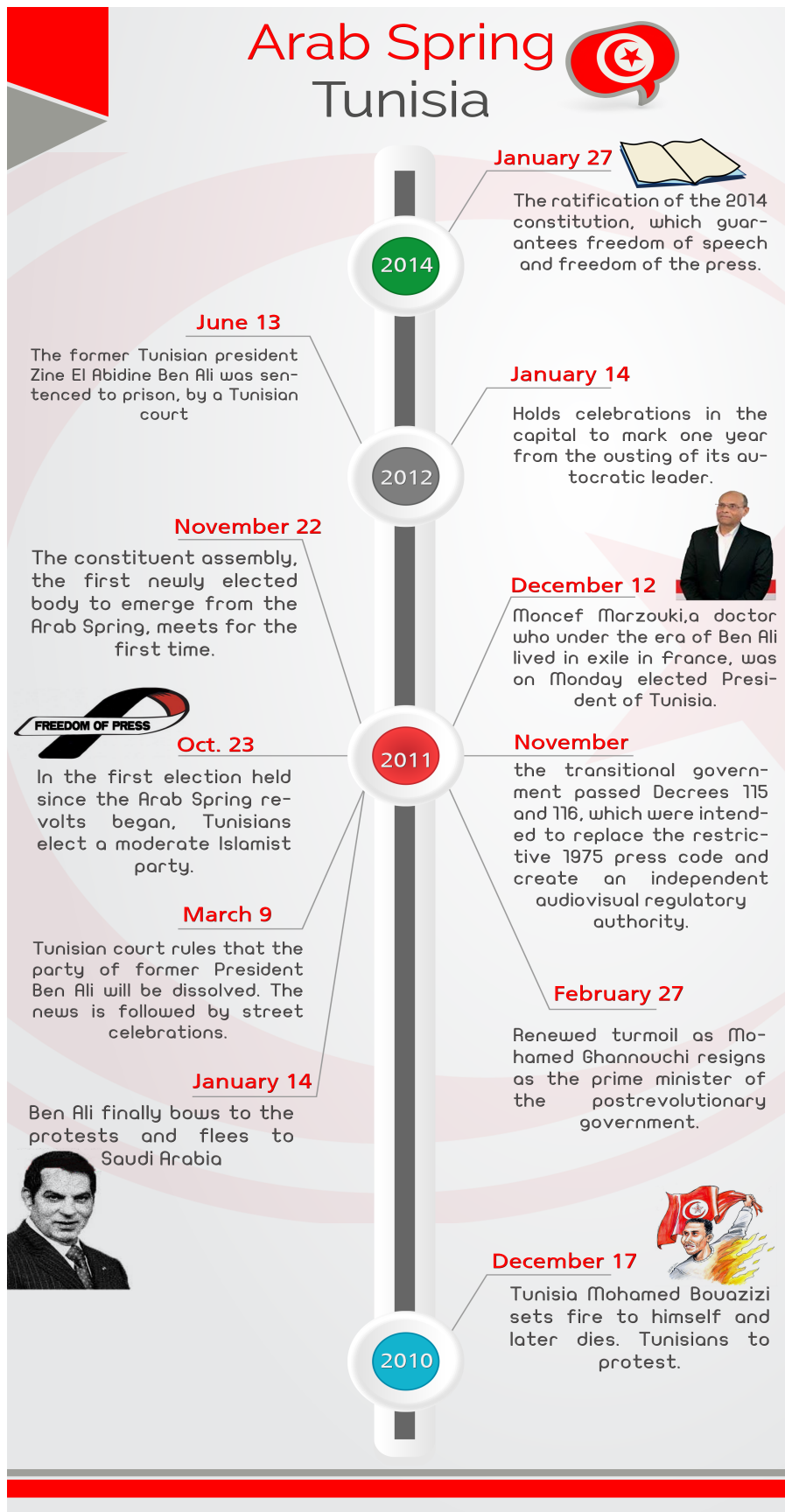
Observing the two interviewees' narratives leads me to assume that Libyan media has become worse than before Arab Spring, as journalists' lives become more endangered. For me, press freedom is less important compared to putting lives of journalists in danger. Therefore, after the Arab Spring uprisings, a new obstacle emerged which is the lack of security for journalists. In my opinion, the absence of government has led to this lack of security.

Chart 2: Libyan press freedom was also one of the biggest declines in 2014, according to Freedom House.



5.4. Journalism and Press Freedom in Tunisia

Infograph3: The most important events in Tunisia (2010- 2014).



5.4.1 Before Arab Spring

In the study of journalism and press freedom, Tunisia is a unique case. The reason is that even though there was media censorship in Tunisia even before and during the revolution, throughout the reign of Ben Ali, there were strong media syndicates that fought for the freedom of the press. As a result, people in Tunisia had faith in the media. However, Zeinelabedin bin Ali's reign is described as a "*despotic regime that prevented expression of opinion*". The number of media outlets was few (Four TV channels and a several newspapers). Two were controlled by the government, while Nesma and Hanbaal were private. However, the privately owned media was not allowed to discuss on political issues. Newspapers had "*a small margin of opposition that doesn't exceed 30 per cent*". (M. Khadraoui, Personal Communication, May 10, 2014).

When prompted to elaborate on the margin of opposition, Mr. Mongy stated that "*they were saying that the president supposed to do this and that, and almost comes as advice, not criticism... you can criticize the ministers and orientations of government, but the ruling family and president were like angels who shall not be approached*" (M. Khadraoui, Personal Communication, May 10, 2014).

Tunisian journalists faced different kinds of harassments; Mr. Mahmoud Dawadi recorded significant personal experiences of harassment and the infringement of his human rights prior to the Arab Spring. He recounted:

I was exposed to many harassments at the professional and personal security levels. They summoned me to the police headquarters, my photos were distributed in police stations and I was threatened more than once with dismissal from my job. Throughout the past years, I have been deprived of my financial and moral rights. The police have pursued me to my house and have monitored me when I was travelling. In addition, my mobile phone was tapped and in the airport I was subjected to aggravated inspections and threats. (M. Dawadi, Personal Communication, April 15, 2014).

Similarly, Mr. Mongy recalled the regime's tight control of journalists and the related human rights abuses, saying "*I feared prison, and was sent to prison. The regime dealt with us brutally and took revenge on people in prisons*".

The Tunisian respondents gave a number of detailed examples regarding the types of control and difficulties which they encountered prior to the Arab Spring. Mr. Dawadi gives evidence of attempts to modify copy to conceal the truth regarding events covered:

One time, I wrote about a teachers' strike and made sure as a journalist that the strike was public and that the proportion declared by the syndicate at 90 per cent was the right number. But the editor exercised pressure on me to reduce it to 40 per cent. I did not do that and I was deprived of my work. In the beginning of my journalistic life, I was delegated to cover a conference for the most prominent opposition party. When I conveyed honestly what had happened in the conference, the editor accepted the article but replaced it with another text. I protested but he dismissed me from the politics department. (M. Dawadi, Personal Communication, April 15, 2014).

Both respondents commented that before the Arab Spring they had been obliged to write internationally or online in order to evade the control and punishment of the regime. For example, Mr. Dawadi wrote opinion articles in the opposition newspapers abroad and released reports online, such as his 2007 expose under the title 'Corruption gnaws the Tunisian media institutions'.

As with other Arabian media, Tunisian media before the uprisings was biased in favour of government, not objective, not compliant to the basic ethics of journalism, and Tunisian journalists were subject to harassment.

5.4.2. During Arab Spring Uprisings

Mr. Dawadi described the Arab Spring “ *the most important popular protests that Tunisia witnessed* ”, although he was at the time “ *prohibited from writing about these events, like all of the Tunisian journalists, unless we write lies in favour of the regime.*” (M. Dawadi, Personal Communication, April 15, 2014).

As a result, Tunisian reporters during this period wrote coverage of the uprisings under pseudonyms and in the international media, where controls were less stringent.

The major newspaper especially those owned by the government and some money-focused private papers were defending Bin Ali's regime. They were even circulating lies overshadowing killings by the government forces of protestors. The media would directly support the government even when it was wrong by propagating lies or would turn a blind eye on such activities and only report on the few positive achievements. Mr.

Mongy says, *“They justified suppression and murder, even when the Bin Ali regime committed massacres on 8 and 9 January 2011 in Al Qasrayn and Tala, Tunisian newspapers wrote in bold: “ Tunisian people in one vote thanks president ”... and described martyrs as terrorists and described the rebellious entities as dark organisations and criminal organisations”*. Mr. Mongy described this reaction of media as *“ media dishonesty ”*. Mr. Mongy adds, on the last few days of the uprisings, although the *“ regime was not able to suppress the flow of information as it did previously, resulting in the weakness of the regime ”*, journalists were *“ imprisoned after they leaked photos of the demonstrations ”* during the period of unrest. According to Mr. Mongy, during the Arab Spring *“citizens came to demonstrate for the sake of the freedom of journalism, which we hadn’t witnessed before”*. (M. Khadraoui, Personal Communication, May 10, 2014).

Mr. Dawadi adds, *“Before one day of his escape, Ibn Ali allowed us to cover the events, shoot, and convey the news but not through the official means which were glorifying the president till the last moment.”* (M. Dawadi, Personal Communication, April 15, 2014). Exactly like what happened in Egypt and Libya, state-owned media houses stayed loyal to the regimes until the last moment.

5.4.3. After Arab Spring Uprisings

After the revolution, a section of the media adapted the function as the voice of the people and reflected the different points of view of a situation. As Mr. Mongy says, *“60 per cent of Tunisians are satisfied with the media in general.”* However, he adds that there is still lack of objectivity in a section of the media as they openly support political parties. He asserts, *“ There are mass media that defend political parties and mass media that try to express the opinions of all people, but there is no ban on expression in Tunisia. Whoever wants to express his opinion can do this.”* (M. Khadraoui, Personal Communication, May 10, 2014).

The flourishing of new media in Tunisia after the revolution is presented as a positive development by Mr. Mongy:

Internet is free and you can access all sites without blocking or filtration and you can write even on walls ... you can open radio, TV channel or organization, and we have about 17,000 organizations now active in Tunisia ... there are over 15 daily newspapers, about ten TV channels and over 20 weekly newspapers, and there are semimonthly newspapers and over 150 electronic newspapers and

thousands of Tunisian websites. (M. Khadraoui, Personal Communication, May 10, 2014).

After Arab Spring, the government also now lacks direct control of the media. It cannot influence the editorial component of the public media corporations. The media practise the internationally agreed on journalism that allows everyone to express their opinion and views. Mr. Mongy says, “...today government is unable to intervene in the editorial policy of public media corporations whether television, radio, news agency or even newspapers. These media corporations practise their works according to the internationally agreed general policy to enable all people to express their opinions.” (M. Khadraoui, Personal Communication, May 10, 2014). He also commented that “ I now talk from Tunisia without fear of prison ” since the Arab Spring effected social and political changes. However, Mr. Mongy still sees some obstacles preventing media from achieving full freedom, in his opinion, the freedom of expression is again curtailed, “today, three years after the revolution, the corrupt managers have returned and they now control the media scene again. The Arab winter has come back”. Nonetheless, he asserts that Tunisia to be “ the best of the Arab Spring countries due to the nature of Tunisian society... there are no ideological disputes or differences... we can’t deny that Tunisia has a good level of freedom” (M. Khadraoui, Personal Communication, May 10, 2014).

Facebook and twitter use is also widespread; Mr. Mongy stated that “objectively, there is media diversity now”. It is less positively received by the other interviewee, Mr. Mahmoud “ due to the electronic media, professionalism was reduced ... the media scene became common land ” (M. Dawadi, Personal Communication, April 15, 2014). In spite of the optimistic view of Mr. Mongy, Mr. Mahamoud has a different view regarding new constraints that emerged after Tunisian revolution:

Impartiality and accuracy needs a free media atmosphere and requires a minimum level of skill and commitment to the professional regulations. If the Arab media practised as cheats and false witnesses during the time of the dictatorships, the reach of political money and corrupt money within the sector after the revolution has had a negative impact on honesty. This is currently the largest problem: before the Arab Spring events, we were facing an enemy with one face, the regime head, but now big challenges have been created. (M. Dawadi, Personal Communication, April 15, 2014).

According to Mr. Mongy, the biggest achievements that have occurred after Arab Spring events in Tunisia were the establishment of a journalistic “ *amendment panel and self-amendment authority* ” with powers to withdraw accreditation but not to imprison journalists which incorporates internationally approved principles guarantees of press freedom, and the enactment of Tunisia laws concerning the media (Decree No 116 and decree No 115. Decree 116 is related to the audiovisual media and creation of supreme authority of audiovisual media, and decree 115 is related to the freedom of press, printing and publication), which are favourable to the growth of a free media (M. Khadraoui, Personal Communication, May 10, 2014).

It seems, therefore, that the media landscape in Tunisia has seen some very significant liberation, including far-reaching institutional reform, but the old power alignments still manage to undermine press objectivity

5.5. Journalism and Press Freedom in Yemen

5.5.1. Before Arab Spring Uprisings

The situation before the Arab Spring is referred to as one in which “ *there was freedom of speech and freedom of expression but there was not freedom of action. The motto of Ali Abdullah Saleh was: say what you want and I’ll do what I want* ” (M. Al-Latefi, Personal Communication, January 20, 2014). He adds, “ *there were opposing newspapers but there were not opposing satellite channels* ”. However, there the attempt by the government to deny the media freedom in Yemen through censorship of the state owned media organizations that were also the majority. However, as Mr. Mohammad states, journalists in Yemen were determined to bypass the restrictions by the use of new media and international satellite channels: “ *Before the February 2011 revolution, Yemen witnessed many demonstrations by the opposition. I transmitted them in articles or news reports. During the revolution, I was transmitting events to the channels Al-Jazeera, Al-Jazeera Mubasher and France 24 and also to the Al-Shorouk Egyptian newspaper* ” (M. Al-Latefi, Personal Communication, January 20, 2014).

Mr. Mohammad considers these violations of press freedoms to be moderate. He comments, “ *Generally, freedom was normal. People were calling satellite channels and talking very freely* ”.

Mohammad says that Yemenis aren’t easily intimidated so that they would still speak out even when there was censorship. However, a section of the journalists were also biased due to some material or political gains. Such included privileges and interests

like money and promotion to high positions. Also allegiance to a particular party could lead to bias. Mr. Mohammad says,

The political environment in Yemen includes some privileges and interests. This matter makes journalists depend on the government because of money, hard situations, or ideological intolerance. For example, a journalist who belongs to a specific party will not say the truth which harms his party but he will flatter his party and sometimes defend it. Interests and salaries make some people unable to convey the truth but not because of fear. (M. Al-Latefi, Personal Communication, January 20, 2014).

Regarding journalists' safety, Mohammad did also comment that his role and his activity prior to the revolution exposed him to “ *many harassments to professional and personal security* ” and that he was “ *deprived of my financial and civil rights* ” in the period before the Arab Spring, in an attempt to control his expressions and curtail his freedom of speech. He states that those defied the government would also be imprisoned or involved in some situations that were indirect victimization. For instance, in some rare cases they would be attacked or threatened through the phone. An example includes Abdul-Karim Al-Khiwani when he opened a file of rule bequeathing. Journalists were also threatened and attacked even though the attackers could not be traced back to the government.

For Mohammad, “ *the main factor in the deterioration of press freedoms in Yemen was the political corruption, not a lack of personal freedom. This corruption led to administrative corruption; the recruitment of editors was fulfilled from political not professional motives* ” not fear. He continues: “ *In our lifetimes, we have not been afraid. Journalists in Yemen do not fear censorship or fear being punished... The control of interest and salaries make some people unwilling to convey the truth but this is not because of fear. There is no fear in the real sense.*” (M. Al-Latefi, Personal Communication, January 20, 2014).

5.5.2. During Arab Spring Uprisings

A key change that Mr. Mohammad mentioned in connection with the Arab Spring period is the rising role of satellite channels. The journalist from Yemen also mentioned the effect of new media including “ *simple tools as camera, Facebook, Twitter and social media which offered a new outlet for people to express their opinions and share*

information”. (M. Al-Latefi, *Personal Communication*, January 20, 2014). He also considers improvements to press freedom were made during this time.

I can suggest that official Yemeni media didn’t play a major role during the uprisings, this can be discerned through the whole conversation with Mr. Mohammad where he didn’t mention any role played by the official media. Instead he did mention that he and other journalists transmitted events via international channels, even though he mentioned that Yemeni journalists do not fear being punished.

5.5.3. After Arab Spring Uprisings

Even though there were privately owned media organizations after Arab Spring events, they were not fully independent. They were either directly or indirectly influenced by the government or other ideologies such as those of the owners. As reported by Mr. Mohammad:

*In Yemen, there are non-governmental associations but some of them are related directly to the government and other related indirectly to it. There are also non-governmental associations which affiliate to opposing political parties. It is very rare to find an administratively independent association and even if it is administratively independent, it is not ideologically independent; it is not affiliated to specific party but has its own political opinion. (M. Al-Latefi, *Personal Communication*, January 20, 2014).*

when I asked Mr. Mohammad to compare the current situation with the one before the uprisings, he replied:

*After revolution, these same institutions which were working previously for the favour of the government are still working. Now, they practice consensual media for the favour of the interoperability government as the official associations do not violate the consensual policy. As for criticizing government, this differs from one institution to another; for example some official institutions criticize the ministers and political forces and the citizen can send his complaint to them and they publish it. Also, he can write his opinion against a specific party in the government but for the President, there is no criticism but also there is no platitute in praising him like what happens in some other Arab countries. So there is no platitute in praising the president or exaggeration in criticizing or rejecting him. (M. Al-Latefi, *Personal Communication*, January 20, 2014).*

Mr. Mohammad displayed an attitude and mode of expression which was unusually optimistic, much more so than that averagely displayed by those of other nationalities who were interviewed. For instance, he stated that:

With the passage of time, free journalists will be the leaders of the media institutions. These are the journalists who believe in the importance of serving the public interest, in professionalism and credibility and they will create a free press in the future...Now the journalist has the choice to say yes or no. This was not available in the past. The Arab Spring has developed the options of the journalist: either to be victorious in his professionalism or to be dependent on his personal interests. (M. Al-Latefi, Personal Communication, January 20, 2014).

In this way, his narrative displays a hopeful attitude towards the future of press and journalistic freedoms in Yemen and across the Middle East region, and is expressive of a sense of natural progression and improvement, driven by the uprisings of the Arab Spring and subsequent social and political changes. However, he does not consider that this change can or will happen spontaneously, but rather than it is the responsibility of the Arab press to “*be serious in freeing ourselves from our political ideological pasts in order to provide impartial and independent commentary*” (M. Al-Latefi, Personal Communication, January 20, 2014).

Mr. Mohammad summarizes the positive impact of Arab Spring as following:

- 1- The emergence of citizen journalism.
- 2- Media is interested now in citizen’s opinion and his political requirements, and allowing citizen to be partner in power.
- 3- Media, newspapers, and journalists are keen relatively to satisfy citizen.

Thus, Arab Spring eliminating media bias in favour of government that existed before Arab Spring. On the other hand, Mr. Mohammad sees some of the previous obstacles still exist even after the revolution. According to him, these obstacles are the absence of media institutions which are financially independent and also independent from political restrictions, the absence of a democratic system committed to the democracy principles according to the international standards, the absence of transparency and the fourth one is the absence of accountability culture among journalists or media figures.

When I asked him about how Arab Spring had changed his way of writing and conveying events, Mr. Mohammad said “ *Arab spring events deepened in me the*

importance of being open whether at conveying my opinion or others' opinion. As a journalist and media figure, this was deepened more after the events. The events did not change only my way of thinking but also the way of thinking of many people who believed in freedom before and after the revolution. ” (M. Al-Latefi, Personal Communication, January 20, 2014).

Like Libya, the impact of Arab Spring on Yemeni media needs more time to be measured, as the government is not established yet. So it is difficult to evaluate government's commitment towards respecting press freedom. The difference between the situation in Yemen and the situation in Libya is that, in general, Yemeni journalists are not targeted or endangered.

In addition to what has been mentioned above in this chapter, three significant trends have emerged from the analysis of the data that can be summarised as following:

Trend 1: Transitional periods , case study Egypt, self-censorship

It can be observed that across the scope of the data, the state of journalism in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Libya, present different reactions to Arab Spring with regards to the treatment of journalism and freedom of the press. Two distinct trends emerge when observing the manner in which the Arab Spring shaped or influenced the condition of journalism in Middle Eastern nations. The first suggests that the greater the degree of political involvement in homogenising the content dealt with by the press, the greater the initial impact of the Arab Spring with regards to increasing freedom and diversity of the press. This observation is particularly relevant to Egypt, that has transitioned through three degrees of press freedom and commitment of successive governments. Looking at the impacts of drastic transitions in the media climate in a nation over a considerably short span of time, we are able to observe how these shifts are somewhat problematic to preserving the function of press as a trusted social institution. The rapid transition and contrast regarding the state of press freedom before and after Arab Spring in Egypt, suggests that a sustained and objective regulatory body is necessary to preserve the reputation of press operating to serve citizens within a nation.

In Egypt, after a time of great constraint, the removal of Mubarak saw the press enjoying perhaps the most significant degree of freedom from the nations analysed in this study. The radical nature of the shift that occurred in Egypt immediately following the Arab Spring, saw a decentralised control of the press that allowed for deregulated reporting and a loss of legitimacy and objectivity. The swing from heavy regulation to significant deregulation, during what would be a transitional period in Egyptian media, once again resulted in press not serving the genuine needs of citizens. The loss of objective and legitimate reporting degraded Egyptian press as a social institution. As a reactionary move, two months later, restrictions were imposed on the media by the military who ruled the country during the transitional period. After the election of President Morsi, the media enjoyed a high level of freedom but with political polarization. The media divided into two streams; one supporting the democratically elected government, and the other against the government. Both of these streams enjoyed freedom. Diversification was present within this period and direct interference

from government bodies during the Morsi era appeared rare. After 30 June 2013 when the military ousted Morsi, restrictions against the media institutions, journalist opposition, and activism increased. Once again, the Egyptian press came under scrutiny and control. Examples of these restrictions are the closure of channels that opposed the coup, the arrest and imprisonment of activists and political opponents. However, three Egyptian interviewees justified this reaction from government by claiming that it was necessary to maintain security and move forward to stabilising the country.

International human rights organisations and other organisations such as Freedom House support this claim in regards to the fluctuations of press freedom in Egypt. See Freedom House reports from 2012 to 2015, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reports and releases for 2015. Also the Yemeni journalist commented on press freedom in Egypt, summarizing that the restrictive state of the press established during the Mubarak era, improved during Morsi rule, and then become worse immediately after the ousting of Morsi. The commentary suggesting this claim was from a Yemeni journalist, who defines himself as a 'liberal journalist'. His comment is thus treated as an independent comment coming from outside Egypt, which means this data has not been considered as derived from a primary participant for consideration of data towards commentary on the state of Egyptian media.

In Egypt, It is suggestive that, while respondents spoke in general terms about the political and organizational control of the press and of individual expression, they were unanimously reluctant and careful to avoid giving current or specific examples of abuses (even when encouraged by the interviewer to evidence their assertions). Rather than considering this a lack of evidence, in aggregate, this reluctance supports the argument that journalists do not yet feel free and able to speak openly about political realities, -not least those within their own profession. It appeared that there was some correlation between the type of job held by respondents and the freedom with which they expressed themselves, Those working for state run organisations in Egypt (Ms.Amal, Ms. Hala and Mr. Hesham) commented in general ways about the current, post-revolution presence and effects of state control and political influence but they did not comment directly on the nature of this within their own organisation at the current time. What can also be observed here is that journalists in Middle Eastern nations who participated in this study, feel somewhat that self-regulation is a safe practice towards preserving their ability to report and recount critical events. For example one journalist used highly creative metaphors which can be considered a manner of communication

that avoids direct criticisms of the state, in order to pre-empt negative consequences. The comparison of the “lion and the cat” for example, which refers to comparing the New Zealand media system with the systems common in Arab countries, leaves it open to the listener to determine exactly what aspects of the two ‘animals’ are being referred to. The fact that the data contains such an analogy is at the same time comical and also very serious if we read into its sub-text. The participant makes self-regulation appear both very skilful and very critical, stating as insulting point about the Arab state systems without providing specific detail or literal references. Such a strategy may well be an example of the tactics used by journalists in their efforts to exert criticism of the state systems without committing any act clearly identifiable as treason or other kinds of disloyalty.

In the case of Egyptian respondents, all agreed that the Arab Spring has impacted on freedom of expression positively, helped in opening new horizons for journalists and making them and ordinary citizens no longer fear. Four of six interviewees from Egypt agreed on that Arab Spring affected their way of writing positively. In fact, all Egyptian interviewees agreed on that there are no explicit social, religious obstacles that hinder them or press to follow the international journalism ethics, however, during the data collection process, the avoidance of certain questions and the giving of examples or evidence to support their answers, suggests otherwise. Self-regulation appears much like self-censorship. There is a dissonance between what is attested (that freedoms have increased after the Arab Spring) and what is practised (freedom of speech participants are willing to engage in). Perhaps this a practice left over from the fear and constraints of a heavily media regulated Egypt? Perhaps this approach is a reaction to the sense of instability cause by a quick transitional change over the period surrounding the Arab Spring? Overall, this research surmises that a trend observable in the data suggests a common lack of specific criticism as the result of an ongoing curtailment of freedom of speech, and to a negative attitude towards whistle-blowing and to challenging administrative or organizational power structures in Middle Eastern nations. This structural control and the suppression of individual examples of ongoing abuses is also further supported by current literature and commentary in the field (Freedom House, 2010, 2014; Puddington, 2012; House, 2013).

Table 2: Comparison of four state periods in Egypt (1952 – 2013).

	<i>Before (1952-2011)</i>	<i>During (25th Jan 2011 to 14th Feb 2011)</i>	<i>The Transition Period (14th of Feb 2011 to 30th of Jun 2013)</i>	<i>After (30th of Jun 2013-to-date)</i>
<i>Ownership</i>	<i>-both government and non-governmental including the opposition</i>	<i>-both government and non-governmental including the opposition</i>	<i>-Both government and private</i>	<i>-both government and non-governmental including the opposition</i>
<i>Finances</i>	<i>- government and private financing</i>	<i>- government and private financing</i>	<i>-both government and private</i>	<i>- government and private financing</i>
<i>Control</i>	<i>-govt. controlled main stream media -new media was less controlled</i>	<i>-strict control</i>	<i>-there was short-lived freedom (two months) -strict control by the military – indirect control during the Morsi regime (through appointments) -privately owned firms enjoyed press freedom</i>	<i>-strict control</i>
<i>Content</i>	<i>-some criticism were possible -biases to the govt.</i>	<i>-bias to the govt. -bias to other relevant parties (funders)</i>	<i>-post-Mubarak content was not biased -highly censored by the military -during Morsi's era there was free content with some political polarization depending on the affiliation of media institution.</i>	<i>-bias to the govt. -bias to other relevant parties (funders)</i>
<i>Security</i>	<i>-journalists were threatened with imprisonment</i>	<i>-the threat got worse. Whole media houses were rounded up.</i>	<i>-there were few threats -there were a few lawsuits</i>	<i>-the threats increased</i>

Trend Two: Tunisia, why neutrality and pluralism works for freedom of speech

The second observable trend in the overall scope of data can be exemplified when analysing Tunisia and the manner in which press freedom has operated before, during and after the Arab Spring. Tunisia, unlike Egypt, managed transitional phases in freedom of press, to preserve the value of national journalistic media. After analysing two interviews with the two journalists, we are able to gain the general impression that Tunisia also represents a significant example of how press freedom and the freedom of expression, had improved after citizen uprisings. The evidence suggests that no new constraints have visibly emerged after the revolution. What is notable here is that prior to the uprising, constraints regarding press freedom frequently operated on the grounds of religious and legal censorship being at odds with freedom of expression. Tunisian journalists who faced defamation charges in the recent years prior to the Arab Spring, often violated censorship codes and reporting on developments in the political arena. These censorship codes were enforced by the Ben Ali government, who operated all dominant media outlets within Tunisia, prior to 2011. After the uprising an almost free media environment emerged and as the interview findings indicate, there was significantly less interference by the Tunisian government. Defamation was formally decriminalized in 2011.

The success of Tunisia's media freedom can be attributed to a strong press syndicate that was established after the revolution, and to the new media law established during parliamentary transition. Unlike Egypt, Tunisia managed the transition from high levels of governmental censorship and involvement, to protecting freedom of the press with legislation and decree, in a fairly seamless manner. Media in Tunisia moved from being heavily biased, to being far more neutral, and pluralism increased significantly after the Arab Spring. Online participation in media discourse was adamant in supporting pluralism within Tunisian press. The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) welcomed Tunisia among 19 other nations, in 2012. This collective sought to prevent state intervention and protect freedom of press in online forums. This coincided with an increase in privately owned media outlets in late 2011, following the era of the Ben Ali government. What we observe within the data is the diversification of media enabled, by decriminalizing defamation and relaxing heavy constraints on censorship in the press. Both the new and transitional governments that formed after the uprising,

respected press freedom and the freedom of expression, due to the new constitution that was established after the Tunisian revolution.

New constitutions protecting freedom of expression and enabling the diversification of media outlets in Tunisia, include clear and strong decrees. These decrees aim to regulate freedom of expression, providing clear guidelines and consistency to outlining the rights and responsibilities of journalists. Decree 115 stipulates the right to access statistical data and various forms of information, and be protected from physical threats or detainment without sufficient grounds. Decree 116 establishes a regulatory body to which all media is subject to meeting certain requirements. Again, both decrees establish a set of guidelines that all media outlets are subject to, supporting pluralism and media diversification within Tunisia, enabling privately owned media outlets to be more independent and self-regulating – rather than being scrutinized by one central government. The reality of these freedoms are further detailed by the attestations of Tunisian journalist Mr. Mongy, during the section of the interview that reviewed the state of Tunisian press after the revolution. He states that although some managers of media outlets still have a disproportionate amount of control, Tunisia is still the best of the Arab Spring countries, due to the nature of Tunisian society operating as a collective whole. We may regard the homogenous legislation such as decree 115 and 116, as a regulating and unifying force in supporting this sense of collectively. Human rights organization, Freedom House, and other press related institutions welcomed the great advance in Tunisia regarding press freedom, after the passing of these decrees. Somewhat in opposition to this, the data collected represents journalist Mr M Dawadi discussing the lingering threat of political money and power as still prevailing somewhere in the scope of media. Mr Dawadi presents a relevant point here, that despite the decrees and shift in government, while the visibility of oppressive government censorship may have been decreased, its presence still exists within the financial sector of Tunisian media. He states *“This is currently the largest problem: before the Arab Spring events we were facing an enemy with one face, the regime head, but now big challenges have been created”*. Perhaps this emerges as the new problematic focus after creating decrees to protect the authenticity of journalistic practice within Tunisia? As Mr Dawadi asserts, power structures do not merely dissolve in light of electing new governments, but rather, they are simply less visible to citizens as active participants in press control. This is not to say that they do not have a financial stake in controlling or influencing media outlets, but rather that their reign is

less visible and less explicit. This area perhaps yields further research opportunities, to assess freedom of press in Tunisia with a focus on this theme in particular.

Table 3: Arab Spring events and the media in Tunisia (before 2011 until 2013).

	<i>Before</i>	<i>During</i>	<i>After</i>
<i>Ownership</i>	-state -private	-state -private	-state -private
<i>Finances</i>	-government -private (only two media houses)	-government -private	-government -private
<i>Control</i>	-total control	-partial control	-partial control
<i>Content</i>	-government propaganda	-government propaganda	-free content
<i>Security</i>	-there were imprisonments -firing of media people	-there were imprisonments	-no government interference

Trend three: Yemen and Libya: the absence of government and journalists safety

The data presented in the cases of Yemen and Libya, expresses a more focused look at the actions and attitudes of journalists themselves. What we are able to observe in the scope of this data, is that Yemenis and Libyan journalists had significantly less interference from government authorities, such as in the case of Egypt and Tunisia, prior to the Arab Spring. Yemen and Libya share many of the same outcomes after the Arab Spring, and also share many of the same political situations such as absence of government. The following analysis of findings highlights the impact of the Arab Spring on Yemen and Libya, treating them as similar movements, with the only distinct difference being that targeting journalists is more common occurrence in Libya than in Yemen. This fact is supported by reports issued by international organizations such as Freedom House, reporters without borders and Human Rights Watch.

In an interview with Yemeni journalist Mr Mohammed, he speaks of how journalists themselves have reacted to increased freedoms within Yemen. He states that Yemeni media has experienced less constrictions than that in Egypt or Tunisia, but this is largely due to the manner in which journalists themselves approach controversy. He suggests that the prevailing attitude among Yemenis journalists is towards the duty of their profession – regardless of the opposition they face. Mr Mohammed does recognize that bribery and corruption are present within media institutions in Yemen, but credits this to

personal choices on behalf of journalists themselves, stating “*The Arab Spring has developed the options of the journalist: either to be victorious in his professionalism or to be dependent on his personal interests.*” (M. Al-Latefi, *Personal Communication*, January 20, 2014). Yemenis freedom of press thus may not face the same challenges as presented in Egyptian and Tunisian media landscapes, but it does highlight challenges faced by those occupying the ground level of the profession. What is most relevant about what Mr Mohammed suggest here, is that there are many layers to attaining freedom of press, supported by objective and pluralist media outlets. In consideration of challenges faced by Egypt and Tunisia, Yemen delves further into the practice of journalism itself, to analyse another barrier to constructing the press as a social institution that serves the good of a nations citizens. An analysis of data from Yemenis journalists, reveal yet another layer that compromises freedom of the press. This suggests that after the Arab Spring, although Yemenis journalists enjoy a fair degree of freedom of speech, financial influences in the form of bribery and affiliations to political organisations still presents a challenge to the ethics of journalism in Yemen.

The data analysed in the previous chapter expresses that both Yemen and Libya have a low level of literacy within their populations. This presents a challenge for print media, with regards to reporting on key social issues concerning citizens. This phenomenon is particularly present within Libya. Throughout the developments of the Arab Spring, journalism has had minimal influence on the situation in the country due to the reputation media outlet hold, as being excessively controlled by the government. As a result, many Libyans lost trust in journalism as a crucial segment of their society. Analysing Libya offers yet another dimension in reviewing the findings of the data in the previous chapter. Where Egypt and Tunisia are represented at as problematic at a government level and Yemen faces a degree of corruption due to financial control, data collected on Libya acknowledges the reception of media by citizens as a crucial element which inhibits the impact of freedom of press.

The case of Libya presents another important dimension in the sphere of analysing transitions through and beyond the events of the Arab Spring. An analysis of the state of Libyan media suggests that the impressions formed by the citizen collective, prior to the Arab Spring, are still somewhat enduring. This is exemplified by the statement made by Libyan journalist Ms Ali, stating that “*Journalism in the other countries means much, but in Libya it doesn’t represent anything*” (H. Ali, *Personal Communication*, June 25, 2014). As noted by Ms. Ali, Libya is also a very conservative nation, aware of the

influences of western media upon how its media operates, and resistant to any influence that may oppose its culture. Libya itself fights for stability in government after the Arab Spring, and the conflict within the nation at present, may have much to do with the negative reception of press media.

At present, the enduring conflict in Libya leads many journalists to self-censor for fear of reprisal. Both of the Libyan respondents' in this study expressed a great sense of discouragement, with the journalistic profession, public reception, and progress towards the opportunities and hopes perceived as flowing from the Arab Spring uprisings. Within the interview data gathered regarding Libya, the overall tone suggests that there is uncertainty towards the general trend that Libya is indeed progressing towards a state of increased press freedom and increased citizen involvement in national media. All participants expressed this uncertainty, as if they doubt that the impacts of the Arab Spring will sustain a lasting and positive movement toward increased press freedom. Similarities between Libya and Yemen regarding the relationship between press and the public, suggest that a lack of stable government in both of these nations destabilises any press freedom gained from the movement. It seems that the Libyan and Yemeni journalists and public still do not treat further freedom of press as something which is secure or enduring.

The two tables below summarize the media situation in Yemen and Libya before, during, and after Arab Spring events:

Table 4: Arab Spring events and the media in Yemen (before 2011 until 2013)

	<i>Before</i>	<i>During</i>	<i>After</i>
<i>Ownership</i>	<i>-government -private(opposition parties)</i>	<i>-government -private(opposition parties)</i>	<i>-government -private (opposition parties)</i>
<i>Finances</i>	<i>-government -private</i>	<i>-government -private</i>	<i>-government -private</i>
<i>Control</i>	<i>-there was minimal control by the government</i>	<i>-minimal government control</i>	<i>-minimal government control</i>
<i>Content</i>	<i>-free</i>	<i>-free</i>	<i>-free</i>
<i>Security</i>	<i>-minimal cases of harassment and imprisonment</i>	<i>--minimal cases of harassment and imprisonment</i>	<i>-no harassment or imprisonment</i>

Table 5: Arab Spring events and the media in Libya (before 2011 until 2013)

	<i>Before</i>	<i>During</i>	<i>After</i>
<i>Ownership</i>	<i>-government</i>	<i>-government</i>	<i>-government/ private ownership</i>
<i>Finances</i>	<i>-government only</i>	<i>-government only</i>	<i>-governmental and private ownership</i>
<i>Control</i>	<i>-total government control</i>	<i>-total government control</i>	<i>-partial government control</i>
<i>Content</i>	<i>-regional news -government propaganda</i>	<i>-regional news -government propaganda</i>	<i>-free content on new media -mainstream media still air government propaganda</i>
<i>Security</i>	<i>-journalists are harassed</i>	<i>-harassment, imprisonment and assassinations</i>	<i>-harassment, imprisonment and assassinations</i>

The overall findings across the four nations of Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Libya suggest that progressions towards further press freedom during and following the Arab Spring, have developed differently in different nations. What emerges is a timeline that shows the direct relationship between constraints over freedom of press, demonstrations to overturn governmental and ruling class power structures, and the actions that have followed these demonstrations, in order to protect and sustain the freedom of speech, authenticity, and objectivity of the press as a social institution. It is clear that the Arab Spring altered the social climate of all of these nations in some way or another, however the positive impact this may have had on press freedom is inconsistent, when comparing all four nations. In the next chapter I will discuss how visible change, such as in the case of Tunisia, is best supported by changes to legal regulation, and the decentralisation of media ownership. I will discuss how this is a key factor when striving to create lasting and sustainable changes to the media landscape, in a time of social transition or in the presence of an unstable government. I will also touch on the value of working with global organisations to ensure the protection of journalists, and preserve the value of journalism as a profession that serves public interest.

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1. Introduction

The following chapter aims to discuss key observations, derived from findings analysed within the previous chapter. Where the previous chapter has explored the varied and fragmented developments to freedom of press within Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Libya, this chapter addresses the impact the Arab Spring has had on media outlets, the profession of journalism, and how press media is received by Middle Eastern citizens as a national institution. Overall, this chapter seeks to gauge the impact the Arab Spring has had on reinforcing truth, objectivity and ethical reporting in journalism, unifying key issues that have arisen from data presented in the previous chapter. The data, consisting of narratives and attestations, show that considerable challenges still remain regarding the ways in which journalism is able to operate in Middle Eastern nations since the end of the uprisings.

It can be suggested that evidence from some of the participants' comments attribute this to two factors: the first one is political and financial, referred to as 'the deep state', which can be defined according to Grant Barrett as "a hard-to-perceive level of government or super-control that exists regardless of elections and that may thwart popular movements or radical change. Some have said that Egypt is being manipulated by its deep state" (2013). This idea of a less-visible presence of government authority dominating freedom of the press, is something present within almost all the interviews conducted in this study. The sense of journalists feeling the need to self-censor, carefully and tactfully phrase their criticisms of government authority figures, and the presiding feeling of threat that was presented within the interview data leads us to question the ability for social movements such as the Arab Spring to bring sustainable change to Middle Eastern nations. As previous chapters have outlined, the ideology of press as a national institution, suggests that it should serve as an informative and discursive link between citizen collectives and events occurring within a nation. Although the Arab Spring movement may have shifted particular governing representatives out of their visible roles within the political sphere, what has remained enduring is the sense that political powers and the profession of journalism are consistently at odds with one another. Journalists in this study seem to be aware that this notion of 'the deep state', always seems to preside over the content and manner in

which they are able to present information through the press, even after the Arab Spring. Improvements to press freedom, although notable in particular nations such as Tunisia, still leaves us with an unusual paradigm that represents the state journalism constantly in opposition to the will of the state, even in the wake of the revolutions. It seems that as long as the presence of the deep state holds the ethical ideologies of journalism to ransom, there will always be a gulf between political actions and a well-informed citizen collective, as an audience of the press.

The second factor, when building on this idea of the gulf that exists between political actions and a well-informed citizen collective, is the absent of active and real civil institutions that are able to fill the political vacuum. Egyptian, Libyan, and Yemeni societies have suffered from the underdeveloped civic societies. As discussed in the previous chapter, widespread illiteracy and lack of civil participation are causations of this. Interview data suggests that authoritarian governments in these countries worked intentionally to hinder such institutions to keep their people away from policy. When comparing these three countries with Tunisia, we find that the civil institutions were strong in Tunisia, even during the time of the old authoritarian rule. Furthermore, with regards to state institutions in Tunisia, such as military and interior ministries, they were also not fully in support of the ruling party. The discussion featured below will specifically address all research questions featured in this study, with these factors in mind.

6.2. Discussing findings related to the research first question

Has the Arab Spring reinforced truth, objectivity, and ethical reporting in the Middle East?

The narratives featured in this study show that considerable challenged for journalists remain, or have arisen, since the end of the uprisings. Rather than a definitive conclusion about social climates and news media ethics, my research has aimed to extend the depth of scope and framework, for further research on the impact of significant social movements, on the Middle Eastern journalism practices. What has arisen from the findings of this research is that the Arab Spring uprising requires sustained support by civil institutions to defend and preserve diversity among media outlets, and protect the rights of all journalists, and also to use regulations to ensure the quality of all press media.

The steps taken to ensure the objective and authentic quality of press media in the wake of a restricting of legal, financial and political holdings of power following a social uprising, is presented as the greatest factor in improving the condition of journalism within a nation. This has been discussed in detail with regards to Tunisia, as the data suggests that Arab Spring was regarded as only the start of the revolution, something that needed to be supported and protected in order to reap the long-term benefits of change for both journalists and citizens.

6.3. Discussing findings related to the research second question

In what ways has the Arab Spring changed reporting styles and tendencies among Arab journalists who report on political and social events in the Middle East?

It is suggestive that, while respondents spoke in general terms about the political and organisational control of the press and of individual expression, they were unanimously reluctant and careful to avoid giving current or specific examples of abuses, even when encouraged by the interviewer to evidence their assertions. In consideration of the careful treatment of such content, this reluctance supports the argument that journalists do not yet feel free and able to speak openly about political realities. We may consider then that although the Arab Spring has opened up discourses about the mechanism of journalism for informing a citizen collective, however this is still an early phase in the movement towards authentic press freedom. Additionally, it is notable that across the national divides, respondents consider common themes to be political corruption and influence, and the necessity of journalistic professionals to withstand the pressure of this influence and bribery. All of the respondents in a general sense expressed admiration for the international standards of journalistic professionalism and press freedom. However, the level to which they considered this to be appropriate (or were willing to advocate it), differed fairly widely. What can be said about the changes in reporting styles and tendencies among Arab journalists who report on political and social events in the Middle East, is that the Arab Spring has broadened their horizons as far as the expectations, possibilities and understandings of what freedom of press is. There is a suggestion that the Arab Spring takes people to a new place where their latent ability comes to the fore, and where new things will happen because of the opening up of a new space for media activities. Again, many journalists in this study recognise the Arab Spring as a stepping stone for further developments to come in the near future.

6.4. Discussing findings related to the research third question

To what extent is freedom of the press allowed and supported by Arab governments which came to power after the Arab Spring?

Among the four nations, a restructuring of political power has resulted in varied responses to press freedom following the Arab Spring. Tunisia, with greater civil institutions and participation, sought to instil decrees to protect the legal rights of journalists and independent media outlets. In Egypt, the unregulated media environment during a transitional government, decreased the authenticity and reliability of the press. The data in this study expresses fragmented and inconsistent responses to preserving the role of media after the Arab Spring. This may be due to the concept of ‘the deep state’ where political representatives receive less visibility after the revolutions, but their influence can still be felt within the political climate.

I believe that Arab Spring positively impacted the press freedom and the freedom of expression, but this is not attributed to deliberate support from governments which came to power after the Arab Spring. Rather, this sense of development or open discourse, is assured by journalists and civil institutions supported further by international organisations such as Freedom House. As an observer of MENA political and social situations across the regions of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen, it can be observed that Arabian governments have become more tolerant regarding freedom of expression. Moreover, I argue that Arab Spring and the advance in communication technology forced Arabian governments to reach to a point where they realised that dialogue is more useful than exclusion and harassment of citizens. Thus, new governments following the uprisings have launched more open dialogues with their citizens through allowing more freedom of press. Overall however, it seems that the political sphere in Arab nations is still at odds with the degree of open communication it is willing to support.

6.5. Discussing findings related to the research fourth question

Have new obstacles or constraints emerged as result of Arab Spring events?

Identifying the new obstacles or constraints that have emerged as a result of the Arab Spring was a complex question for all participants within this study. Many respondents

were not clear about the level of government or regulatory involvement needed within journalism to ensure more objective and non-bias reporting. One respondent identified that prior to the Arab Spring, the two opposing forces could be identified as journalists and ethical practices within the profession versus government mechanisms of information control. What now emerges as problematic when a visible government control is removed, is power operating over media and journalism without an easily identifiable source. Again here, we refer to the idea of 'the deep state' or conservative organisations of power operating within a nation, to still restrain freedom of speech. Respondents in the study seemed to express an enduring understanding that a threat still existed to the profession of journalism concerning authoritarian power, however they were vague in their ability to identify and pinpoint the source of this influence. Perhaps ambiguity concerning centralisations of power, can then be identified as an obstacle to emerge from the Arab Spring.

What is also problematic is the lack of established governments at this point in time, in nations of Libya and Yemen when examining the impact of Arab Spring on press freedom. This may be much clearer to gauge what new obstacles or threats could have emerged from the revolutions, after the formation of a stable government in both of these nations. At present, we are analyzing them while they experience a state of political transition. Looking at Egypt and Tunisia however, from a personal perspective, I think that after decades of governmental control, most of Arab journalists who worked in countries that witnessed the events of Arab Spring have adapted to bias towards governments. Even after the removal of the old regimes, it was not easy for them to move to neutrality as it difficult to change this rooted behaviour. Whatever the near future holds for social movements within these nations, feelings among journalists at present is that the tension between current government and restrictions towards freedom of speech and reporting is a constant factor within the profession. Examining new obstacles to ethical reporting in journalism after the Arab Spring, rather serves to highlight the enduring problem of this tension between journalism ethics and government control over the freedom of the press. Instead of new obstacles, we seem to address the same problematic structures from a different lens: a lens that identifies the complexity of the problem as consisting of low civic participation, the influence of financial power and the failure of government structures to work alongside the civilian population it is supposed to serve.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study seek to not only examine the state of journalism within a shifting social and political climate that is the Middle East, but to also question how we measure social change with regards to freedom of expression and the presence of democracy. Examining the treatment of journalism prior to the Arab uprisings suggested the urgent need for restructuring systems of power that governed the lives of citizens living in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen. Prior to the uprisings, restrictions on journalism deliberately limited communication between state governance and the civilian population. The events of the Arab Spring promised revolution, wherein civil participation would stand for something; where democracy could be seen within social structures. Given the crucial role the profession of journalism holds, an analysis of journalism as a civil institution that came under much scrutiny by the pre-Arab Spring government power structures, can serve as a measure of success for the revolution itself. It can be said that in all four nations encompassed within this study, the presence of positive social change can be gauged as being expressed in civil institutions.

The implications of this study suggest that looking at civil institutions such as media outlets and journalism, and observing the shift caused by the Arab Spring, we are able to reach a deeper understanding of the impacts of social and political revolutions. Furthermore, we are able to observe how these shifts are expressed, how they are supported and sustained, and how freedom of communication within a nation, can be indicative of the autonomy possessed by its citizen collective. By examining the time spans before, during and after the Arab Spring, we are able to gain richer insight into the processes involved with social revolution, as it is expressed through a national institution. What we find is that journalism and media outlets struggle to express marked improvement in the wake of revolutions, without the proper support structures and legislative change. Perhaps then, this is relevant to all social institutions operating within nations experiencing significant social change or political restructuring? We may begin to think of demonstrations and revolution as merely the catalyst for lasting and genuine change, and rather, begin to think of the processes that follow as what is really responsible for embedding positive shifts that serve a citizen collective. This research will directly address the need to prioritise freedom of speech and freedom of the press,

as an ongoing representation of democracy operating within the Middle East. It will also suggest that analysing the state of social institutions following a social or political revolution, is an effective way of analysing what remains problematic within a nation.

7.2 Contribution of the research

Research presented in this analysis reveals the relationship between the social revolution of the Arab Spring and differing and fragmented ways in which it has caused regional shifts towards increased media freedom across the Arab world. Analysing the manner and degree to which journalists perceive media freedom as having been gained in the regions of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen, provides a richer understanding of the impact of the Arab Spring. Here, data identifies elements that support the sustained success of social revolution, as expressed in the social institution of the press. This research serves as a snapshot of the current state of press freedom, identifying the factors that support or disrupt press freedom, following social revolution. This research also serves in the hopes of further development, regarding research towards developing frameworks for sustaining and legislating practices and processes that support and protect press freedom.

Analysing the impacts of the Arab Spring on press freedom, also serves to make visible issues of the Arab world to a global audience. Whereas the job of journalism itself is to make citizens increasingly aware of local and global topical events, likewise, research into the treatment of journalism serves to critically analyse the authenticity and reliability of press as an institution and serves a social function. Drawing attention and visibility to critical inconsistencies in press freedom across the Arab world further seeks to support internal national structures driven by citizen collectives, that support and sustain freedom of speech. This study contributes to the area of journalism research by developing a deeper understanding of the challenges still faced by Middle Eastern journalists, proposing that for freedom of press to emerge from revolutionary social change such as the Arab Spring, legislative change must occur on a policy level within an affected nation.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

Particular limitations of this study is an inhibited ability to make more broad claims about freedom of press in the Middle East around the events of the Arab Spring. As

only qualitative research has been drawn on to inform conclusions, we are able to explore depth of personal experience. However, the data alone does not allow us to explore breadth of perspective and may limit constructing a developed image of the press situation in the Middle East. Furthermore, the perspectives offered are that of journalists alone: not of those who control or are stakeholders in media outlets, or citizens as consumers of local national media. The condition and role of journalism may be positioned differently, depending on how the role of media is perceived by different individuals. Journalists come from an educated and literate background, aware of the philosophies that oppose oppression of freedom of speech. It can be speculated then that journalists are not accurately representational of the majority populous residing within nations that experienced the Arab Spring, but rather, they occupy the space between state and ordinary citizen. This positions them in a particular manner where they are vulnerable to criticism, supported by the observation that more than half of participants not feeling safe responding in a critically explicit manner when speaking of the negative or restrictive powers of government.

Furthermore, there are other nations involved in the Arab Spring that have not been the focus of this study, such as Syria and Bahrain. Although these nations may have not expressed a focus on media outlets as a source of controversy, when compared to the nations in this study, they have still participated in the Arab Spring revolution. The limitations of this study are the exclusion of these and other nations, that may have experienced significant restructuring expressed in press media that coincides with political change. Freedom House does rank Bahrain and Syria as currently very low on the provision of civil liberties, and this is partially the reason they are excluded from this study, that aims to test the claim of increased freedom of press following the Arab Spring.

Lastly, the preconceived notion that increased freedoms are positive expressions of citizen participation are somewhat present within this analysis. I have intentionally undertaken the assumption that decentralized quality media is an empowering force of social change and highly involved with exercising democracy. This is an assumption that is perhaps taken for granted. Decentralisation and diversity of media outlets increases the chance of quality objective reporting, but in this study I have not explicitly analysed content to define what this is, what it looks like, nor measured the impact it has as a force of social benefit. I have instead, enriched an experiential and qualitative

inquiry into the causes of restricted press media freedom, and gathered testimony to support phenomenological claims. Although this is extremely useful as a contribution to research, touching on events within Middle Eastern press that has been under-explored, it only presents a limited snapshot of the big image of press situation.

7.4 Potential Future Research

Studying press freedom in Middle East using a mixed method will contribute to understanding Arab Spring impact on journalism in more depth. I would suggest applying a survey method to gain quantitative data from different groups of society; audiences, activists, and freedoms monitoring organisations about press freedom situation before and after Arab Spring revolutions.

Moreover, I would recommend focusing on studying how improvement and establishment of strong civil institutions would be reflected on increasing press freedom.

I believe that may be after few years the image will be much clearer as the outcomes of such revolutions especially the social ones will not appear within the few years passed after these revolutions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Approval



AUTEC
SECRETARIAT

25 June 2013

Allison Oosterman

Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

Dear Allison

Re Ethics Application: **13/77 After the Arab spring: An analysis of the future of journalism in the Middle East.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 24 June 2016.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 24 June 2016;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 24 June 2016 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Madeline Banda'.

Madeline Banda

Acting Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Al Zowailil, Majid A. tjf8646@aut.ac.nz

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet



1.0. Date Information Sheet Produced:

dd mmmm yyyy

2.0. Project Title

After The Arab Spring: An Analysis of the Future of Journalism in Middle East.

3.0. An Invitation

Dear ,

My name is Majid Alzowaimil. I am a postgraduate student in the School of Communication Studies at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in New Zealand. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my Master in Communication Studies, and I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Taking part in the study is your decision and you may withdraw from the research at any time prior to the completion of data collection. Additionally, you have the right not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering.

4.0. What is the purpose of this research?

This research will consider the extent to which the Arab Spring and other recent developments in the Middle East have influenced journalism in the region and the likely future outlook for journalism in the Middle East. The research will provide a specific level of insight into the direct influence of the Arab Spring on journalism, both in terms of the actual level of media control and in terms of the forces influencing journalists which prevent them from reporting according to the highest standards of journalism. This research is a part of the requirements of my Master degree and will be published online through the AUT library.

5.0. How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You are invited to participate in this research because you are an Arab Journalist, who is familiar with Arabian journalism. You have also been chosen because of your wide knowledge and experience. Also, you have been selected as you are from a Middle Eastern country that

has experienced events confluent to the Arab Spring. I have located your contact information within the public forum, through internet search engines.

6.0. What will happen in this research?

The ultimate goal of this research is to study and understand the role played by Arab Spring events, in influencing the freedom of press in the Middle East. The research will contribute to documenting the current state of journalism in Middle Eastern regions and assist in making predictions about likely future of journalism within the Middle East. It will identify and address the factors that may prevent Arabian Journalists from reaching the highest standards of journalism.

Initially, the research will focus on studying and understanding the Arab Spring phenomenon of date, and how it has affected Arabian press freedom in general. My interviews with Arab Journalists will aid my research, and therefore my understanding of the impact of these events on Arabian Journalism.

You as a participant will be asked to meet with me for an interview to answer broad and general questions about freedom of press in the Middle East before, during, and after the Arab Spring uprisings. The interview will be done through an online medium such as Skype, at any time that suits you. The interview is likely to last about one hour in duration. However, if you prefer to make the interview face to face, then I will arrange with you for an appropriate time to do that. The session will be video-taped to allow me to accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tapes will only be reviewed by me and I will transcribe and analyze them. They will then be destroyed after six years. The information from the interview will be used in my master thesis. I might use this information in my PhD thesis in future. I will ask your permission by signing a consent form to use information provided by you in my study. The types of topics will be asking you include: Arab Spring events, Arabian press freedom, and the constraints that prevent Arab Journalists from reporting according to the highest standards.

7.0. What are the discomforts and risks?

Minimal discomforts are envisaged as the interview will be done via an online communication medium at the place and time that suits you. The questions are impersonal, only regarding professional experience. I am Arabian citizen and fully familiar with the cultural, social, and political situation in Middle East. I will endeavor, with best efforts, to not put any participant at risk or any discomfort.

8.0. How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

You as participant have the full right not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. You can stop the interview at any time. All personal information you provide will be considered confidential unless otherwise agreed to by you. A consent form will be provided. You have the right to review the content and approve the use of the information. The information will be kept in a secure place inside AUT premises until 2019. I would like to inform that due to the

nature of the detailed and specific qualitative data, there is a possibility you could be identified even with the use of pseudonyms. Best efforts will be made to protect confidentiality.

9.0. What are the benefits?

This research holds personal benefit for you as a participant, as well as for me as a researcher.

Participants (Middle Eastern Journalists): This research will offer the opportunity for selected journalists to voice their views and opinions, sharing their experiences in a context free from professional discrimination. It will provide an opportunity for them to reflect on, and consider past personal experiences. In addition, publishing this research will contribute to the delivery of their voice to the world of journalism studies, so as to also stem further research into the representation practices surrounding Middle Eastern journalism.

Researcher: This research is a part of the requirements of my Master degree at AUT. My selected line of inquiry is also closely aligned to my profession and will increase my professional understanding of key issues in the area of Middle Eastern journalism ethics. Originally, I come from the Middle East, and have a personal connection to this region of the world. I possess the cultural capital and social sensitivity to provide an authentic and in-depth analysis of Middle Eastern journalism ethics. This study also will open up opportunities to me as an employee by developing my communication skills, which is very essential to my job. Overall, the opportunity to conduct research in this area, will be enriching for me personally, and professionally.

Middle Eastern Community: Freedom of the press is one of the most important factors that help to build a modern democratic state and contribute to the advancement and progress of society. Over the last three years, there has been much turmoil in the area of reporting on national events within the Middle East, and much debate about freedom of speech. My research may offer a means of attaining a more accurate understanding of the social climate that influences journalism in the Middle East. A more accurate understanding may contribute to shaping the way journalism is approached in the future. Ideally, I would like to contribute to informing citizens about the need for balance within journalism ethics, no matter what the political context. My research is conducted in the hopes that it will build on the growing understanding of the complexities, tensions and diversities involved with Middle Eastern journalism. I acknowledge that over time, these understandings may provide a more enriched understanding of journalism practices, which is knowledge that may be made available to the Middle Eastern community.

10.0. How will my privacy be protected?

Because of the nature of qualitative interviews which requires me to meet you and that your information is known in advance to me, I will make best efforts to maintain your privacy by not including any traceable information about you such as your contact details. If you decide you would prefer not to be named, you will be given a pseudonym and all identifying information will be removed. Best efforts will be made to maintain privacy, however due to the nature of the data, there is a slight possibility of individual participants being identified. All data will be stored

securely inside AUT premises. Electronic and recorded data will be downloaded to an external hard drive and securely stored inside AUT premises; inside the supervisor office (Room WG 1233) in a locked file and will be destroyed after six years. The data collected, suitably anonymised, may later be used for studies related to a PhD thesis, in the near future. In accordance, best efforts will be made to maintain your privacy, when using this data for purposes of use for completion of a PhD thesis.

11.0. What are the costs of participating in this research?

To participate in this study all you need is an internet access with Skype program which is free, and one hour of your time when convenient for you. If you prefer to make the interview face to face, then I will arrange with you for an appropriate time to do that.

12.0. What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please respond to this request at any time between 1 May, 2013 and 30 June, 2013.

13.0. How do I agree to participate in this research?

I will provide a consent form which I ask you to sign if you consent to this request. I will email you a copy of the consent form, after reading and filling it please scan it and email it back to me.

14.0. Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

I will provide you with a copy of the results and a summary of the final report. If you would be interested in greater detail, I will provide you a copy of the entire thesis in electronic format.

15.0. What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr. Allison Oosterman*, Allison.oosterman@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 9219999 ext7908.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Dr Rosemary Godbold, rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 6902.

16.0. Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Majid Alzowaimil, majedona98@yahoo.com,

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr. Allison Oosterman, Allison.oosterman@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 9219999 ext7908.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 25 June 2013, AUTEK Reference number 13/77.

Appendix C: Consent Form



Consent Form

Project title: **xxx**

Project Supervisor: **xxx**

Researcher: **xxx**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be video-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I authorize the researcher to use all relevant information in his future studies including PhD thesis.
- ☐ I agree ☐ disagree ☐ to be named and identified in the research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....

Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 25 June 2013, AUTECH
Reference number 13/77.***

Appendix D: Interview Protocol:

Interview Protocol

I. Information about the Interview:

Interviewee: _____ Interviewer: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____

Dear, welcome and thank you for coming today to meet with me. My name is Majid Alzowaimil and I am a post graduate student at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. I am conducting this study as part of the requirements of my Master in Communication Studies. I would like to talk with you about the role played by Arab spring events in influencing the press freedom in the Middle East and the likely future of journalism in the region. This interview will take about 60 minutes. I would like your permission to record this interview to allow me to accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tapes will only be reviewed by me and I will transcribe and analyze them. You have the right to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself at any time without consequence. If you decide not to be named in this research, you will be given a pseudonym to maintain your privacy and confidentiality. I ensure that any information I include in my report does not identify you as the respondent. Kindly remember that your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop, or take a break, please let me know.

Now, I would like to ask you to read the consent form and sign it.

Do you have any question before we begin? With your permission we will begin the interview.

Interview Questions

- 1- What do you understand the term " Arab spring" to mean?
- 2- Have you ever reported on any event involving social uprising ? Please describe what you reported.
- 3- Please describe a time where you may have felt constrained about how you reported an event.
- 4- Do you think the Arab Spring events have changed the way you report from before the Arab Spring? If so, how?
- 5- Freedom House says that press freedom in Middle East has improved after the Arab Spring events, Do you agree?
- 6- In your opinion, what is the difference between Arabian journalism and Western journalism?
- 7- What are the journalism practices that you believe must be followed in the Arab world? Do they differ from the west?
- 8- In your opinion, what are the constraints that prevent Arabian journalism from reporting according to the highest (Int.) standards of journalism?
- 9- What else would you like to tell me about press freedom in Middle East and the future of journalism?

• *Thank you very much for your time today. I appreciated hearing your insights on this topic.*

