

**LEGITIMISING DISSENT?
BRITISH AND AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE
2011 EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION**

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**A thesis submitted to Cardiff University in fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

June 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank both of my supervisors, Dr. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Dr. Stephen Cushion, for their unwavering support, guidance, and patience from the beginning of this project to its completion. A bit of wisdom to the students that they will supervise in the future: no matter how frustrating the process of completing a Ph.D. gets, never despair, as you are in very capable, very talented hands with these two. All the best to you both in your future endeavors. Most importantly though, I would like to thank my Mom, Dad, and brother for their unquestioning support and love throughout my time as a doctoral student at Cardiff University.

Abstract

While news media coverage of political protest is by no means a new topic of research for media scholars, few studies have attempted to unpack how and why protesters and protests have been legitimised within news media coverage, rather than covered with the expectation of violence occurring (Halloran et al. 1970), marginalised (Gitlin 1980), cast as threats to the social order (McLeod 1995), or denied the status of legitimate political players (Shoemaker 1984). This research project is an attempt to do just that. Therefore, this dissertation examines whether newspapers from the United Kingdom and United States accorded the opposition movement against then president Hosni Mubarak with favourable news coverage during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

A content analysis of 611 newspaper articles from both British and American publications was conducted to determine whether the anti-Mubarak opposition was covered favourably, in addition to revealing what other dominant themes were present within the reporting. This study revealed that the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were covered favourably by an overwhelming margin within both British (65 percent) and American (66 percent) newspaper articles, and put a particular emphasis on the political motivations galvanising the protests. Conversely, then-president Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government, and the Egyptian police and security services were portrayed as repressive actors within the reporting on the revolution. Furthermore, the anti-Mubarak opposition was featured most frequently as the first source within the reporting from either nation's newspapers.

Another dominant theme emerging from the content analysis, and that was subsequently examined within the empirical chapters of this project, was that geopolitical considerations were frequently included within coverage from both British (60 percent) and American (76 percent) newspapers. Few studies have attempted to assess the prominence and role of geopolitics within the reporting of international politics (Myers et al. 1996). In summation, this research project questions the normative assumptions made about the relationship between the news media and protesters being antagonistic, and to understand how and why protest is granted legitimacy within media coverage of political crises.

Introduction: News media coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution

The 2011 Egyptian Revolution was the mass protest movement that led to the resignation of longtime authoritarian president Hosni Mubarak after twenty-nine years in power on the 11th of February, 2011. Underpinned by a broad swathe of political (political repression, rigged elections), economic (rise in food prices, endemic corruption, unemployment, lack of upward mobility), and human rights grievances (police brutality and impunity), eighteen days of street protests in the cities and towns across Egypt became the “revolution that toppled the mightiest of Middle Eastern dictators” (Cook 2012, p.296).

Like many who took an active interest in wondering what would become of the protests across Egypt that began on January 25th, 2011, I consumed whatever news I could about the burgeoning citizen-led movement that would inevitably dislodge then-president Mubarak. Given that another long-term, authoritarian president in the Arab world, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, had just been ousted by popular, citizen-led protests only weeks earlier in Tunisia, the events unfolding in Egypt did not occur in a vacuum. Indeed, the protests that commenced on January 25th, 2011 spoke to the spread of a political consciousness into the streets and public squares across the Arab world no longer cowed by state-sanctioned intimidation and repression in what has been popularly called the “Arab Spring”. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will be focusing specifically on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

When I was either watching or reading the latest coverage on the revolution

in Egypt, what stuck out to me was not only what I thought to be the favourable representation of the protesters themselves, but the degree to which their voice, and the motivating factors driving Egyptians out into the streets of their country were incorporated within the reporting. Obviously, I did not have any empirical data on hand to corroborate my sentiments at the time, but so strong were my suspicions that it led me to abandon my previous dissertation topic that aimed to explore British and American print news media coverage of the Iranian presidential election protests of 2009, and focus on the revolution in Egypt instead. The topic of how foreign news media reported the Egyptian Revolution offers a unique point of entry to discuss these issues, and is my own attempt to understand how and why news media from the United Kingdom and United States covered the 2011 Egyptian Revolution as they did.

Political protest is not an indication of casual disagreement with stated governmental policy, but speaks to the deeper political consciousness of those protesting against the status quo (the dissenters), those who seek to maintain it (political, governmental officials and their allies), and those whose profession (journalists) it is to interpret the political and social dynamics underpinning the public and visceral manifestation of policy disapproval (protests).

A casual evaluation of the available academic literature on news media coverage of political protest indicates that journalists are, more often than not, inclined to cover protests and protesters in an overwhelmingly unfavorable manner. Whether it be delegitimising their goals (Gitlin 1980), casting them outside of the

contours of mainstream political debate (Hallin 1986), covering them with the expectation of violence to erupt (Halloran et al. 1970), or more generally denying them the status of legitimate political players whose voices and grievances deserve to be heard (Shoemaker 1984), the literature is clear: the voice, grievances, and policy recommendations of protesters are not likely to receive a sympathetic hearing within news coverage.

Yet, within news coverage on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, the protesters who comprised the diverse anti-Mubarak opposition movement sought not only to redress the grievances they had against the Egyptian government, but the actual removal of the head of state himself, Hosni Mubarak. In his seminal research examining the coverage of protesters against the Vietnam War, Gitlin previously stated that representations of protesters within the news media, more often than not, serve to uphold the governmental and political infrastructure of the nation-state (Gitlin 1980, p.5). If the opposite was true in the case of news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, then what factors contributed to the positive representation of the protesters calling for the removal of Hosni Mubarak? How are we, as media scholars, to understand the dynamic between the positive portrayal of the protesters (if that was indeed the case) and the fact that the events were taking place in Egypt, a nation in which the United States and United Kingdom have significant geopolitical interests?

After all, van Dijk commented that journalists rarely include universally-desired concepts such as freedom and democracy in their reporting on Western

client-states (van Dijk 1995, p.27). If the anti-Mubarak protesters were covered favorably, then to what extent were political, economic, and human or civil rights issues included within coverage? Given the significance of Egypt to both the United Kingdom and United States on a geopolitical level, how are we to understand the impact of such considerations on the reporting of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution? These are some of the issues that came to mind as I grappled with how to transform news media coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution from a topic of personal and intellectual interest into the subject of my doctoral research.

With that stated, what I aim to accomplish within this dissertation is to first determine if the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were covered favourably. Secondly, irrespective of whether they were covered favourably or not, what were the contributing factors present within coverage impacting the way they were reported on? Lastly, what are we supposed to make of the other prevalent topics or themes within the reporting, and what does it say about how journalists make sense of political events in foreign nations?

In order to answer these questions, this dissertation will be examining news coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution within newspapers from both the United Kingdom and United States. What I wanted to determine by selecting newspapers from the United Kingdom and United States exclusively is how these English-speaking, Western nations interpreted the Egyptian Revolution for the audiences within their respective countries, and indeed around the world. I therefore performed a content and framing analysis of these publications, the results of which

guided the empirical chapters of this research.

The chapters following this introduction will begin this dissertation by outlining the theoretical paradigms employed to better understand this topic through a literature review of relevant scholarship. Following my theoretical discussion, and how the work of the scholars included within those chapters will inform, and help me better understand the workings of the news media on a broader, more conceptual level, I will shift focus to scholarship examining the more practical aspects of how news coverage is produced. Here, I will explore topics such as journalistic routines, the professional norm of objectivity, the relationship between the press and state, and the influence of geopolitics on news coverage. Finally, I will conclude my literature review by examining how previous academic scholarship has examined the topic of news media coverage of political protest through a variety of national, international, and cross-national contexts.

Following the literature review, the next chapter will detail the methodological approaches I used to pursue my research. Here, I will explain why I elected to perform content and framing analyses within my research, how they assisted me in unpacking the dominant themes present within the news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, and the specific publications and time period examined within my research. For further clarification on the actual categories that comprised my content analysis, I have attached my coding sheet within the appendix.

Moving forward, the final three chapters of my dissertation will lay out the main empirical findings of this research project, the first of which will discuss the

representation of the anti-Mubarak protesters, then-president Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government, and the Egyptian police and security services. Following that chapter, I will evaluate the prominence and role of the most significant news sources from the British and American newspapers examined within this research. Along with my discussion of news sources (and whether they were determined to be supporting the anti-Mubarak opposition or Mubarak), I will also briefly evaluate the role of new and social media within the reporting on the revolution. Next, I will explain who the constituent elements of the opposition to Hosni Mubarak were (according to the reporting), and what sort of motivations were included and described within the reporting as key motivating factors driving Egyptians out into the streets to protest against their government.

Next, I will turn my attention to how news coverage contextualised the international impact of the Egyptian Revolution, whether it was through the prism of the 'Arab Spring', U.S, British, or Israeli interests, or implications for the Middle East as a whole. Previous research from Chang et al. (1987) and Shoemaker et al. (1991) addressed the newsworthiness of global events in relation to their relevance to the United States, so given Egypt's political, economic, and military relationship with both the U.S. and U.K., assessing how news media from these two countries incorporated these topics into their reporting is essential.

With the purpose of this research stated, and the layout of this dissertation delineated, the first chapter of this project will begin by discussing Jurgen Habermas' concept of the 'public sphere' and its importance in understanding and

evaluating the political role of the news media within society, despite the numerous (and most certainly valid) criticisms of it that have arisen since its inception.

Chapter 1: Democratic Participation and the News Media

I. Introduction

The theoretical approaches explored and evaluated within this chapter of my literature review shall be used as a foundation from which to understand how newspapers in the United Kingdom and United States covered the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. I will begin this chapter by discussing Jurgen Habermas' concept of the *public sphere*, and Chantal Mouffe's recontextualisation of Habermas' idea through the concept of the *agonistic public sphere*. Habermas serves a starting point for discussing what forms of citizen participation within the political process are privileged by his conception of the public sphere, and how the news media is supposed to serve the public interest by functioning as the platform by which citizens can debate and reach consensus over issues concerning their daily lives. Therefore, this chapter will argue that the public sphere is a necessary starting point for examining the role of the press within a democracy, and how the press is supposed to serve as a medium for citizens to articulate their political demands. This is a particularly salient point given this research project's focus of British and American newspaper coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

Thus, first and foremost, I will be explaining what the public sphere is in Habermas' terms, exploring its historical roots, its political capacity, and the role of the press in providing a broadly accessible means by which citizens in a democracy can employ the public sphere for the purposes of engaging in critical political

discourse. The rational-critical discourse that Habermas prefers will be outlined as well. Following that, I will be looking at other scholars who, while not dismissing Habermas' conception outright, have sought to recontextualise it in order to confront what they feel are the inherent weaknesses within Habermas' conceptualisation of the public sphere.

My discussion of Habermas, his concept of the public sphere, and those who have critiqued him will show that the focus of certain scholars, whether it is on differing social and economic backgrounds or the life experiences of citizens within a democracy (Christiano 1997, p.249), have produced new angles and vantage points by which an informed and politically efficacious democratic society can be realized, specifically within news coverage.

In a broad sense, what this dissertation will be examining is the political role of news media. Habermas' concept of the public sphere is a unique tool by which to explore this topic. As Kevin Williams has observed, the public sphere continues to attract scholars due to its "focus on the political dimension of media and their relationship with democracy and the political process" (Williams 2003, p. 69). Additionally, to echo the sentiments of Kramer (1992), I remain convinced of the value of using Habermas' concept of the public sphere as a starting point to understand how the news media cover contemporary political movements, as it will not only help myself and others who wrestle with his concept make sense of their own political reality, but of those far beyond their borders (p. 257). What I hope to achieve by employing the public sphere as a conceptual starting point is to

understand *if* news media in the United Kingdom and United States created a politicised citizenry within their reporting on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution by covering the anti-Mubarak opposition favourably.

II. Theories of political participation in society

A. Habermas and the Public Sphere

One of the most important and widely employed concepts to examine the history of the political role of citizens and the press within Western democracies is Jurgen Habermas' concept of the *public sphere*. This concept speaks to the core of liberal democratic theory, and explores the roles of citizens and the press as integral parts of any democratic society. Habermas defines his concept of the *public sphere* as the sphere of private people coming together to engage with public authorities in political debate "over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor" (Habermas 1989, p. 27).

By "basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor," (p.27) we can assume Habermas is referring to the spaces within society outside of the formal mechanisms of government and not subject to its proceedings. Key to Habermas' concept is the focal point of this political confrontation between citizens and the politically powerful, that being the "people's public use of their reason" (p.27). Habermas remarks that within the context of the public sphere, citizens' use of reason to conceive, elaborate on, and address political

grievances preserves the “polemical nuances of both sides” of a heated argument, while also preventing polemics from being the overriding characteristic of political debate (p.27).

The early venues of what Habermas considered the public sphere were the coffee houses and salons of Britain and continental Europe from the 18th century and onward (p.31). Though the types and number of people engaging in debate within these early versions of the public sphere varied considerably, the initial criteria that Habermas saw as essential to the development of an environment suitable for the creation of a public sphere held a few key characteristics in common.

The first was that the type of social discourse to be had did not suppose equality of status amongst participants, but disregarded status altogether (p. 36). Secondly, the domain of “common concern,” where the early arbiters of political and social authority such as the Church and state officials had previously possessed the monopoly of interpretation, was eroded through early capitalism when the texts and products of these authorities were disseminated amongst the public, and thus subject to their interpretation (p.36). And thirdly, the “same process that converted culture into a commodity” through early capitalism by extension “established the public as in principle inclusive” (p.37). With texts and objects of knowledge now being sold or distributed for consumption and interpretation to those who did not produce them, the general accessibility of those products included the public as a stable, and growing group of discussants (p.37).

A public sphere underpinned by political debate first arose in Britain at the

beginning of the 18th century, (p.57) though its historical antecedents date as far back as the 1670s (p.59). The nascent, bourgeois public sphere that Habermas says came into being within the coffee houses and salons of that period was considered a hotbed of political unrest (p.59). Until the rise of the public sphere within those coffee houses and salons, political opposition and dissent at the national level was often pursued through the use of violence to confront the state (p.64). However, through the public's use of their reason in public debates, confrontations between citizens and state authorities became less about challenging and upending tyrannical figures or policies, and more about negotiating the soundness of the idea that public interest should be an irrefutable and essential component to political proceedings.

Beyond the establishment of the public sphere in the social realm, Habermas' concept partly originated from the state by virtue of its basic functions being delineated within legislation or the constitutional framework of the state (p.83). For instance, freedom of opinion and speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly and association guaranteed the public's right to engage in rational-critical debate (p.83). Additionally, the right of petition and the equality of vote preserved the political function of a private people within the public sphere (p.83). A second set of basic rights that provided the framework for the public sphere concerned "the individual's status as a free human being, grounded in the intimate sphere of the patriarchal conjugal family," referring to personal freedoms and the inviolability of the home, among others (p.83). Lastly, a third set of basic rights concerned the

“transactions of the private owners of property in the sphere of civil society,” guaranteeing equality before the law and the protection of private property (p.83).

These basic rights, as outlined by Habermas, guaranteed the existence of the spheres of the public and private within a legal, constitutional framework. This recognised the institutions and instruments of the public, such as the press and political parties, and the foundations of private autonomy for the citizen, such as the family and the right to own property (p.83). Taking all of these elements together, it guaranteed the rights of a private people to manifest as a functional and integral part of society, both as politically-involved citizens and also as players within the economy as owners and barterers of commodities (p.83). As a result, the public sphere truly came into being as civil society separated from the state, and as the rules that governed the interaction between public officials and private people, and amongst private people themselves, became a public concern (p.127).

Though the commercialisation of cultural products in conjunction with the actual constitutional and legal framework of the state established the public sphere, the emergence of mass culture and the growing power of an emerging press spelled a dubious future for Habermas’ concept. Although commercialisation of cultural goods had, at one point, been a precondition for rational-critical debate, Habermas laments its eventual negative impact on the press, which he felt, historically speaking, was the preeminent institution of the public (p.181). Habermas contends that, in the case of the press, it now functions more as a commercial enterprise than as a purveyor of information begetting critical debate in society. In Habermas’ view,

this has, in effect, relegated critical debate “behind the veil of internal decisions concerning the selection and presentation of material” (p.169).

Politically relevant news relating to public affairs, social problems, economic matters, education, and health are read and reported on less and less as the immediate satiation acquired from human interest narratives, social events, and recreation-based stories assumes command over editorial decisions (p.170). Habermas comments that the distinction between fact and fiction is increasingly blurred because of this editorial predisposition, and with entertainment-based news presenting a product more palatable for widespread consumption. As a result, it is more likely that the press will establish a relationship between itself and its readership defined more in terms of fetishising entertainment-based news that offers a quick indulgence rather than stimulating the public’s use of reason to instigate debate over the implications of policy (p.170). The public sphere made available by the existence of an institution such as the news media is merely one in appearance only, and not the platform for rational-critical debate that Habermas envisioned it as being (p.171).

In contemporary times, the more mass media, as the most widely accessible public sphere to all citizens in society, assume greater and more pronounced advertising and commercial functions rather than critical functions, the more mass media become depoliticised and pseudo-privatised as a whole (p.175). As Habermas notes, the process of political engagement and interplay between those governing and those being governed within the news media is now largely the realm of private

bureaucracies, special interest groups, political parties, and public officials (p.176).

Far from becoming the preeminent institution of the public that Habermas envisioned, the commercialisation of the press left it at the disposal of party politics, which, coupled along with a burgeoning editorial function, meant that the press had shifted from being a purveyor of information to being a merchant in public opinion (p.182). In turn, the news media industry becomes fused with the public relations industry as the opinion, platforms, and special interests of the politically powerful and influential became part of the news-gathering routine (p.194). As those politically powerful and influential players became an integral part of the news-gathering process, they did not promote, so much as suggest to the public the acceptance or rejection of a “person, product, idea, or organization” (p.194). Thus, the public unwittingly cedes ground as a critical functionary within the news media, and instead responds to the policies and directives of the politically powerful not by engaging them, but identifying with some while rejecting others (p.206).

As widely lauded as Habermas’ public sphere has been for examining how a politicised class of citizens emerged in Western democracies, and as a starting point for examining what kind of political participation is privileged by the press, numerous scholars have come forward to identify the inherent weaknesses within, and dated aspects of, Habermas’ concept. Additionally, some scholars have offered insightful counter-approaches to Habermas’ concept in order to demonstrate a move from ‘rational’ towards ‘radical’ political participation. This is will be the focus of the next section.

B. Contemporary evaluations, and critical expansions of Habermas' Public Sphere

Habermas originally conceived of the public sphere as a physical or discursive space where private citizens can come together and engage with public authorities in political debate “over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor” (p.27). Though, in reality, no space in society is truly outside of the reach of government or the politically powerful, we can take Habermas' public sphere to refer to the spaces in society that are traditionally the domain of the public, whether be an actual physical space (such as a park or town square), or even a newspaper.

For instance, coffee shops and salons are identified by Habermas as some of the first few examples of a functioning public sphere in society, along with its preeminent institution, the press (p.181). Though Habermas' concept continues to enjoy widespread currency in contemporary academic debate, scholars have come forward to challenge Habermas' original conception in an attempt to keep it relevant to discussions of the changing nature of political participation. Yet, underpinning the criticism from those scholars is the use of Habermas' original conceptualisation of the public sphere as a theoretical and practical starting point for the discussion of how politically engaged, ostensibly democratised societies can be realised, particularly through news media coverage.

Thus, before I explain the ways in which Habermas' original concept has been critiqued and recontextualised, I would first like discuss the work of scholars

who have explicated the virtues of Habermas' original concept. For these scholars, discussion revolves around how the public sphere, in addition to the system of political decision-making that it influenced - *deliberative democracy* - might be applied for the purposes of enacting a critical, oppositional space where political dialogue finds not only sanctuary, but a foundation with which to grow and expand upon in an age of 24/7, globalised news media outlets.

Christiano (1997) discusses the value of deliberative democracy as a political philosophy and practice that is instrumental to the health and sustainability of any democratic society. Deliberative democracy draws from Habermas' (1989) conceptualisation of the public sphere, and has been defended within recent scholarship from Chambers (2009). At the root of deliberative democracy is public deliberation, an emancipatory communicative practice (Niemeyer 2011). As Christiano (1997) says, public deliberation "transforms, modifies, and clarifies the beliefs and preferences of citizens of a political society," and he subsequently identifies three distinct kinds of value to the practice of public deliberation (p.244).

The first of the three values, and perhaps the most important one that Christiano attributes to public engagement is that deliberation is valuable because of the results it may yield in society at-large. For instance, public deliberation will usually improve the quality and equity of legislation in a democratic society by enhancing citizens' understanding of their society, and to continually renew or revise the ethical principles guiding the application of said legislation (p.244). Furthermore, because of deliberation, the laws and governing bodies of a society

tasked with enforcing them will be perceived as legitimate, rational entities, as the inclusionary nature of an intense, deliberative process, whether through informal channels such as debate, or formal channels such as voting, will tend to justify laws, policies, and governing bodies in the eyes of the general populace (p.244). Finally, deliberation offers citizens the opportunity to become active participants within politics, thus incentivising them to become permanent fixtures within the political process itself. Citizens who integrate themselves within the political process tend to develop and continually refine their own interpretations of autonomy, rationality, and morality, as their political beliefs, in a theoretical perfect world, are then open to the thoughts and criticisms of other participants in the political process (p.244).

The second of the values Christiano discusses is that it is essential that an individual, or an electorate as a whole, undertake a vigorous deliberative process before coming to a conclusion on the merits or demerits of a law or policy. The intrinsic value lying within the idea that a democratic society is best served by public deliberation is that such a process might engender a certain amount of respect amongst competing factions taking part in a debate, and ideally speaking, a common concern that the best ideas are accepted and put into practice (p.245). Lastly, deliberation is valuable as it yields political justification for law and policy. The act of deliberation, with necessary fixtures put into place to healthily constrain the political process, is “necessary and sufficient for the justification of the outcomes of the process” (p.245). Thus, assuming that citizens are able to freely debate and discuss the policies and laws governing their public and private lives, the means by

which policies are substantiated justify the end result of the process, whereby the ultimate acceptance or rejection of policy is then realised (p.245).

In order to further substantiate the significance of public deliberation to a democracy, there are three theses worth mentioning that expand on the worth of discussion and debate within the democratic process. The first of these is the *contribution thesis*, which simply postulates that deliberation broadly contributes to the inherent worth of political institutions (p.246). The *necessity thesis* holds that decisions undertaken within a democratic society without proper discussion and interrogation by the public yield an undesirable form of political society (p.246). Perhaps most important, though, is the *exclusivity thesis*, which promotes public deliberation as the only value in a democracy (p.246). Clearly, the *exclusivity thesis* pertains to a broad, somewhat abstract theoretical terrain of political participation, and assumes that it is the only means by which knowledge in a society can be fostered and shared. However, such an assumption leaves out several important factors that heavily influence how and where deliberation takes place within society, and who gets to initiate and participate within, and legitimate political proceedings.

For instance, the exclusivity thesis does not speak to the effect of political and economic factors or the power of network executives, and how these considerations influence who journalists defer to when reporting on polemical issues. Nevertheless, because Christiano is discussing public deliberation within a theoretical framework, and not in a practical context in which he would be forced to

address and reconcile the various challenges to public deliberation that would prevent dialogue that is more representative of the public (and, by extension, their interests), his inclusion of the necessity thesis stands as an important reminder of how politically attuned societies can, and should be formed.

Even though Christiano does not specifically engage with or challenge Habermas' conception of the public sphere, his commentary calls us to focus on the theoretical and intellectual antecedents of the public sphere, which are broadly accommodated within the notion of deliberative democracy. Indeed, before one is tasked with evaluating and coming to terms with how the myriad scholars who have commented on or recontextualised Habermas' public sphere arrived at their decision to do so, it is essential to understand the inherent worth of Habermas' concept, and how and where it draws its strength and value from an allegiance to deliberative democracy. If public deliberation is exercised within a space bereft of fear and intimidation, then a plurality of political viewpoints can be put forth and debated within a public forum (p.247), such as the news media.

Nicholas Garnham (1992), while acknowledging the legitimacy of the criticisms levied at Habermas' original conception of the public sphere, nonetheless asserts that those criticisms do not diminish the importance of Habermas' idea as a "starting point for work on urgent contemporary issues in the study of mass media and democratic politics" (p.359).

Of the normative criticisms directed at Habermas' conception, Garnham acknowledges that Habermas:

1. neglects the importance of a plebeian public sphere that simultaneously formed with, and in opposition to, the bourgeois public sphere (i.e. trade unions) (p.359).
2. idealizes the bourgeois public sphere and the ability of early print media to offer itself as a forum for critical political debate to citizens (p.359).
3. does not immediately address the question of power as it relates to gender relations and class division, a situation brought forth by his keenness on maintaining the distinction between 'public' and 'private' (p.360).
4. and his predisposition toward the rational/critical model of political discourse within the public sphere seemingly precludes him from theorizing about the benefits of a pluralist public sphere and the need for compromise between bitterly divisive political positions (p.360).
5. neglects the rhetorical and playful aspects of communicative action and other forms of protests which Habermas would most likely dismiss as banal attempts to challenge authority and inspire discourse amongst citizens (p.360).

Despite these criticisms levied towards Habermas' public sphere, Garnham focuses and expands upon the virtues inherent within Habermas' conception, and how the public sphere simultaneously acknowledges and takes advantage of the natural link between the news media industry and the political process to engender citizens with the knowledge and rhetorical skills to engage in efficacious political dialogue. Speaking on the indispensable virtues of the public sphere that Garnham awards Habermas' conception with, the first is that his concept links the institutions and processes of public communication together as central to the structure and practice of democratic politics (p.361).

According to Garnham, most studies of the mass media are too "media-centric," taking for granted "the existing structure of both the media and politics"

(p.361) and ever-changing relationship between these two pillars of contemporary politics. Secondly, Habermas' approach ostensibly focuses on the "necessary material resource base of any public sphere," drawing attention to the problem of how the material resources necessary for accessible communication and dialogue are made available, and allocated (p.361).

Such a virtue positions the public sphere model of the press as the preeminent institution and exclusive domain of the public while also making the public sphere, as Habermas envisioned it, stand diametrically opposed to the liberal theory of the free press, which assumes that the marketplace is *the* one true source of democratic innovation that is capable of yielding the institutions and processes of communication that will foster an engaged democratic polity (p.363). The third virtue that Garnham lists is that Habermas cleverly anchors the public sphere outside of the terrain of the state and the marketplace, thus leaving it within the purview of private citizens. Essentially, the third virtue Garnham attributes to the public sphere adequately explains its function in a democracy, as Habermas sees it: to provide a space by which citizens can challenge political authority outside of the explicit control of the state or private enterprise. Thus, Garnham sees the Habermasian notion of the public sphere as accounting for the negative implications of power in limiting the discursive arena, a point which has been further argued for within recent scholarship (Dahlberg 2004, 2005).

Despite the promise of the public sphere offered by these virtues, the

problem arises that once political communication is mediated by a market-driven news media industry, it is then subject to the arbitrary decision-making of those managing the news outlets, whose style and direction often takes cue from their own personal political values. Garnham (1992) acknowledges that “political and corporate actors are every day making willed interventions in what they see as their calculated interest,” seeking to influence the manner in which information is gathered, discussed, and disseminated to the public (p.371). The struggle of who controls the marketplace of ideas with greater leverage between political and corporate actors, and the public at-large is a never-ending one, and a problem that cannot be readily and permanently solved within a capitalistic society. Garnham proposes that systems of democratic accountability must be integrated into media systems in order to open them up to informational exchanges, and lessen the impact of economic or political decisions across the media industry as a whole (p.371).

To that end, the version of the public sphere Garnham sees as legitimate is one universal public sphere made up of subsidiary public spheres, each underpinned by a political structure and media system formed by their own unique set of values and interests (p.371). Expanding on idea of different public spheres with a unique role for the media within them, Downey et al. (2012a) outline three “varieties of actual and normative public spheres that have developed out of contrasting political philosophical traditions and historical circumstances” (p.338). The first of these, the *discursive public sphere* is “the one most closely associated

with the thought of Habermas”, in which popular inclusion, civility, and dialogue with the goal of consensus is of paramount importance (p.339).

Next, the *liberal representative public sphere* holds that the main function of the public is to elect political elites who debate and ultimately agree amongst themselves on how to best conduct the business of politics (p.338). The remit of the news media within this sphere is to provide the public with information on which to make political judgments, and to promote transparency (p.338). Going beyond the liberal representative model, the *participatory liberal public sphere* “sees the public’s active engagement in debate and decision-making as paramount”, with media institutions serving that end by including citizens as active participants within debates that reflect the diversity of opinion amongst the public (p.339).

While Habermas’ pursuit of consensus driven by rational debate was the driving force behind his original concept, there are those who believe that contestation, not rationality, and a plurality of diametrically-opposed viewpoints may yield the most fertile conditions by which justice and equity can be realised (Christiano 1997, p.249). Such critiques and recontextualisations shall be the focus of the next section of this chapter.

III. Chantal Mouffe and the ‘agonistic public sphere’

The consensus-based, post-political approach of political participation as espoused by Habermas in which partisan conflicts and politics ‘are a thing of the past’ is rebutted by Chantal Mouffe, who deems the Habermasian vision of what

political participation in society should look like as the point of origin for many of the problems democratic institutions and the constituents within them are currently facing. Mouffe (2005) argues that the consensual, post-political approach that aims to establish a world 'beyond left and right,' 'beyond hegemony,' and most importantly 'beyond antagonism,' is conceptually mistaken and is destined to have unintended, malign effects on the vitality of the public sphere (p.2).

As a counterargument to such a vision of the political, Mouffe proposes the *agonistic public sphere*, which recognises the value of partisanship in which individuals can assemble themselves against hegemonic political projects (p.3). Mouffe argues that the adversarial, we/they distinction between political ideologies is being conceptualised within a moral rubric. Instead of we/they or right/left, Mouffe indicates that political contestation is seen as a struggle between 'right and wrong,' where contestation is now theorised and actualised as a moral struggle between good and evil in which opposition to one's preferred ideology must not be proven wrong or contested, but destroyed altogether as an ideology (p.5). Essentially, if we relate Mouffe's sentiments back to the rational, consensus-based approach offered by Habermas, there is a denial of the political and the inherent benefit of agonism within political debate.

The agonistic approach, as espoused by Mouffe, is a we/they relation where contestation between adherents of a certain political philosophy acknowledge that there is no immediate solution to their conflict, but nonetheless embrace the conflictual nature of their relationship to each other, and thus legitimise each other

(p. 20). For Mouffe (2000), the crux of an agonistic public sphere is to substantiate an “us vs. them discrimination in a way that is compatible with pluralist democracy” (p.101). Thus, the purpose of debate within a democratic political terrain establishes one’s opposition in debate not as an enemy whose ideological foundations must be eradicated (p.102), but instead conceptualised as an enemy whose right to hold an oppositional idea makes them an *adversary*. As Mouffe notes, an adversary is a *legitimate* enemy, “somebody whose ideas we combat, but whose right to defend those ideas we do not put into question” (p.102).

As well as legitimately occupying the same space in the political public sphere, adversaries also ostensibly share the same commitment to liberty and equality, the ethical-political principles on which liberal democracy rests (p.102). Clearly, the nature of politics means that what defines “liberty and equality,” for whom, and under what circumstances, is a set of principles that remain eternally open for debate. That debate, however, along with the imperfectability and temporality of its resolutions, is what keeps the *agonistic* public sphere a viable means by which citizens can continually improve actually existing democracy.

In this sense, parties involved in a conflict see themselves as belonging to the same political association, and sharing, instead of occupying a common symbolic space in which the outcome of conflict is negotiated (p.20). As a result, Mouffe’s agonistic approach acknowledges the influence of power, and the hegemonic nature of the political world by providing the theoretical platform in which multiple, oppositional hegemonies can arise. Mouffe sees this as an alternative to groups

fighting to attain the position of the preeminence who, through their position of dominance, are able to articulate the legitimacy of their status and prevent multiple, oppositional public-spheres-in-the-waiting from usurping their position (p.118).

The type of agonistic pluralism Mouffe advocates is predicated on the belief that healthy, vibrant democracies arise from, and can only sustain themselves by an adversarial relationship between left and right political factions within a society. Contrary to Habermas' rational, consensus-based approach, Mouffe sees the constructive value of political conflict. In breaking with the Habermasian model of how a deliberative democratic public sphere should operate, Mouffe cites the ability of the agonistic model of the public sphere to impart a constructive order towards impassioned, polarised political positions in which they embolden existing democratic designs by debate and contestation (p.103).

Without the element of inclusivity that is inherent to the agonistic model of the public sphere, impassioned political positions are left to go unchecked by supporters or opponents, and can potentially manifest in ways that are incompatible with notions of fairness, justice, or equality – the basic elements of what is supposed to constitute a democratic political system. The emphasis put on rational-critical discourse by Habermas and his adherents can unintentionally yield apathetic or extremely polarised citizens who look to form their own collective identification outside of, and in response to, a public sphere governed on the premise that something such as broad consensus can be achieved without including the passions of disaffected groups. Thus, the agonistic model, at least in theory, does not

endanger democratic participation in the political process, but rather is “its very condition of existence,” (p.103) and seeks to accommodate various conceptions of sociopolitical identities, from far-right to far-left and the moderates in between (p.104).

Mouffe sees the Habermasian liberal-democratic model as aspiring towards a post-political future in which neither left nor right factions have a tangible, and socially visible channel with which to accommodate and modify their political aspirations. As Mouffe (2005) contends, the form and substance of the left and right will always vary and play off of each other, so efforts which erase that line of division denies social division, assumes contestation can only have negative sociopolitical consequences, and perhaps unintentionally silences voices that would have otherwise found an outlet through an adversarial, left/right divide (p.120). Mouffe suggests that it is incumbent upon citizens in a democracy to realise that any consensus in society is the offspring of a “provisional hegemony” predicated upon some form of exclusion, and that staking the legitimacy of democratic institutions on notions of pure rationality is illusory at best, and more likely to prevent said institutions from realising a potentially inclusive character (p.104).

In summation, what radical or pluralistic notions of democratic engagement reject is the possibility hoped for by advocates of the ‘rational-critical’ approach geared towards consensus, such as Habermas or John Rawls. Mouffe (2000) states that radical and plural democratic approaches “reject the possibility of a non-exclusive public sphere of rational argument where a non-coercive consensus could

be attained” (p.33). Mouffe continues that the imperative of adherents to the radical-democratic approach must be preventing the democratic potential of the public sphere from being sidelined by attempts at censure or closure, which she feels the Habermasian approach unwittingly advocates. Theoretically speaking, the radical democratic approach does take account of the inherent weaknesses within the rational-critical, consensus-based approach. However, Mouffe somewhat overreaches in her criticism, and on the converse, does not take into account how the radical democratic approach would be handled by the news media.

Essentially, Mouffe’s argument fails to take into account how a sociopolitical entity such as the news media would interpret political movements which, however rightly or wrongly, set out and firmly establish themselves first and foremost by what they do, and not what they represent. While having an idea, political party, or individual to establish oneself or one’s group against an opposing idea or faction is seemingly the bedrock of radical democratic politics, there are very real structural and political constraints put on a political message once it is in the grasp of journalists. Thus, the radical democratic approach fails to appropriately address how the news media would react to more visceral, conflict-driven forms of contestation.

The Habermasian notion of the public sphere, in the contemporary media landscape, accounts for the fact that while political opposition groups may receive more media attention due to polemical and controversial acts of protest, their media strategies performed to garner additional news coverage will not equate to their

message being legitimised. Thus, the Habermasian approach is more about employing a rhetorical strategy that aims for legitimation by carefully elucidating one's political aims and grievances. Altogether, Mouffe's criticism needs to be considered alongside the fact that Habermas did not specifically intend for his conception of the public sphere only to be a tangible, realisable goal, but also a conceptual aid by which to imagine democratic societies as projects continually in need of modification.

Rather than asserting the superiority of the rational-critical, consensus-based approach as espoused by Habermas, or the agonistic model of the public sphere as defined by Mouffe, both theories of the public sphere are useful tools by which to understand the changing nature of political participation and critique. Thus, the rest of this chapter will again not seek to refute Habermas, or Mouffe, but to show how other scholars have engaged with the public sphere and explained the ever-changing nature of political participation. By the end of this chapter, I will argue that despite the continuing relevance of Habermas' public sphere to scholarship, more radical forms of democratic participation are finding greater currency within today's media and political landscape, such as street protests.

The points of contention previously elucidated by Mouffe are further detailed with Ernesto Laclau in their work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. The philosophical antecedents of Mouffe's agonistic model can be found in this work, where Laclau and Mouffe (1985) cite the need for the left to expand liberal-democratic ideology in the direction of a radical and

pluralistic democracy (p.176). Here, Laclau and Mouffe advocate the need for the political left to present the end goal of democratic struggle beyond the realisation of greater sociopolitical freedoms. As such, both authors call for the left to achieve sociopolitical parity with hegemonic groups in society, which aims to best satisfy problems of underrepresentation and power struggle by not uniting various groups with different agendas in one theoretical and actual space. Instead, Laclau and Mouffe's radical democratic vision aims to allow each oppositional group in society a degree of autonomy in which they can sustain themselves by controlling their own unique struggles, and thus preserving the discursive plurality that the radical democratic project seeks to engender (p.181).

Distinctions of public and private and the civil and political are boundaries set by "hegemonic articulation," and vary in accordance with shifting sociopolitical power relations (p.185). The ideal society Laclau and Mouffe hope for is one in which a body of power (such as the news media, for instance) does not divide groups that comprise the political culture of society into winners/losers ("zero-sum game"), but one in which political arena is never dominated by one racial, ethnic, or special-interest group (p.193). According to their vision, a nonconsensual and inherently agonistic plurality of voices with their own unique set of needs to sustain themselves as a community presents an opportunity for each group to enter the political mainstream and render the idea of one hegemony moot.

As such, Mouffe (2005) sees the purpose of the radical democratic project to create the practices, discourses, and institutions for the purposes of allowing the

ongoing project of democracy to take an agonistic form (p.130). The radicalised, agonistic form of democratic participation Mouffe stands behind opposes Habermas' vision of a reconciled, consensus-based version of political participation. Mouffe's vision forces followers of the Habermasian model of political participation to put the rational, consensus-based approach under intense scrutiny to determine if it really is the most efficacious means by which to challenge political authority. If we extrapolate such a concern to the role of news media in reporting on political conflict, we are forced to ask ourselves if it is more beneficial for members of the media to tacitly align themselves with whom they, and we as a public feel is a legitimate political voice and to consequently accord them favorable news coverage, or if it is better for society to see all actors at play, irrespective of their political or social platforms?

Likewise, James Curran (1991) has voiced concerns and criticisms of the Habermasian conception of the public sphere, also stemming from an allegiance to the radical-democratic approach of political participation. Curran takes the radical-democratic approach as espoused by Mouffe and applies it to the news media as an institution, elaborating on the radical-democratic approach's challenge to Habermas' conception of the public sphere.

Curran interprets the Habermasian, classical-liberal theory of the public sphere as a space in society where private citizens can exert pressure on the state through formal and informal methods; formally, through the election of governments, and informally, through citizens pressuring the state by public

opinion (p.29). Similar to Habermas, Curran views the role of news media in a democracy as playing a central role to the process by which citizens challenge political elites, as they gather, synthesise, and disseminate information that the public uses to inform their voting decisions (p.29). In theory, news media provides citizens with an accessible forum for policy debate, which is thought to influence the conduct of government.

According to Curran, however, the classical-liberal approach, based on consensus, rationality, and rigid distinctions between public and private, does not go far enough. Conversely, the radical-democratic approach to the role of news media does not suppose distinctions between public and private and goes beyond representing divergent, or opposing views in news coverage in order to “subject to critical public scrutiny the exercise of power,” whether that is by governments, corporations, or trade unions (p.30). Rather than imagining the media as conceived of vertical channels of communication between citizens and government in traditional liberal theory, a radical-democratic approach imagines news media as the complex interplay between individuals, groups, and power structures (p.31). Such an approach takes into account that individual prerogatives in modern liberal democracies rely on political parties and special interest groups on a practical, and strategic level that invariably affect the way journalists report on political events, and who is deemed a legitimate player in political processes (p. 31).

When this formula is applied to the news media, it has the effect of changing the assumption that the media are not a “fully conscripted servant of the social

order,” but a sociopolitical instrument that is the medium of an ideological struggle between divergent interests in society where the outcomes are no longer viewed as inevitable, and inherently faithful to dominant interests (p.37). In summation, Curran suggests that if the news media adhered to a radical-democratic approach in the way that they produce their products, then the news media would resemble a public sphere that might be better able to counter the power of government and free market forces (p.52). With that articulated, I will now shift discussion toward scholars who have provided further critiques of the normative, Habermasian conception of the public sphere.

IV. Beyond a radical democratic critique of the public sphere

As this section of the chapter shall demonstrate, criticisms of the Habermas’ conceptualisation of the public sphere are numerous. Given that the public sphere is in a constant state of flux, it is essential to consider “new methodological approaches” to its application within media research that recognise and incorporate the various influences that compel us to think of the public sphere as a fluid concept (Downey 2014, p.378). As Lunt and Livingstone (2013) noted, scholarly critiques have taken aim at Habermas’ account of history (with particular emphasis on the press, and relations between the state and civil society), his political analysis (ideal of civic republicanism), and that he overlooks the exclusionary nature of his conceptualisation (based on gender, class, ethnicity, etc) (p.90). The latter point on who is included, and who is excluded, shall serve as a point of departure for

examining some of the more prominent and well-documented critiques of Habermas' conceptualisation.

Seyla Benhabib (1992) confronts the public sphere, as defined by Habermas, with the demands of the women's movement (p.93). Benhabib states that "any theory of the public, public sphere, and publicity presupposes a distinction between the public and private," (p.93) which sets apart areas such as the *public* and *private* as inherently mutually exclusive distinctions. If this sort of interpretation would be allowed to go unchallenged, it would privilege a type of discourse that, in the case of the women's movement, legitimises gender-based oppression and exploitation in the private realm (p.93). Benhabib contends that Habermas' discourse ethics are gender blind, and have largely ignored the differences in experiences of males and females, and also the power relations in the private sphere that have yet to be accounted for by Habermas' original conception (p.92).

Benhabib feels that concepts of *privacy*, *privacy rights*, and the *private sphere* work together in order to separate, albeit superficially, the distinction between public and private. The first of those, *privacy*, arose from the historical compromise between the church and state within Western European countries, which let citizens decide themselves what constitutes a good and virtuous life according to their own worldviews (p.91). *Privacy rights* was understood in terms of economic liberties, meaning noninterference from the state in the area of commodity relations (p.91). Lastly, the *private sphere* speaks to the domain of the household, where subjects such as the imminent survival needs of household members, sexuality and

reproduction, and care of the young, sick, and elderly are negotiated (p.91). For instance, Benhabib notes that the relations between members of a patriarchal household had been traditionally defined in terms of “nonconsensual, nonegalitarian assumptions,” (p.92) a notion that precluded addressing oppression taking place within the private sphere from being discussed within broader conversations of social justice.

In order to confront the distinction between public and private that can legitimise oppression taking place within the private sphere by ignoring it within public discourse, Benhabib elaborates on the distinctions between public and private that are put into place by figures who enjoy considerable sociopolitical power. Benhabib differs from Habermas in that instead of privileging rational-critical debate, she advocates “radically open” (p.89) conversation as a means to broaden the topics of conversation allowed into the public sphere. This sort of conversation prevents any and all discussants and topics from being excluded in debate by not predetermining the topics of debate to be intrinsically public, or private matters (p.89). Therefore, by bringing “any and all matters under critical scrutiny and reflexive questioning,” distinctions that determine what constitutes *justice* in the public realm, and *the good life* in the private are open to rearticulation and renegotiation through the radically open discourse Benhabib advocates. Other scholars, such as Nancy Fraser, have emphasised a reconceptualisation of Habermas’ concept on similar grounds, agreeing with it in principle, but expanding Habermas’ conception to accommodate marginalised voices and non rational-

critical forms of dialogue.

Nancy Fraser (1992) argues Habermas' conception of the public sphere is inaccessible to members of subordinated social groups such as women, non-white persons, workers, and gays and lesbians (p.123). Insofar as who decides what is legitimate political discourse in society and what is not, Fraser feels that the public sphere is classed, gendered, and accessible only to an intellectual elite. In short, Fraser feels that Habermas' original conception does not live up to the democratic and inclusionary ideals that Habermas attributes to it. Fraser does not wholly reject Habermas' original, bourgeois conception of the public sphere, as she feels that it is an indispensable tool to explore critical-social theory, and to understand the limits of late-capitalist democracies (p.111).

However, in stratified societies where social inequalities prevail, Fraser feels that it is dangerous for societal discourse to proceed in a way in which more mainstream oppositional discourses can appropriate less dominant, less mainstream ones. In this sense, the bracketing of oppositional dialogue to address perceived social inequalities usually works to the advantage of dominant, more mainstream groups in society, and to the disadvantage of those social or political groups who have traditionally operated on the fringe of mainstream acceptance (p.120). Fraser argues that in the case of Habermas' bourgeois public sphere, a "misplaced faith in the efficacy of bracketing" reproduces, and does not provide a foundation by which subordinated groups can challenge dominant discourses (p.120). This gives rise to the marginalisation of subordinated groups or ideas

both in everyday life, and also public spheres such as the press, (p.120) where commercial interests and private ownership impose strict limits on accessibility.

As a result, Fraser speaks of the “political economy of the bourgeois public sphere” which substantiates, rather than mitigates, the disparity between the dominants and subordinates (p.120). The inherent limits on open access, or publicity from a political economy perspective would mean that circulation and acceptance of certain discourses are subject to such constraints such as private ownership and the incentive for profit, which presents a problem for subordinated groups vying for acceptance and greater visibility within society through broad discursive arenas such as the press (p.120). In this sense, “political economy enforces structurally what culture accomplishes informally” (p.120), denying marginalised groups a platform (such as the press) by which they can redress their grievances. Subsequently, Fraser envisions a recontextualisation of Habermas’ bourgeois public sphere that accounts for the inadequacies she sees as endemic within the original conception.

As a response to Habermas, Fraser introduced the concept of *subaltern counterpublics*, which are “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (p.123). Fraser contends that the ideal of participatory parity, supposedly an inherent characteristic of Habermas’ public sphere, can only be achieved via many publics, rather than a single one achieved through consensus, which by its very nature is comprised of a

hierarchy that would favor one group over others (p.127).

According to Fraser, subaltern counterpublics offer a dual approach by which to counter dominant discourse and open up the discursive playing field for various participants with their own ideas, rather than many participants loosely, and perhaps unwittingly assembled under one idea. Firstly, they function as spaces where subordinated groups can assemble and challenge dominant discourses and wider publics by controlling their own speech and representation, a feat that would be less likely to be realised within the bourgeois public sphere (p.124). Through such a reconfiguration of the public sphere into many publics, instead of a single public, Fraser contends that Habermas' original concept regains its oppositional potential. Even further yet, Wahl-Jorgensen (2001) goes beyond Fraser's notion of the "counterpublic" and introduces the activist public, which she argues better accommodates the various means of public interaction (p.308). Counterpublics, Wahl-Jorgensen says, refer to subordinated groups in society, whereby the activist public absorbs the notion of counterpublics and expands its political potential by "focusing on the achievement of activist goals as the locus of public action and interaction" (p.308). Similarly, further scholarship from Downey and Fenton (2003) explored how non-mainstream discourses become part of mainstream debate through counterpublic spheres, such as alternative and new media (p.200).

In the previous section, I have noted how Fraser (1992) outlined the inherent limits of the democratic potential of Habermas' public sphere, and how subaltern counterpublics expand discursive space by virtue of competing public spheres

guided by their own premiums of dialogue, expression, and criticism. Fraser considers the implications of globalisation on the public sphere, which at this point she positions as the *transnational public sphere* (Fraser 2007). In light of the permeability between borders of nation states in the digital realm and actual physical reality, Fraser again reconsiders the traditional, Habermasian notion of the public sphere and how to make it salient within dialogues no longer bound by an immediate physical space and configurations of the nation-state. As Fraser succinctly puts it, “if states do not fully control their own territories, if they lack the sole and undivided capacity to wage war, secure order and administer law, then how can their citizenries’ public opinion be politically effective?” (p.16)

Notwithstanding the diversity of voices within the 21st century nation-state, how can legitimate, politically effective decisions be reached when decisions regarding the functioning of state apparatuses are subject to global influence from outside and within their borders? While not dismissing grassroots, localised forms of resistance and dialogue, the transnational public sphere emerges as a generally accessible, global creative commons where counter-hegemonic discourse can negotiate within a structure that is not maintained by physical space, but ideological congruency. However pressing and important it is that ideological contestation be an integral part of, and influential factor on dialogue occurring within the news media (or indeed the general public), it cannot be realised unless the identity of participants does not first preclude them from having their voices heard.

Similar to Fraser’s discussion of *subaltern counterpublics*, Warner (1992)

emphasises what he deems to be the exclusionary foundations inherent to Habermas' public sphere. Warner posits that Habermas' conception of the public sphere "others", to borrow a term from Edward Said, participants within political proceedings that are not white, male, and of certain standard of economic privilege via *self-abstraction*. By self-abstraction, I take Warner to mean that a member of a subjugated group must substantiate themselves in the public sphere by 'disembodying' their own political voice so that it can be subsumed within a 'collective', oppositional identity in hopes that their ideas and voice "transcend the given realities of their bodies and their status" (p.382).

Essentially, Warner implies that Habermas' public sphere is a seemingly ahistorical concept, which carries with it the unintended, yet harmful effect of not considering the sociopolitical disadvantage of subordinated groups in the past as it relates to their present opportunities for political gain and an enhanced, broader social currency as it relates to their future. According to Warner, the "bourgeois public sphere is a frame of reference in which it is supposed that all particularities have the same status as mere particularity" (p.383).

Thus, for example, the Habermasian public sphere assumes a symmetrical relationship between men and women, black and white, wealthy and impoverished, and heterosexual and homosexual. As such, Warner suggests that the public sphere, in theory and practice, unintentionally affirms hegemonic notions of who is allowed to legitimately enter political dialogue by suppressing the identity of the 'othered' participants whose identities would ordinarily bring into question notions of

gender, class, race, and sexual orientation biases. Therefore, individuals would be refuted not because of who they *are*, but who they are *not* due to the suppression of their identity.

What Warner argues is that the viability of the public sphere should be judged not only by who is admitted into it and contributing to political dialogue, but also who and what they represent when they are within that space. As Warner notes, “the political meaning of the public subject’s self-alienation is one of the most important sites of struggle in contemporary culture” (p.387). Key to that struggle is the media’s representation of the public as a political body, and the effect of the public’s representation within the media on the type of, and the potential for engendering a critical, non-passive political discourse. The public sphere shall be discussed next as a viable site for broad contestation and reclamation of political identity.

Kevin M. DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples (2002) took the Habermasian, consensus-based notion of the public sphere and recontextualised it in the aftermath of the anti-globalisation protests in Seattle during the World Trade Organization meeting in December of 1999. DeLuca and Peeples define Habermas’ public sphere as a concept which “denotes a social space wherein private citizens gather as a public body with the rights of assembly, association, and expression in order to form public opinion (p.128). As such, the public sphere “assumes open access, the bracketing of social inequalities, rational discussion, a focus on common issues, face-to-face conversation as the privileged medium, and the ability to achieve

consensus” (p.128). They noted that Habermas mourns the loss of the bourgeois public sphere to the rise of a saturating, cacophonous mass media, leaving the door open for spectacle and consumerism to dominate. However, DeLuca and Peebles stress that Habermas’ understanding of the public sphere privileges consensus at the expense of muting out dissent and de-legitimising visceral resistance, but do remain faithful to the general notion of the public sphere as an essential means to evaluate democratic discourse and its manifestations within society (p.128).

For DeLuca and Peebles, events such as the volatile anti-globalisation protests in Seattle provide the opportunity to critically engage the Habermasian, consensus-based notion of the public sphere. The Seattle protests also provided the opportunity to bring the public sphere up to speed with a hypermediate mass media world in which broadcast and digital media become the real and virtual battleground in which sociopolitical resistance aims to legitimate itself. DeLuca and Peebles supplement what they feel is the antiquated, consensus-based version of the public sphere with the concept of the *public screen* as the new “metaphor for thinking about the places of politics and the possibilities of citizenship in our present moment” (p.131).

Their idea of the public screen gives a nod to a technologically determinist perspective, stating “television and the Internet in concert have fundamentally transformed the media matrix that constitutes our social milieu, producing new forms of social organization and new modes of perception” (p.131). The public screen seeks to push political debate beyond the face-to-face, rational dialogue

governing relations between private citizens and the politically powerful in the public sphere, and expand that dialogue to print, television, and online channels as a site where private citizens can create spectacles of non-consensual criticism specifically for the media coverage. That resistance, in turn, is then broadcast to an unlimited number of viewers at any given time without having to rely on Habermasian preconditions of consensus and civility.

DeLuca and Peebles make an important point to consider regarding the interplay of spectacle and critique, however. Rather than the public screen either privileging public spectacle or political critique, it instead privileges political critique *through* public spectacles due to organised protest groups performing *image events*, which are highly symbolic forms of protest conducted specifically to attract and retain media coverage (e.g. vandalism against corporate targets). Activists then employ the subsequent publicity and media coverage as an accessible medium for forming public opinion and “holding corporations and states accountable” (p.134).

This speaks to the role of symbolic property violence during the protests, and what those who participated in it hoped to achieve. According to an anarchist quoted by DeLuca and Peebles, symbolic property destruction was carried out so that viewers of the coverage would consider the “economic incentives to not hold meetings like that at all”, and the “psychological incentive to reconsider the kind of society we live in that fills our world with Starbucks and McDonalds” (p.145). In terms of the Egyptian Revolution, by conducting symbolic forms of protest to attract

coverage, and by co-opting news media channels to broadcast the images and rhetoric of their struggle, the opposition protesters in Egypt could then go beyond the heads of the Egyptian media and government, and shape global public opinion on their own terms through radically-democratic forms of political participation, such as physically occupying, and protesting within a symbolic place such as Tahrir Square in Cairo.

For the protester, whether in Seattle or Cairo, the public screen mitigates the power of corporate or political elites to manipulate and influence the news media, and allows citizens to contest dominant political narratives. While not disregarding Habermas' conception of the public sphere, DeLuca and Peeples argue that it neglects the power that something like the public screen engenders citizens with. Since DeLuca and Peeples put the premium on the image of resistance on getting broadcasted, they conclude that "given the importance of the image on the public screen, even powerful corporations are vulnerable to imagefare and must be protective of their public image" (p.134). Their conclusion could ostensibly also include governments or political figures. For DeLuca and Peeples, the WTO protests did not mark the end of the Habermasian public sphere, but instead engendered scholars and activists alike to rename and reframe it as the public screen in the next stage of its evolution.

Furthermore, implicit within the concept of the 'public screen' is the recognition of the role of emotion within political engagement. Indeed, the liberal-democratic model predicated upon rationality does not account for, or appreciate

the productive capacity of emotion within political engagement, especially considering that “rational citizenship may also be emotional” (Wahl-Jorgensen 2008, p.158). Thus, the lasting value of the ‘public screen’ is that, on a conceptual and practical value, it moves beyond an emphasis on rational-critical dialogue, and acknowledges the productive nature of radical, emotional acts of political participation.

Lastly, scholarship in recent years has argued that the rise of the internet has opened up the possibility for an expansion of the public sphere into the digital realm (Dahlberg 2001, Papacharissi 2002, Barton 2005). The essence of the internet as a new communication technology is its utility as a public space in which individuals of “different cultural backgrounds, states, or countries” can be involved in political discussions almost instantaneously (Papacharissi 2002, p.23).

Conversely, Dahlgren (2001) has noted several impediments to the elevation of the internet from a public space to a public sphere, most notably 1) the increasing commodification of cyberspace that threatens the autonomy of online public interaction, that 2) reflexivity does not figure prominently within online discussions (p.15), and 3) “the extent to which resource inequalities determine how discourses are fostered online” needs to be considered (Dahlberg 2007, p.838), with the last point echoing concerns previously expressed within Fraser’s (1992) critique of Habermas’ original conceptualisation. Despite these limitations, the internet represents fertile ground for the formation of counter public spheres (Downey and Fenton 2003) where citizens can influence the development of a new democratic

politics (Dahlgren 2005, p.160) by contesting “the discursive boundaries of the mainstream public sphere” (Dahlberg 2007, p.60).

V. Conclusion

This chapter has primarily discussed and evaluated the historical roots of, and conceptual and practical terrain in which a critical, vibrant democratic polity can adequately challenge authority. Specifically, this task has been argued for by beginning with an evaluation of Habermas’ (1989) concept of the public sphere, and shifted to those who have critiqued and expanded on Habermas’ conceptualisation to accommodate radical forms of democratic participation. My discussion of Habermas’ public sphere (1989), Mouffe’s agonistic public sphere (2005), and other scholars who have expanded upon, or modified Habermas’ conceptualisation (Benhabib 1992, Fraser 1992, Wahl-Jorgensen 2001, DeLuca and Peeples 2002, Downey et al. 2012 (a), 2012 (b)) of what critical democratic participation entails has allowed me to see the ways in which political participation has moved beyond the ‘rational-critical’ approach.

As a result, this chapter is less about repudiating Habermas’ original conceptualisation of the public sphere, and more about understanding why his concept continues to enjoy widespread currency while acknowledging the scholarship of those who have identified flaws within it. Indeed, the public sphere is a unique tool by which to judge whether British and American print news outlets fulfilled their role as the “preeminent institution of the public” that served as

a platform privileging the political voice of Egyptian citizens who came out to protest against the country's longtime authoritarian president, Hosni Mubarak.

The next chapter of this literature review will shift focus towards how power, as a conceptual and practical tool, is an influential and vital factor on how citizens in a democracy interpret the political lifeworld around them, and also in legitimising certain forms of political participation, such as protest. Power, translated in this context to mean the ability in which political authority or a nation-state can influence its institutional surroundings and subjects, is often given preferential treatment within debate occurring within the news media. Oftentimes, the logic of power goes unchallenged, and the news media environment functions more like an echo chamber of the powerful, rather than a platform for debate and contestation in which citizens can participate, as outlined within this chapter. Thus, the following chapter shall discuss the implications of power on the political role and actions of citizens, and the influence of power on how the news media subsequently interpret those roles and actions within press coverage.

Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall provide conceptual starting points exploring how power is maintained within society, while also compelling us to look at power relationships beyond a rigid, top-down, authoritarian context. What Foucault's and Hall's thoughts suggest is that those with power in society maintain it not by exclusively attacking opponents, but by depending on visible systems of communication which allow certain figures and movements to access the public sphere unchallenged, and thereby gain sociopolitical currency within it.

Additionally, Edward Said's concept of *Orientalism* (1978) is of paramount importance to the discussion of power, and how *othering* influences the way the governing elite, media, and citizens of a particular country might view geographically distant nations through the prism of cultural relativity and ideological incompatibility. This will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter of my literature review.

Chapter 2: The influence of power on the construction of news

I. Introduction

Within this chapter, I will be arguing that power is a key determinant influencing the construction of reality and political identity within the news media.

Power, if we understand it as the ability to influence or manipulate, is a concept that is exercised daily in journalistic practices and routines, and is materialised in what becomes the final news product. As a means of pursuing my argument, I will be drawing on several influential scholars and theorists to explain and contextualise the nature, effect, and manifestations of power within news media discourses, even if their work does not explicitly address the news media (e.g. Michel Foucault).

While there are indeed many possible points of departure from which to address theories attempting to articulate the nature and influence of power in society, I shall first discuss Michel Foucault. Foucault's theories on the articulations of power offer scholars a point of entry by which to engage the topic of how the powerful in society determine the ways politicians, policy makers, and citizens come to interpret the world around them. An exploration of Foucault's reflections on power, its political implications, and how it relates to a scholarly examination of the political role of news media will form the first section of this chapter. Though Foucault's importance to critical theory, and as one of the main theorists discussed in this chapter cannot be underestimated, his work cannot go unchallenged or accepted uncritically. Nonetheless, Foucault provides a point of departure for

a more abstract evaluation of power before discussing it in a more practical, tangible, and media-centric context.

Additionally, this chapter will discuss Stuart Hall and Edward Said. Both scholars offer concepts that will assist my research in teasing out, and forming the conceptual boundaries of a theoretical exploration of how power influences the construction of identity and representation within the news media. Regarding Hall, the discussion will naturally entail concepts such as maps of meaning, signification, regimes of representation, and primary and secondary definers. Unlike Foucault, Hall relates such concepts to examinations of the news media and cultural industries, which will serve as conceptual templates that I will draw on in my own research. Furthermore, I will discuss specific examples Hall gives pertaining to how regimes of representation and primary and secondary definers shape and construct representation within the news media.

Regarding Said, a look at his concept of *Orientalism* (1978) will detail the significance of analysing how the politically, culturally, or socially powerful make sense of the world beyond their immediate purview, and the subsequent effect that has on how ordinary citizens orient themselves in reaction to political struggles taking place in distant societies. Inevitably, the reductionism inherent within Orientalist discourses often times constructs political movements in distant societies as beneficial to, or threatening towards, Western interests, and no place is seemingly more ripe for analysis in terms of examining potential Orientalist narratives than the news media. I will then discuss several scholars who have used

Said's concept of Orientalism as a theoretical template within their own research.

Lastly, this chapter will be rounded out with a discussion of Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses. Althusser's concept will allow me to determine how news media can assist in the perpetuation of dominant ideological outlooks that may not be to the benefit of society as a whole, and how the media constructs political subjects, which will be the focus of the latter chapters within this literature review.

II. Situating 'power' in theory, and in practice

For Foucault, *power* is not strictly a repressive, reductionist concept that political figures use to manipulate or omit certain elements within society. On the contrary, what made power accepted within society is not only its repressive elements, no matter how subtle, but its ability to traverse boundaries and produce forms of knowledge, which is subsequently explicated within any given discourse (Foucault 1980, edited by Colin Gordon, p.119). Power, in Foucault's words, "needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body" (p.119). Therein lies the implication that power must be explicated, accepted, and transmitted in order to achieve full potency as a political tool.

Foucault speaks of *regimes of truth* that exist in every society that produce certain discourses about reality that those in power make function and be accepted as truth within the greater social body (p.131). Thus, Foucault outlines the 'political economy of truth' as defined by five important traits: 'truth' is always centered upon

discourse and the institutions which produce it; the 'demand' for truth is subject to political and economic incitement; truth is the object of immense dissemination and consumption, in that it circulates, largely uncontested, throughout the educational and informational apparatuses of society; truth is produced and transmitted under the dominant control of a few great political and economic apparatuses (universities, army, writing, media); and lastly, truth is the concept underpinning ideological struggles contesting the prevailing social and political norms (p.131-132). Thus, what those in power define as 'truth' and impress upon the rest of society to accept as such defines the institutions, ideologies, and practices that combine to form the societies in which citizens live.

As a matter of principle, Foucault defines political problems not as issues of 'science' and 'ideology,' but in terms of 'truth' and 'power' (p.132). Truth, Foucault says, is to be "understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements" linked within systems of power which produce and sustain truth (p.133). Truth, then, is linked within a circular relation to systems of power (e.g. political, economic, media), which induce and extend the effects of power, hence the concept *regime of truth* (p.133). The end point of Foucault's discussion of truth is that it must not be pried from the grasp of every system of power, but that truth must be freed from dominant forms of governmental, political, economic, and cultural hegemonies (p.133). In summation, the political question for Foucault is not truth itself; but its composition and the political ends truth serves (p.133). As a point of entry into

what constitutes power and how it operates, an examination of Foucault suggests that we approach such a question through an analysis of the discursive.

Myra Macdonald (2003) explores Foucault's reflections on discourse as the key communicative component in which power is explicated and dominance asserted, aligning with Foucault's suggestion that discourse should replace the material world as an object of analysis. Macdonald posits that such a theoretical position on discourse "obliges us to reinstate the relationship between the operation of the text and the world beyond the text" (p.1). As Macdonald notes, Foucault's concept of discourse compels us to acknowledge that "all forms of knowing and talking about reality require position-taking, and consequently help to construct the very phenomena of which they speak" (p.11). Clearly, reality exists outside of discourse, but Macdonald supports the Foucauldian notion that through discourse, we exchange ideas about, and interpret reality (p.11).

Discourse, as Macdonald argues, should be explored according to what Foucault deemed their 'tactical productivity,' relating to what discourses produce in terms of power and knowledge, and 'strategic integration,' which speaks to the circumstances and rules in which power produces knowledge (p.18). Thus, in terms of knowledge, Macdonald subscribes to the Foucauldian notion that breaks with the Enlightenment understanding of a common pool of knowledge, universally accessible, existing independently of human communicative frameworks (p.33). Subsequently, in the context of this research, we can then examine an object of study as a historically specific moment in which knowledge is produced by institutions

with significant sociopolitical cache. As Barry (2001) observes, such a formulation constructs that which is under examination as a subject and object of government, as their identities and attitudes are influenced by power (p.199).

Admittedly, there is a danger in putting the locus of research on governmental power, as in the case of this research project. As Shapiro (2004) observes, “power is most often exercised, individually and collectively, in entities other than state institutions” (p.13). Such a point, however, compels us to pay special attention to the media as a communicative medium of power. It need not matter whether the individual or collective application of power comes in the form of personal relationships or transnational commerce (p.13), as the point emerges that power is not the exclusive tool of the politically influential, and does not have to be situated within a political context in order to possess a broader social currency. Even in the absence of domineering state power, private individuals who possess substantial sums of monetary wealth can use that as a coercive measure to ensure that their own initiatives are either privileged or fully actualised, creating new forms of oppression and inequality (Tilly 2004, p.37).

More specifically, Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) reflect that political communication, in general terms, is bound by the “reciprocal flow of influence between the media and other social institutions” (p.28). Thus, communication within a news media environment that is fertile for the reproduction of power relations tends to privilege the reciprocal dependencies that underlie the relationship between the news media and institutional actors, whether public or

private (p.29).

Such a co-dependency between an institution such as the news media and public or private institutions and actors speaks to the constraints with which journalists must work around to uphold an ostensibly democratic communications environment (p.29). Yet, in summation, we still must heed to Shapiro's cautionary note against overextending the influence and agency of governmental power as something that any scholar examining power relationships, no matter the context, must take into account and carefully examine within their research. Indeed, while it is useful for us to consider the circular and reproductive nature of discursive regimes of power, Foucault does not interrogate the political consequences of power (p.36).

Alan Sheridan's (1980) interpretations of Foucault's theories on power relations seek to distance the idea of power relations from that of a rigid struggle between vested interests and ideologies to one between that of the governed, and governing (p.131). Sheridan interprets Foucault as seeing the powerful in society as dependent upon widespread, and visible systems of communication to maintain their positions and presence within society (p.131). In essence, various systems of communication and information resources (such as the news media) extract, appropriate, distribute, and aid in the retention of knowledge in society (p.131). We can think of news media organisations as possessing a power structure resembling that of a government's. News media outlets depend on consent from society for power, which is conferred by a steady viewer or readership, and on governments or

other official sources for the information by which they negotiate what is, and what is not valid citizen participation within a democracy (p.131).

It is useful here to mention Stuart Hall's discussion of the relevance and importance of official sources within the news gathering process, and how that importance is reflected within the actual news product. Hall (1999) notes that the voice of official sources, such as high-status private individuals, powerful political officials, or figures given the mandate to uphold law, public order, and provide security, such as the police, are given considerable leverage above other non-official voices within news coverage of controversial topics (p.250). Official sources are 'accredited sources,' which Hall references in his discussion of primary and secondary definers. A more detailed discussion of primary and secondary definers will feature within the upcoming section on Hall's work.

Official sources are seen as having access to more accurate and specialized information on topics, and thus citizens, journalists and commentators defer to their interpretations and definitions above others. By virtue of journalists privileging their analysis, official sources set a media agenda for the interests they represent, disperse information as they see relevant to their goals and interests, and discredit oppositional voices by virtue of their professional position and experience. For example, Hall cites the example of race relations in Britain, as once they are framed as a 'problem of numbers' (how many blacks there are in the country), liberal spokesmen or politicians who provide evidence suggesting the contrary are nonetheless obliged to subscribe, albeit implicitly, to the idea that the debate is

indeed about numbers (p.255), rather than the underlying economic, social, and political issues kept out of the forefront of debate. As information given by official sources relates to coverage of political protest, it helps me explain why the nuances of conflict are often passed over by journalists who rely on the voice of police, government, or other powerful public and private figures to provide situational context.

Tying official sources back in with Foucault, commentary from official sources inform what Foucault refers to as *societies of discourse* – who produce and preserve the dominant discourse surrounding a topic by producing it within a restricted group, such as the news media (Sheridan 1980, p.126). For example, if it is the policy of a nation's government to privilege foreign political movements that might be beneficial to their vested interests, then the news outlets in that nation would follow the government's lead and privilege that political movement. News media in that nation would do so by highlighting the "signs" accompanying a political movement's discourse (such as the gestures, behavior within, and circumstances of the protest) as intrinsic to the movement that they are attempting to legitimise (p.126).

Continuing on this thread, Eric Paras (2006) explored the circumstances and conditions by which Foucault felt there could be a legitimate 'revolution' that transformed a country's political structure. Paras further elaborated on Foucault's comments that dismiss the possibility of human individuality as a means by which to oppose oppression and domination within society.

The first point, regarding the conditions in which Foucault felt there could be a legitimate revolution in society, were expressed through his thoughts on the growing turmoil in Iran after the infamous “Black Friday” massacre, in which the pre-Islamic Republic Iranian security forces killed scores of protesters in Tehran on September 8, 1978. Paras commented that Foucault stood behind the nature of the uprising “by the fact that it was not Marxist, not revolutionary, not political, not even philosophical. It was a *Sobibor* – a collective uprising” (p.97). Additionally, Paras quoted Foucault as saying “One fact should be clear: by ‘Islamic’ government, no one in Iran means a political regime in which the clergy would play a role of direction or leadership” (p.76). It is necessary to acknowledge Foucault’s comments about this specific sociopolitical event, since it relates to how and why he supported the revolutionary movement that eventually overthrew the Shah that same year, then legitimating it due to its “collective” nature, and overlooking the possibility that an Islamic government might could be oppressive as well.

Speaking on human individuality, Paras wrote that Foucault interpreted it not being “a weapon with which to oppose oppression and domination,” instead placing individuality within the realm of the powerful in society (p.78). Foucault commented “I do not believe in the least that individualization is opposed to power, but on the contrary, I would say that our *individuality* – the obligatory identity of each of us – is the effect and instrument of power” (p.78). It is important to note this within my research so as to effectively draw the limits of Foucault’s utility in this instance, as Foucault did not view the individual as possessing the political agency

to effect change, leaving that strictly to the actions of “collective” movements.

Similarly, Fraser (1994) faults Foucault for overlooking forms of domination (p.195). The criticism Fraser reserves for Foucault stems from what she believes is Foucault’s inability to substantiate the political judgments he makes (p.195). Furthermore, Fraser questions whether Foucault’s political judgments effectively distinguish between fruitful and unfruitful, acceptable and unacceptable forms of resistance to domination, and lastly whether his judgments go beyond concluding if change is possible, but rather what sort of change is desirable (p.195). With respect to these concerns, Fraser finds Foucault’s political judgments lacking (p.195).

Such inadequacies are addressed in detail within Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson’s (2005) analysis of Foucault’s comments on the Iranian revolution. Afary and Anderson focus more on feminist and historical critiques of Foucault’s Iran commentary. For instance, Afary and Anderson cite that Foucault seemed unaware of the fact that Shia Islam was imposed on the population during the 16th century, and instead referring to it as the language of resistance throughout Iranian history (p.84). Additionally, the authors contend that Foucault ignored the warning signs for women’s rights that Khomeini’s revolution seemed to pose from the outset, such as unveiled women being insulted on the streets, which an Iranian exile named ‘Atoussa H.’ noted in her rejoinder to Foucault’s comments (p.92). Instead, Foucault directed his caution towards the danger he felt that “modern forms of social and political power that had grown up alongside liberal democracy” presented to the revolution, all the while describing the political will of the Iranian people as

perfectly unified (p.90).

The link I seek to make between Foucault's miscalculation of the dissent in Iran during the revolution, and the Western news media's lens by which they legitimise or delegitimise foreign political movements, is that both look at dissent taking place abroad with a patently myopic gaze. Claims of objectivity or allegiance to progressive values should not distract researchers from paying heed to the political and cultural history out of which purportedly "collective" movements arise. Instead, researchers must focus on whose interests the movement in question serves, while not making premature judgments as to whether the "revolt, uprising, or movement" (Paras 2006, p.96) being discussed is benefitting society as a whole, or certain quarreling members of a nation's political and social elite. Such a question naturally brings the role of news media into the equation, and how it is influenced by power wielded by governments, or from private individuals.

Van Dijk (1995), in his research, examines the power of media and its ability to influence the relationship between power structures and audiences. The power of news media, van Dijk notes, is generally bound to symbolic and persuasive terrains, more or less in alignment with agenda-setting theory, in that news media do not tell you what to think, but what to think *about* (p.10). Thus, the attendant effect on audiences is that they tend to accept news coverage as legitimate and accurate (p.11). News media organisations are no longer exclusively arbiters between political figures and institutions and the public, if they ever truly were. Rather, they themselves are institutions boasting elite power and considerable currency in

political and social realms (p.11). News media organisations control and produce discourse, selecting what aspects of dialogue and imagery combine to complete a media narrative (p.11). Taken altogether, the ability of news media organisations to produce or influence discourse speaks to the ability of power to shape the political role citizens see themselves having, and the ways in which they interpret manifestations of political participation or protest occurring in other parts of the world.

Altogether, van Dijk's analysis of the news media's capacity to exert influence and control what aspects of reality become, and remain salient for citizens validates the suggestion that news media adopt the perspectives and legitimate the domination of elite thought (p.27).

Additionally, when 'universally-desirable' concepts such as freedom, democracy, and human rights comes to the fore in coverage, van Dijk asserts that such concepts are pursued often to delegitimise the leaders and governments of nations hostile to Western interests, while ignoring such concerns for Western client-states (p.27). Essentially, it must be considered that the interests of governments and news media organisations are not formed and produced independent of one another, but are rather the products of each system of power (p.29). Relating such an assertion to the realm of news media coverage and foreign policy, van Dijk posits that foreign policy initiatives without the support of the press cannot be legitimated or realised to a significant degree (p.29), least of all garner broad support amongst the public.

Within this section's discussion of Foucault and his significance to my research as part of the theoretical foundation of this project, I have reflected on notions of power, and demonstrated how it operates within a sociopolitical domain such as the news media. The process by which members of the news media select and identify certain elements of political happenings and incorporate them within media coverage will be the dominant focus of the next section of this chapter. In summation, not only do news media outlets have the ability to construct reality for citizens, but inherent within the capacity to construct is the ability to control how certain aspects of reality are then represented within reporting. With that in mind, I will turn my focus to Stuart Hall and Edward Said, whose theories and ideas exploring textual construction and visual representation within the news media are essential to understanding the processes by which certain political movements are, or are not, accorded legitimacy.

III. Power and representation

A. Constructing identity within news coverage

Hall (1999) speaks to how members of the news media cover events of high social value, playing up the "extraordinary, dramatic, tragic elements" within a story to enhance the newsworthiness of it (p.250). This leads to the *process of signification*, which translates to giving social meaning to events, as well as constructing reality on the basis of consensus. Subsequently, Hall posits that journalists shape the pool of knowledge from which citizens form their cultural and

political knowledge via *maps of meanings*, which serve as ideological templates for them to make sense of events in society as they relate to their fundamental interests, values, and concerns (p.251).

For example, if events taking place in distant societies are not to be understood as random and chaotic events with no bearing on the rest of the world, or possessing no conceptual point of entry by which the rest of the world can understand and react to the events, members of the news media must identify (name, define, and relate events known to the audience via conceptual templates, such as democratic values) and assign a social context (placing an event within a frame of meanings similar to the audience, e.g., freedom, democracy) (p.250). As Hall notes, the process of identification and contextualisation is how events taking place across the world are given meaning by the news media (p.250).

The interplay between *signification* and *maps of meaning* causes citizens to ask themselves whether events unfolding beyond the borders of their locality, region, or nation-state offend, shock, or upset their interpretation of the world, and the role they envision their country playing in it. This sort of interplay becomes especially acute when the event up for debate is inherently political in nature, and has a decided impact on the nature of the discourse that evolves between citizens, journalists, and policy makers. Thus, as Davis (2007) notes in his discussion of Hall, the media rely on those in positions of authority to lend an air of credibility to their accounts of reality, which in turn reinforces power in the communicative process (p.40). Indeed, such accounts of reality that are constructed within the news media

establishes a relationship between the politically powerful, the press, and the public where the aims of the powerful are awarded legitimacy in the press (p.40) and subsequently absorbed as that which is closest to truth by the public.

Signification and maps of meaning, in a sense, tie back to Foucauldian notions of truth and power. As previously indicated in this chapter, Foucault (1980) defines political problems not as issues of 'science' and 'ideology,' but in terms of 'truth' and 'power' (p.132) which should be "understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements" linked within systems of power that produce and sustain truth (p.133). If we take the abstract notion of 'systems of power' and put it into a more practical context such as the news media industry, the news media serve as a conduit through which the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of information or ideas must emerge from in order to achieve broader social and political currency. Once that information, or those ideas are accepted as legitimate by media gatekeepers and disseminated to the public at-large, they produce discourses about the world which citizens adhere to in an effort to make sense of their everyday lives. Hall (1992), like Foucault, notes that a discourse is the production of knowledge through language (p.291).

In summation, Hall and Foucault share a similar understanding of discourse, insofar as Hall notes that discourses can be produced by many individuals in many different institutions, and that discourses are not closed, top-down systems aiding in the production of knowledge (p.292). Discourses, as Hall reflects, draw on

certain aspects of other discourses, binding them within a network of meaning to understand social or political movements as they regularly form and dissolve in societies across the globe (p.292). Throughout Hall's discussion of discourse, implicit within it is perhaps what most logically ties Foucault and Hall together, that being the issue of *power*. As it has been discussed, power's circulatory nature and ability to produce forms of knowledge while traversing ideological and geographic boundaries constructs the templates by which citizens come to understand their immediate surroundings and the world beyond. As this literature review moves into the more practical terrain of representation within the news media in the next chapter, we must not forget that at the core of our understanding of sociopolitical events are written and visual texts influenced by discursive regimes of power.

B. Representation and signifying practices

Representation, as Hall (1997) says, connects meaning and language to culture, and is an essential component by which language is used to represent the world meaningfully to others (p.15). Thus, representation is a part of the process in which members of society produce meaning for themselves and others, employing the use of language and signs or symbols to represent what is understood as actually existing reality (p.15). According to Hall, in order for people to interpret the world around them, they must access, and then interpret the world through two systems of representation: first, the set of correspondences between people, ideas, objects and our system of concepts, and the second, where the set of

correspondences constructed is then organised into a language which represents the concept (p.19).

Taken altogether, representation is the production of meaning through the textual, verbal, and visual cues that constitute our everyday lives. In the context of the news media, the processes of representation are discernible as a script for how members of society make sense of their immediate surroundings, in addition to events taking place in the world beyond the intellectual and physical borders of the state, for which news media play a prominent and essential role. As such, representation is an instrumental model for analysing the meanings of particular texts and images. By examining how people, concepts, or events are represented within a communicative space such as the news media, we can decipher what the text says, what its message is, how it relays inscribed messages, and to what effect. A more detailed discussion of Hall is needed to show why his concepts need to be integrated into a broader, conceptual discussion of the political role of news media.

Moving onward with the conceptual discussion of representation, Hall (1997) asserts that “the whole repertoire of imagery and visual effects through which ‘difference’ is represented at any one historical moment” should be known as a regime of representation (p.232). Within the context of a news media narrative, regimes of representation are the dialogue, photography, and other associated audiovisual elements of a particular sociopolitical event that are woven together to promote a certain interpretation of that event.

Additionally, binary oppositions are a valuable conceptual framework to

draw on, as they put the diversity of sensitive, complex situations, such as political protest, within an ideological context palatable to journalists and their audiences. However, Hall also notes that they are a “crude and reductionist way to establish meaning,” (p.235) often falling victim to hyperbole. For example, particular views of good and evil in the world can automatically, and without proper interrogation, confer the status of legitimacy on political or social groups that can lead to reductionist, harmful, and ultimately counterproductive discourses. Hall lists several examples of binary oppositions, most notably white/black, day/night, masculine/feminine, upper class/lower class, and British/non-British (p.235). While individuals rely on difference between subjects, objects, and places to make sense of reality, in terms of political discourses, binary oppositions can establish power relations that do not seek to alleviate or understand difference, but identify difference as ideologically compatible or incompatible with what is understood as familiar and normal.

Lastly, I would like to elaborate on the aforementioned concepts of primary and secondary definers. I draw on Hall’s (1999) concepts of primary and secondary definers to explain the influence of the powerful on how news media produce reality for citizens. When Hall speaks of primary definers, he refers to the institutions, interest groups, or people who are themselves part of the government, or have the capacity to influence it, and thus “sets the limit for all subsequent discussion by framing what the problem is” (p.255). Primary definers provide a framework by which all subsequent contributions to a dialogue are defined as either relevant or

irrelevant (p.255). For example, Hall mentions that journalists, when reporting on political topics, will seek out commentary from MPs and an 'accredited source' to give an authoritative analysis of whatever issue is being contested (p.254). What this then means is that instead of journalists acting as a bulwark against the interests or influence of the powerful, they perhaps unwittingly orient their coverage in a way that is in tune with the definitions of good policy or social reality that only 'accredited sources' – ostensibly driven by a objective pursuit of knowledge – can provide (p.254).

In terms of secondary definers, Hall speaks of the news media's structured subordination to the politically powerful in the primary/secondary definer context, commenting that the preference given to the voice of 'accredited sources' by journalists symbolically reproduces existing power structures in society's institutional order (p.254). In summation, the transmission of dominant ideas depend not so much on force, but on non-coercive means to ensure their reproduction and transmission (p.256).

Without dismissing the importance of Hall and the opportunities his work offers in terms of offering points of entry by which scholars can approach and discuss how power affects the ways certain issues or events are portrayed, some scholars have taken a more critical stance towards some of Hall's work. Cottle (2003), in analysing Hall's thoughts on how the news media privilege the voice and logic of the powerful who subsequently become the 'primary definers' of events within news coverage, faults Hall for failing to adequately address the implications

of the relationship between news sources and news producers (p.10).

To expand on Cottle's point, if we were to accept Hall's stance that 'primary definers' command the discursive field within the media, set the terms of debate, and cast news producers as unwitting purveyors of dominant ideologies (p.11), we would be adhering to a reductionist take positioning the interplay between state power and the media to a top-down fashion that precludes one from viewing the media as a site of struggle between news producers and sources.

Schlesinger and Tumber (1999) outline several criticisms of Hall's concept of primary definers. First, they call into question the legitimacy of deeming a source a primary definer, since such a designation does not take into account the competition amongst sources to influence a news story (Schlesinger and Tumber 1999, p.258). Additionally, they question who would be deemed the 'primary definer' in a dispute between governmental elites, and if there can be many primary definers, rather than just one (p.258).

Second, there is the question of what constitutes the boundaries of primary definition. Not all members of the political class have equal access to the news media in the way that prime ministers and presidents do, who can subsequently influence news coverage to enhance their reach and legitimacy amongst the viewing public as a dominant source (p.259). Such inequalities of access are not taken into account within Hall's formulation of primary definers (p.259). Third, Schlesinger and Tumber fault Hall for assuming the passivity of the news media and their ostensible reticence to challenge elite opinion (p.259). Indeed, if that were the case,

then there would be no such thing as investigative, or advocacy journalism.

Furthermore, the collapsing boundaries between 'primary' and 'secondary definers' has been noted within recent scholarship (McLaughlin 2008, Greer and McLaughlin 2011), with research from Kunelius and Renvall (2010) pointing towards the rise of citizens as 'primary definers'. These are compelling points to consider, as the rigid distinction between primary and secondary definers, and the presumed passivity of secondary definers (journalists) cannot be taken for granted given the enormous changes within the news production process in a 24/7 media culture alongside a "public context characterized by considerable disillusionment with political processes and distrust of expert authority" (McLaughlin 2008, p.152).

Despite these criticisms, Hall remains a central part of my theoretical framework exploring how and why journalists construct and represent topics of political significance within news texts. As the discussion of Hall draws to a close, the next section of this chapter shall shift focus to examining the cultural and political frameworks used to understand the world beyond one's everyday experiences. In the context of this research project, it is particularly useful to draw upon such frameworks to understand how foreign political movements are contextualised when they enter the global news cycle.

Notions of 'East' and 'West' are a popular, yet reductionist means by which nations, groups, or individuals come to understand what is culturally and politically compatible, and what is potentially threatening. For example, if a power struggle erupts within a country that has long been regarded as a threat or of critical

importance to Western powers, the focus of that power struggle or dissent within news coverage might be which faction of the struggle will be beneficial or harmful to Western powers, potentially framing the event in a way that is incongruent with the reality of the situation. As Hall (1992) argues, the notion of the 'West' is a historical, and not a geographic construct, which allows for the classification of societies to be boxed into rigid, and arbitrary categories of 'Western' and 'non-Western" (p.277), democratic and non-democratic, and allies and antagonists.

Indeed, the concept of the 'West' or what is 'Western' induces us to condense the text and imagery emanating from a distant country into a composite picture that is palatable to our own cultural frame of reference, irrespective of the accuracy of doing so (p.277). Essentially, the concept of the 'West' provides us with criteria of evaluation against which other societies or nations are pitted against and ranked, with positive and negative opinions being subsequently developed into *knowledge* about the areas in question (p.277). For instance, are the nations, ideas, or peoples in question modern, industrial, capitalistic, Judeo-Christian, democratic, and 'secular' according to Western standards? Or do they follow a political, economic, and religious philosophy that presents itself as an ideological adversary, and thus as a threat to Western security? Within the next section, Edward Said, and his concept of *Orientalism*, will be examined and employed as a conceptual tool to understand how the 'West' (in particular its media) makes sense of the political and social dynamics of the Middle East. My discussion of Said is not to say that Orientalist tropes will necessarily be dominant within news media coverage of the Egyptian

Revolution, but it is to say that his work is important to reflect upon within any project examining Western news media coverage of politics within the Middle East.

IV. The notion of the 'other'

A. Western perceptions of the Middle East

The complex and diverse nature of politics in the Middle East means that Western politicians, journalists, and citizens alike endow themselves with the authority to make sense out of groups, events, processes, and identities in accordance to their own cultural, political, and social templates. Indeed, this may have coloured and shaped the Western press' coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. In *Covering Islam*, Said (1997) notes that Islam is bound with the idea of the Orient, or the non-West.

To Said, the Orient has always been viewed as an inferior part of the world, but is looked at with a certain sense of awe and fear in the West due to the West endowing the Orient with a greater sense of size and potential for power (p.4). Since the Orient is the birthplace of Islam (and therefore Islam is seen as exclusively belonging to the Orient), Western thought regarding Islam has been defined by hostility, fear, and suspicion (p.4). With the expansion of Islam during the Middle Ages, Islam has not only been seen as a considerable force gaining widespread traction within the Orient, but also as a direct challenge to Christianity, and therefore the West (p.5).

For example, Said attributed this paradigm to how the Western press

covered and interpreted the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979-1981 for global audiences. Said's analysis of coverage from the hostage crisis shows that news media in the West are shaped by cultural, social, and political reductionisms combined with a perceptible allegiance to the nation-state when another nation poses a threat to its citizens, or its geopolitical interests. By *Covering Islam*, Said means that "Islam" becomes the dominant conceptual lens for members of the media, regional experts, and policy-makers to view the region and its sociopolitical culture through (p.8). Said notes that this casts the relationship between the West and East, or the "Orient", as crudely and permanently fixed in terms of an Us vs. Them, West vs. East binary (p.8).

To the West, Said notes that "Islam... suggests not only the threat of return to the Middle Ages but the destruction of what is regularly referred to as the democratic order of the Western world" (p.55). The analysis provided by Said is an important means by which to consider the possible impact of Islam within coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, especially given the role of the Muslim Brotherhood within Egyptian politics, and Western fears that a post-Mubarak Egypt may provide the Brotherhood with the long-denied, unprecedented political space to assert themselves, which they were previously not allowed to do within Egypt before the revolution.

Additionally, Said's work is a useful means by which to tease out the assumptions of the Western news media about Egyptian politics, and the geopolitical significance of Egypt to American and British interests that may have

played a role in the way the news media covered the events. For journalists and academics covering or researching an issue in the Middle East, they work, more often than not, according to “standards, conventions, and expectations shaped by his or her peers” (p.19). Expanding on that point, it is worth noting that those standards and conventions guiding journalists and scholars can possibly be influenced by the national interests and geopolitical relationships of their home countries.

What this means is that when an event is covered within news that bears impact on the interests determining the relations between two countries (and their own national interests be they economic, military, etc), those interests shape whether coverage is presented within the context of a political, economic, civil, or human rights discourse, for instance (p.41). Those factors are then incorporated into actual coverage of events. The resulting coverage is then neither “spontaneous nor completely free”, as the reality created by news coverage and transmitted to national or international audiences is bound by a “uniform set of assumptions” about reality within a particular nation (p.48). Thus, media coverage of the Egyptian Revolution may have focused on the groups and figures whose ideas are characterised as hostile to Western notions of democratic governance, which could be then relayed to audiences through news media organisations deciding “what is news, and how it is news” (p.53). Again, this is not to say that this will emerge as a dominant, or even minor theme within coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, but it is important to consider given the geopolitical significance of Egypt to Western nations.

B. Orientalism

Western nations have come to explicitly, and implicitly dictate how nation-states, political movements, and figures within the Muslim world are interpreted through news media coverage. What is at play in this struggle between the Occident, which Said defines as the former European colonial powers (a group which the United States now belongs to), and the Orient, which Said defines within this discourse as the Middle East, is whether this relationship between Occident and Orient is dialectical, or hegemonical in nature. Said calls into question the ways in which powerful Western governments, political and media institutions, and individual figures determine how knowledge about the Muslim world is conceived, and who possesses the agency to speak on their behalf.

Subsequently, Said introduced *Orientalism* (1978) as a concept and method examining the history of cultural and political relationships between the West and the Middle East, and how those relationships affect contemporary views of countries within the region. In theoretical terms, *Orientalism* describes the ways that the former colonial powers of Europe defined and made sense of the nations and people of the Middle East, often in antagonistic, threatening, and reductionist terms that legitimised the subjugation of the Orient by the West.

Said's concept of *Orientalism* was influenced by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony, in which he posits that other cultures retain importance insofar as they have become constituent elements of European culture by contributing to the process of European thought, and then becoming assimilated

into it (Gramsci, edited and translated by Hoare and Smith 1971, p. 416).

Orientalism, according to Said, came into being as a practice during the post-Enlightenment period in Europe.

During that era, European colonial powers advanced, on a more philosophical level, notions of what they felt constituted the realities of the Middle East, such as “Oriental” despotism, splendor, cruelty, and sensuality (p.4). These notions then reproduced the Middle East “politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” within a scholarly discourse, preserving the essence of Orientalist thought and practice throughout academic generations (p.3). Essentially, Orientalism poses the question as to why certain images and concepts are dominant when topics concerning the Middle East arise within Western social, political, or historical discourse about the region.

For instance, Evelyn Baring, better known as Lord Cromer, is cited by Said as depicting Egyptians in a systematically humiliating, dehumanising manner within *Modern Egypt*, an account of Egyptian history influenced by his time as the 1st British-Controller General of Egypt from 1883-1907. In this text, Said quotes Cromer as identifying the mind of the ‘Oriental’ as possessing reasoning capabilities “of the most slipshod description,” deficient in logical faculty, and “incapable of drawing the most obvious conclusions from any simple premises of which they may admit the truth” (Cromer in Said’s *Orientalism*, p.38). Furthermore, Macdonald (2003) observes in her discussion of Said that whatever the Orient’s physical delimitations, the function of Orientalism within discourse has been to establish the Orient’s

inferiority and primitivisms in relation to the Occident (p.151).

Said (1978) elaborates that Westerners, whether citizens or scholars, must respect and attempt to understand the strength of Orientalist discourse, and its “very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions,” (p.6) which, related to the news media, may give an alarmist impression of the impact of a post-Mubarak Egypt on Middle East, or define the goals of the anti-Mubarak protesters in accordance with the expectation of a Western-style, secular democracy emerging.

Perhaps the most poignant statement that Said makes about Orientalism is that, given the knowledge constructed out of a Western political and cultural lens about the Middle East that informs and shapes the Orientalist perspective, that knowledge speaks less to the realities within the Middle East, and more to the political-intellectual culture of the West (p.12). Since Orientalism speaks to the cultural and political lens with which the West makes sense of, and ostensibly justifies its supremacy over the Middle East, it certainly is not an unreasonable concept to consider when examining how Western news media report on significant sociopolitical events in the Middle East for their audiences in the West and beyond.

Taking cue from Foucault, Said contends that without focusing on Orientalism as a discourse, and thereby as a way by which the West extends influence over the Orient, one cannot understand how the West produced the power relations determining the relationship between them (p.3). This harkens back to the political question for Foucault discussed earlier in this chapter, where the question

was not truth itself and its composition, but to what ends it serves. Thus, if news media seemingly take sides within coverage of a political struggle occurring in a distant nation, we should ask what are the factors providing the rationale for such coverage. As Said notes, politicians, institutions, or individuals possessing the capacity to influence their surroundings perceive, form, and disseminate ideas that are beneficial to their interests (p.19).

Thus, what must be acknowledged is that authority creates the informational base on which the Orient is constructed. And the news media, as an institution that synthesises and disseminates such information to the public, provides the dominant frameworks in which the Oriental (in this case of this research, Egypt), is constructed (p.40). In a very real way, the news media can act as a functionary of Orientalist ideology, completing and disseminating a discourse emanating from the sites of Orientalist thought, such as academia and government (p.94). With Said's importance to the discussion of power and knowledge clarified, I shall now turn my attention towards how contemporary scholars have employed Said's concept of Orientalism in research examining the resonance of the concept within news media coverage.

C. Orientalist discourses within news coverage

In terms of Orientalist discourses percolating through news media coverage, Izadi and Saghaye-Biria (2007) employed both van Dijk's concept of the ideological square (referring to the role of ideology within discourse that yields a positive

representation of an 'in' group, and a negative one of an 'out' group (van Dijk 2009, p.194)) and Said's concept of Orientalism to examine the way several national, and internationally renowned 'elite' American newspapers reported on Iran's nuclear programme.

In their study, they found that the newspapers gave a clear example of van Dijk's ideological square in practice, portraying Iran as undeserving of international trust regarding the nature of its nuclear activity. This conveniently shows Said's Orientalism at work as well, with Western powers exhibiting their uncertainty and distrust over Iran's nuclear research (p.152). One of the newspapers studied, *The Wall Street Journal*, is even cited as advocating regime change through overt and covert means in order to topple the government of "the mullahs," despite a lack of evidence pointing towards the opacity, and potentially destabilising and threatening nature of Iran's nuclear programme. The arguments presented by these newspapers is that Iran's government cannot be trusted with the knowledge that could allow them to pursue nuclear weapons, while simultaneously putting forth the supposition that only Western nations are rational and stable enough to possess such knowledge without dire regional or global consequences (p.157).

The authors recommend future scholarship to examine the relationship between elite media's coverage of Iranian policy and the discourse of government officials, a suggestion to be taken seriously within my own research. While my research will not be examining coverage of Iranian politics or Iran's nuclear programme, it will address to address whether the British and American print press

reported on Egyptian politics through the prism of Western interests, perhaps reifying latent Orientalist attitudes from Western governments that percolate through news media coverage, and are then ultimately disseminated to the public.

Smeeta Mishra (2008) examined the U.S. prestige press' discursive representation of Islam and its compatibility with democracy through coverage of political shifts within Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. Mishra's article does not purport to possess or offer any concrete understanding of the reality inside any of the countries included within her research.

The main focus of the article, however, is a discourse analysis of mass-mediated representations of Islam and whether it is compatible with democracy in the view of the U.S. prestige press, a list of which includes *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Los Angeles Times*. Said's concept of Orientalism and Michel Foucault's power/knowledge paradigm supply the theoretical underpinning of this study (p.157), which assumes that representations of Islam and democracy are indeed constructed in such a way to serve particular ends (p.161).

Thus, the theoretical application of Foucault and Said does two things at once. First, coming from the Foucauldian angle, it recognises that a discourse is the product of knowledge through language and ideology, rendering some discourses legitimate and others illegitimate (p.163). Secondly, Said's concept of Orientalism puts Foucault's power/knowledge paradigm into a practical context by showing that certain discourses about the Islamic world and Middle East in general define the

'Orient' in terms of its instability, irrationality, and frame Islam and the Middle East as a threat to the West.

Mishra's analysis found that the dominant discourses surrounding Islam and democracy in the Turkish, Iraqi, and Iranian contexts were portrayed according to the following themes: unease with the political role of Islam, political Islam's incompatibility with human rights and social freedoms, and encouraging political Islam's reform through Western notions of modernisation and secularisation (p.164). In particular, Iran was cited as the prototypical example of all that could go wrong with a country should political Islam enjoy unparalleled access within the corridors of governmental power.

Altogether, Mishra's research informs my own study in that it is crucial to unpack how the press covered the anti-Mubarak protesters within Egypt, and determine whether they were delegitimised within coverage, or legitimised because they appeared to fall in line with Western secular, democratic values, making a post-Mubarak Egypt to be less of a threat to Western interests.

V. Conclusion

In summation, this chapter has explored how power is exercised, truth and knowledge constituted, and the role that communicative practices and systems play in affirming the viewpoint and interests of the powerful. Though Foucault never explicitly wrote about the news media and power within an academic context, his theoretical exploration of power, its conceptual antecedents, and its discursive

replication can and should be applied to an academic exploration of the political role of news media. As Macdonald (2003) says in her take on Foucault, it is through the Foucauldian notion of discourse that we exchange ideas about, and interpret reality. Stuart Hall, seemingly influenced by Foucault, explicated how citizens interpret the textual and visual world which they encounter everyday, and perhaps in its most politicised form, within the news media. Hall's (1999) concepts of maps of meaning, signification, and regimes of representation inform, and allow me to move beyond a more abstract and theoretical approach to power relations and discourse, and to position power and discourse within the domain of the news media as one of the most accessible terrains in which political identities and representations are forged.

Similarly, Edward Said's concept of *Orientalism* (1978) and 'the Other' speak to the ways in which the West (Occident) makes sense of the Middle East (the Orient), often reducing the people, politics, and culture of an incredibly complex and diverse place into one antagonistic, threatening region comprised of people who are ideologically incompatible with the modern world, and universal human values (as defined by the West). Given the importance and salience of these theorists, their concepts, and those who have applied them to their own academic research, we must now shift from a discussion underpinned by a theoretical exploration of power and the news media and move towards one that examines how news production, practices, and source-reporter relationships impacts the reporting of political events in distant nations, amongst other considerations.

As we shift focus to the next chapter, it is worthwhile to keep in mind the role

of the state in determining how reality is constructed within news media texts. For instance, Althusser's (1971) concept of ideological state apparatuses suggests distinct and specialised institutions such as the family, religious bodies, a nation's political system, its cultural industries, and most importantly, its communicative bodies (such as the news media) serve as functionaries of state power (p.17). Ideological state apparatuses, Althusser explains, are fundamentally different from repressive state apparatuses (government, army, police, courts), which belong entirely to the public domain (p.16,18).

Conversely, ideological state apparatuses can function as private (family) or public (news media), and are first and foremost guided by ideology, and secondarily by a type of repression that is concealed and symbolic in nature. For instance, within the next chapter, Gitlin (1980) provides a useful overview of how the news media, in particular the *New York Times*, framed political dissent during the Vietnam War in a way that derogated the message of the protesters (symbolic repression) while legitimising the war as U.S. President Lyndon Johnson escalated the conflict, thereby acting as a functionary of the state by extending its power.

Keeping in mind the role of the news media as an institution which either upholds, or challenges state policies will be an underlying topic throughout the examination of literature that speaks to the political consequences of source-reporter relationships, news routines, and the news production process within the coming chapter. Indeed, there are greater, and myriad subtle dynamics at play other than 'primary definers' being solely responsible for establishing, or removing the

frontiers of debate within the news media. Therefore, the following chapter will examine how the news environment, political and civilian sources, and journalistic routines impact the construction of news. Such an examination is essential to determining how the anti-Mubarak protesters were covered by the British and American print press within reporting of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

Chapter 3: Constructing news coverage

I. Introduction

As Habermas (1989) has previously stated, the press is the preeminent institution of the public and the most widely accessible public sphere available to citizens to challenge the politically powerful by. Given that, it is now essential to examine how news production processes, journalistic routines, source/reporter relationships, crisis coverage, geopolitics, and the relationship between the press and the state influences the final news product. Furthermore, the news media industry itself has been thought to have ideological effects, such as helping to secure existing hegemonies, legitimising social or global inequality, and thwarting efforts to substantiate more participatory democracies (Cottle 2000, p.427-428). Since journalists are central players in the struggle over political legitimacy, and news media the arena in which the battle for legitimacy is fought, both maintain an instrumental role in determining what aspects of political participation make it into news coverage, and how it is subsequently presented to the public.

An overview of literature pertaining to the news production process shall be discussed next to determine how certain political opposition groups or movements, such as the anti-Mubarak protesters during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, are accorded with, or denied political legitimacy by the news media. Themes of a politicised citizenry and power from previous chapters cannot be ignored, as they will now be examined within a more practical, less abstract context within this

chapter. While the previous chapters set the broader, more philosophical framework by which to examine distant political events, this chapter will argue why news, and especially news of considerable political or international significance, is selected for, and presented in a certain way within media coverage.

II. The construction of news

Political protests are manifestations of citizen opinion that coalesce in times of intense political debate or controversy, and can be spurred on by organic shifts within a country's electorate, or they may be the displacement of a power struggle between political elites onto their political base within society. As Turner (1969) observed, they are an "expression or declaration of objection, disapproval, or dissent in opposition" to a governmental policy or action whose application or continuance the individual citizen seeks to reject or reverse (p.816). On the other hand, news is what Harrison (2006) calls that which "is judged to be newsworthy by journalists, who exercise their news sense within the constraints of the news organisations within which they operate" (p.13). Thus, citizens pour into the streets in hopes of attracting the attention of journalists, injecting their opinion into the news media with the hope that their voice can have some amount of influence within the political process so the politically powerful heed to their demands.

Nonetheless, journalists are key figures in mediating between the public and powerful in society, determining how, why, and what aspects of political protests make it into the news cycle. Protest stories usually come in the form of hard news

stories, which Tuchman (1973) defines as events that are timely, urgent, and demand speed in gathering “facts” and meeting deadlines (p.118). Thus, given the emphasis on just the “facts” being reported within the hard-news context, stories involving protest may be lacking in valuable, in-depth coverage that would assist audiences in comprehending the sociopolitical climate out of which these events arise.

As in many professions, journalists look to past precedents and rely on processes of routinisation to mitigate the unpredictable nature of the work they perform. Before those processes of routinisation such as objective reporting and news frames can be addressed, it is necessary to expand on the construction of politically-oriented news and how news media organisations are influenced by the power relationship between themselves and the political figures and institutions they cover.

As Hallin (1986) put it, power is “exercised indirectly through the manipulation of symbols and the routines of working life that those subject to it accept as their own” (p.24). What such a statement implies is that power, or influence, does not have to be explicated by the political figures who wish to maintain it. The influence of political leaders and their attendant agendas is often not debated amongst editors and adjusted for print or broadcast within news organisations; rather, their influence finds sanctuary within the organisational and professional values that guide editors and journalists through the news-making process (p.24). The reliance on official sources, as Gans (1979) noted, did not

produce a linear process where news originated from political officials, is then covered by journalists, and ultimately consumed by audiences.

The construction and dissemination of news is subject to a large number of feedback loops; for instance, sources cannot provide information and comments to journalists until they make contact with a member of a news outlet, and that outlet's editorial staff will pick which sources they feel will be able to connect with the audience (p.81). The audience is not without power of its own, albeit nominally, since news outlets have to maintain their allegiance to remain profitable, and audience patterns of news consumption influence the choice of sources by journalists (p.81).

News, in the context of a power struggle between sources, journalists, and audiences, is defined by Gans as the "exercise of power over the interpretation of reality" (p.81). That power, in relation to politically oriented news, usually starts with an interpretation of reality from official, or governmental sources, who have the first say as to which participants within a news story are trying to initiate a legitimate political dialogue, and then granted a high degree of political efficacy through attention from journalists. Thus, the politically powerful have preferred access within the news-making process, which causes that process to reflect the hierarchical political structure outside of the newsroom.

Going back to Tuchman (1978), her ethnographic study of newsroom culture and practices found that in the relationship between reporters, political sources, and citizen-based social movements, journalists did not seek out commentary from

representatives of social movements (p.81). Instead, Tuchman found that journalists defer to statements from political figures possessing considerable sociopolitical currency, while neglecting dissident voices (p.81). Selecting the politically powerful as a vital source for information inevitably helps contribute to decisions on which facts are taken into account when piecing together a news story (p.81), as political sources often only disseminate information deemed prudent to the realisation of a desired outcome. This reliance on official facts, and the professional relationship between reporters and their sources has the dual-effect of estranging citizens from the political process by depriving them of a salient political voice within news coverage of democratic processes, which their participation is supposed to be the lynchpin of.

Indeed, journalists themselves have little meaningful contact with citizens, and rely on their own preconceptions, developed and reinforced within the culture of the newsroom, to identify and describe their role in the political process (Lewis et al. 2005, p.27). News stories relating to the engagement of citizens within the political process are often times riddled with contradictions (p.17). For instance, on one hand, protests and protesters can be seen as paragons of a healthy, democratic society and active citizenry (p.17). Yet, conversely, protests and protesters can also be represented as a threat to civil society, and unrepresentative of the “silent, law-abiding majority” (p.17).

The contradiction born out of the relationship between political protest and news media has much to do with the fact that protests are often newsworthy only if

they involve some sort of confrontation with police or any other civil or governmental authorities (p.17). Political news stories, through their very creation, ostensibly grant considerable leverage to official sources and push the voice of protesters to the margins of acceptable dialogue. Though the anti-Mubarak protesters were seemingly not subject to normative paradigms of protest coverage during the Egyptian Revolution, the media terrain and logic out of which such coverage is grounded within needs to be further explored in order to examine how and why coverage of these protests perhaps departed from those normative paradigms and the practice of 'objective reporting'. The history and practice of objective reporting will be the focus of the next section of this chapter.

III. Objectivity

Objectivity is a belief that facts and values must be separated when reporting news (Schudson 1978, p.5). More specifically, objectivity can be understood as the value placed on facts, or assertions about the nature of the world open to independent validation, and the suspicion of values, or an individual's preference for what the world should be like (p.5). The separation of 'facts' and 'values' was hoped to produce "consensually validated statements" about reality (p.122), and act as a safe-guard against subjective interpretations of reality from being dominant within news reporting. Objectivity was also seen as giving journalists increased professional standing by mimicking the scientific method as the "best or true path to knowledge" (p.7), since it was a way to bring the reporting of events and science

closer together in the minds of practitioners and audiences alike. Objectivity became the professional mantra of journalists following the first World War, as it was reaction against the effectiveness of wartime propaganda and the censorship wartime correspondents faced as they covered the conflict in Europe (p.141).

Additionally, the emergence of the public relations industry in the early part of the 20th century contributed to the rise of objectivity. Public relations developed as a field portraying the public as irrational, given to spectacle, and consumption-oriented, all of which had a far-reaching impact on the ideology and social relations of journalism as it was practised in the United States (p.134). With the rise of the public relations industry, objectivity emerged not only to act as a bulwark against government propaganda, but also against the public relations industry's growing leverage within public discourse.

Yet, as objectivity became ensconced within American journalism as a professional value during the 1930s, it was almost simultaneously recognised by those within the profession as an unattainable goal, as the "impossibility of overcoming subjectivity in presenting the news was widely accepted" (p.157). Ironically, objectivity seemingly ascended the ladder of professional values within news organisations due to the fact that journalists saw subjectivity in reporting as an inevitable and permanent phenomenon within the reporting of events (p.157). Despite the rise and omnipresence of objectivity, it is a system of reporting that "refuses to examine the basic structures of power and privilege," (p.160) and can be used "as a camouflage for power" (p.159). The relationship between 'objective

reporting' and power, and the attendant effects that relationship has on news coverage will be discussed throughout the rest of this section.

As a professional norm and standard of American journalism, objective reporting neither yields independent analysis from journalists and the news organisations they work for, nor is it a neutral professional standard. Furthermore, objectivity is not an exclusively American professional standard, as it now permeates news organisations the world over, suggesting that non-Western media outlets have taken up objectivity in a diffusion of professional ideology (Golding 1977, p.292-293). Schudson and Anderson (2009) suggest that the standard of objectivity in journalism "ultimately provides some sort of benefit to the group that articulates it, either by stimulating social cohesion (in a Durkheimian sense) or social control (in a Weberian one)" (p.93).

Similarly, Hallin (1986) notes the ability of political figures and institutions to exert influence through objective journalism. Theoretically speaking, objective journalism was supposed to increase the likelihood of political neutrality, but in the construction of news, journalists often rely on official statements from political figures in order to contextualise their stories. Incidentally, this means that the premium put on objectivity within the production of news does not "free the news from political influence," but instead widens "the channel through which official influence flowed" (p.25).

Within the news production process, objectivity functions both as an occupational norm and as an evolving, conceptual object of struggle over

professional jurisdiction and integrity (Schudson and Anderson 2009, p.96). Indeed, journalists seek to articulate and monopolise “a form of journalistic expertise which itself is discursively constructed out of various journalistic practices and narratives, including the claim to professional objectivity” (p.96). Furthermore, claims to objectivity are often contradictory (p.99). Perhaps there is no better opportunity to study the role of objectivity within the culture of news organisations than by examining when journalists boldly forgo that professional obligation and directly challenge or contradict the viewpoints of political leaders with the hopes of bringing about a specific course of action, or to encourage a particular emotional response from news audiences.

As Hallin (1986) observed, a media system guided by the principle of objectivity, as in the case of the American news media, explains why coverage predicated on objective reporting is less likely to challenge the logic or policy of the state. Similar to Schudson, Hallin identifies the historical antecedents of objective reporting as emerging during the period between the two world wars, and stemming from the rise of cultural relativism and corporate capitalism (p.86). Nonetheless, during the Cold War, journalists often adopted the ideology of the conflict as they wrote about it, letting the imagery and rational given by political figures guide their news judgments (p.53).

The tenets of objective reporting did not subside after the breakup of the Soviet Union. As powerful and highly influential arbiters of political communication, news media organisations, Hallin says, abdicated their responsibility to expanding

the public's information base by which they can make sound political judgments. Instead, journalists deflected criticism of their power by asserting that the principles of objective reporting precluded them from judging the veracity or logic of official statements from politicians, or the logic of a policy (p.67). The vacuum created by a lack of critical analysis on the part of journalists largely prevents citizens from interpreting news as a narrative with multiple figures struggling to position themselves in the best possible light within coverage.

Additionally, objective reporting has not produced equitable coverage of protesters within media coverage. As Hallin observed, during the years of the Vietnam War, the anti-war movement was relegated to the bottom of the news media's hierarchy of legitimate political actors, with its access to the media and the influence they had over their representation when they were covered tightly restricted (p.198). This type of handling by the news media speaks to what Entman (2007) referred to as the three types of reporting bias present in coverage: *distortion bias*, *content bias*, and *decision-making bias* (p.163).

While each of these three concepts is important to understanding how the professional value of objectivity serves only in name and not function, *content bias* is the most relevant of these to my research. Content bias explains the inherent contradiction within objectivity; while objective news coverage often guarantees coverage of the opposing, or many sides of a political conflict, journalists sometimes favor one side of a story which ultimately serves to marginalise opposing viewpoints (p.163).

The net effect of the rise of objectivity within the core values that serve as a professional template for journalists unfortunately does not provide citizens with news free of ideological bias. Rather, the professional maxim of objectivity incidentally strengthened the link between the press and the state (Hallin 1986, p.64). As Gitlin (1980) notes, during the news making process, the unseen linkage between the press and the state inevitably influences the decision as to whether a certain event is newsworthy, reportorial decisions on what should be included within coverage, and lastly how editors decide to treat and place a story (p.258). These issues can be best understood within a discussion of particular characteristics of events that contribute to the decision made by news organisations and journalists as to which events should be covered, and which should not be.

IV. News values

News values, as O'Neill and Harcup (2009) note, involve the processes and values by which journalists and the news organisations they work for select what will be covered, what will not be, and why (p.162). The importance of news values when considering how and why journalists report on topics of international political importance cannot be understated, as focusing on and explaining news values "is a way of making more transparent a set of practices and judgments which are otherwise shrouded in opacity" (p.163).

Indeed, as Stuart Hall (1973) argues, news values, and the explanations offered for why some are more prominent than others, is a highly subjective

discussion. News values, according to Hall, “are one of the most opaque structures of meaning in modern society,” and journalists refer to news as if the events that become news and the way those events are presented within news media narratives select and construct themselves, rather than being the end result of a process that is not underpinned by objective standards in the slightest sense (p.234).

Ultimately, only a small amount of what is happening in our immediate surroundings, and throughout the world, becomes what constitutes the news coverage citizens consume on a daily basis. As Hall suggests, news values, as a conceptual selection device determining what citizens and policymakers alike see of their immediate surroundings and distant lands, does not operate as a transparent arbiter of information; indeed, news values are “un-transparent” even to the journalists who use and abide by them as a professional template (p.181).

The discussion of news values also invokes the role of ideology (a set of ideas constituting the worldview of an individual or group) within media discourses. As van Dijk (2009) states, the analysis of the ideological nature of news construction is where the study of discourse and communication overlap (p.191). Van Dijk seeks to shift attention towards the sociology and economy of news production and how that impacts the way citizens “understand, memorize, and integrate information and knowledge” from the news media they consume (p.191). Given the lack of discursive or sociocognitive theory explaining the role and impact of ideology in news production routines, news values, and power relationships, van Dijk sets off to provide a substantive list of how ideology is ingratiated within the news production

process. For example, regarding the influences on, and reproduction of racism within newsmaking, van Dijk lists news values, beats and sources, (ethnocentric) perspective, quotation (of elites), and rhetoric as ways in which ideology is incorporated within news production process (p.200).

The point emerging from some of the items van Dijk lists is that not only is ideology present throughout the news production process, but it also plays a factor with regards to how journalists identify themselves in relation to the nation-state from which they report. Journalists not only identify with a set 'language,' or verbal, visual discourses to contextualise and inform their reporting, but also with a positive self-image of 'us' in our country, and whatever characteristics constitute the identity of 'them' in another country (p.201). Furthermore, the role of nationalist ideologies in the news process establish a template by which positive, noble characteristics are projected onto the identity, history, culture, and character shared amongst citizens of a country, ostensibly influencing the way journalists cover their own, and other countries (p. 201).

Within news production processes, nationalist ideologies inform and direct newsmaking and the ultimate news product when journalists cover foreign events such as war, or political and social conflicts (p.201). The resulting news is then often couched in terms of whether the events unfolding are beneficial to, or harmful towards national interests, a consideration which may be brought up when dissent erupts in a country with significant geopolitical interest to the West, such as Egypt. Political elites who enjoy relative ease of access to mainstream communication

channels, such as the news media, can then also control the formation of discourse, subsequently reproducing their ideologies on a broader scale and legitimating their power and policy prescriptions (p.202).

Despite the ever-present nature of news values and ideological discourses within media systems across the world, those news values themselves are not fixed, and change over time, geographic distance, and between news organisations themselves (O'Neill and Harcup 2009, p.171). The discussion of news values also helps scholars explore why certain aspects of news are emphasised, while other aspects are downgraded or ignored altogether (p.171), a point which will be explored in greater detail within the section of this chapter concerning news framing. News values, however, are only part of a larger discussion as to why certain aspects of reality are included within a news story. The occupational routines of journalists also play an important role in the news process, and will be the focus of the next section.

V. Journalistic routines

As Becker and Vlad (2009) note, journalists and the news media organisations they work for produce news, making the final news product both the product of the individual journalist and the news organisation they work for (p.59). In short, news routines are the repeated activities of journalists as they go about their professional lives (p.59). The fact that journalists and news organisations follow certain protocols to produce a news story has heavily influenced research

pertaining to how news is made (p.59). The identification of certain routines and protocols throughout the history of news media research has contributed to the argument that news should be viewed as a constructed social reality, rather than a mirror image of events that have happened, or are taking place throughout the world (p.59). Even countries as geographically distant and culturally distinct from each other such as Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, Tanzania, and the United States are all linked by similarities within their “professional routines, editorial procedures, and socialization processes” (Hanitzsch 2009, p.413).

Becker and Vlad (2009) summarise three dominant paradigms for explaining the how the professional norms and standards of journalists and the organisations they work for impact the final news product (p.60). The first of these paradigms is the political economy perspective, which seeks to link news construction to the state and economy (p.60). The second paradigm springs from a sociological perspective, attempting to understand the construction of news from the vantage point of organisational and occupational theory (p.60). Lastly, the third paradigm posits that newswork is broadly constrained by cultural considerations (p.60).

Gaye Tuchman (1973), drawing on the sociological perspective, writes that journalists routinise the handling of unexpected events, and if they did not do this, they would fail in their professional duty to provide information to the general public (p.111). Journalists themselves are supposed to be flexible professionals able to adjust to cover developing news, but as it happens, flexibility within the news media is often routinised. Much of journalists’ professional lives are spent

contextualising unexpected events, and in order to better explain the reality unfolding in front of them, journalists establish contexts and parameters in which reality is perceived and subsequently defined within news coverage (p.129). To relate that point to this research, news routines are capable of creating a paradigm for the treatment of protests and protesters within news coverage.

Tuchman's research casts a long shadow over the research of journalistic routines, and is important to include within my own research for several important reasons. To start, Tuchman's work suggested that journalism could be examined through the perspective of the sociology of work (Becker and Vlad 2009, p.61). Secondly, Tuchman's (1973) work also suggested that researchers who want to understand news should focus on its construction, rather than whether the end product of the news process is biased (p.62). Ultimately, news routines tie back into the previous chapter's discussion of power. In my discussion of the Foucauldian notion of power, I considered Foucault's argument that power is not a centrally located, repressive means of social control, but rather something that induces consent by inserting itself and moving between all areas of the social body. News routines, such as relying on powerful government or private officials that are politically well connected, can end up affirming the logic of those with political or economic power (p.62). In this case, powerful figures have the ability to attract media attention and generate news (p.62).

While an adherence to routines characterises the professional existence of journalists on a broader level, another aspect of their professional duties and

obligations involve synthesising the information that they are inundated with daily in order to produce news. The process of gatekeeping, in which journalists select, write, edit, position, schedule, repeat, and otherwise “massage information,” allows them to select what aspects of reality from a virtually limitless pool of information are important and timely enough to become news (Shoemaker et al. 2009, p.73).

By examining gatekeeping and news media organisations from a sociological perspective, researchers can better parse out the variations between the professional activities of media companies and other social institutions (p.82). Schudson (2003) advocates going beyond a sociological approach, however, stating that applying a sociological approach to the study of journalism “should not be the closing line of a sermon but the opening of an inquiry into how different political cultures and institutions shape and structure different news cultures and institutions” (p.166).

Similarly, Cottle (2000) suggests understanding newswork beyond the rigorous examination of journalistic routines, as there tends to be an overreliance upon organisational duties and roles that does not altogether account for how news is made (p.22). The focus on routines, Cottle says, incorrectly reduces the role of the journalist to that of empty vessels dutifully fulfilling their organisational role, and ignores them as “active and thinking agents who purposefully produce news through their professional practices” (p.22).

Indeed, given that journalists must be “flexible” professionals who are constantly modifying their skillset, the events they cover and the news they produce

is arguably done with full knowledge of what is expected of them as employees, while also playing a purposeful part in the production of news texts, or at least a larger role than they are typically given credit for (p.22). Such considerations allow one to better understand how influential and powerful institutions such as the government, interest groups, and advertisers (to name a few) interact with the news media, and how that interaction potentially influences the final news product (Shoemaker et al. 2009, p.82).

VI. Source-reporter relationship

The subject of the relationship between journalists and their sources, should, at the outset of the discussion, be approached by introducing two theoretical routes by which 'news access' can be studied. Approaching the subject of news access from both sociological and cultural perspectives allows researchers to better understand how such perspectives have orientated approaches to, and conceptualisations of, news access (Cottle 2000, p.428). As Cottle explains, researchers exploring the topic of news access from a sociological perspective are inclined to look at the role of strategic power, what individuals or groups possess and use it, and how that subsequently informs the "public representation of politics" (p.429). Researchers grounded within a cultural perspective, on the other hand, are focused on "how *cultural forms and symbols* are implicated within the politics of representation" (p.429).

The argument between the two perspectives that Cottle has outlined is that

the sociological perspective is crucial for examining the play of strategic and definitional power, but that the sociological perspective fails to account for the myriad ways in which culture “conditions and shapes patterns and forms of news entry” (p.429). Strategic power is certainly an important consideration in any study of the news media, especially since news media produce a “culturally mediated form of communication,” (p.429) that has significant bearing on everything from the stories journalists pursue, what angle those stories pursued are from, and the questions journalists ask their sources.

Ultimately, the discussion of news access, or media access in general, calls into question how broader historical, economic, and political sources of power and authority are “mediated” by cultural and news media industries, and then understood by the public. For the purposes of my own research, I believe it is most useful not to favour one approach over the other, but rather to incorporate both sociological and cultural perspectives within a unified vision to better comprehend how political elites shape news media coverage (and by extension, the public at-large).

The study of journalists and the sources they use to create news stories, Berkowitz (2009) argues, draws upon questions regarding bias, power, and influence in the news media (p.102). Naturally, the big question arising from that point is whether reporters or sources possess greater latitude in affecting what inevitably becomes the final news product, yielding a “particular news agenda that either favors or excludes some issues over others” (p.102). In addition to what

issues or parties that are either featured more or less prominently than others within news coverage, another important point of consideration stemming from source and reporter relationships is whether source power, or influence, provides journalists with “the ability to subsidize the time and effort required for reporting” (p.102). Thus, the resulting news story becomes less about what is happening in the world and constructing a narrative that attempts to approach the veracity of any given situation as best as it can, and more about what powerful sources think about what is happening, or what they want audiences to think is happening.

The shape of the reporter-source relationship springs from a journalistic paradigm following a “science-like model,” in which journalists gather authoritative data and then use it to create a news story without explicitly favoring one side within news reporting (p.103). Reporters are almost always bound to report the facts of a situation, describing things such as setting of an event, who was involved, and what people said without opining of their own accord (p.103). The struggle for leverage borne out of the interactions and needs between reporters and sources within news coverage speaks to the implications of their often times contentious relationship. For reporters, their credibility as professionals is ultimately tied to the quality of the news stories they write, while for sources, the success of their initiatives, and careers in general, are intimately bound with favorable interactions with the news media (p.103). Altogether, interactions between reporters and sources are a “delicately negotiated relationship, with each party hoping to achieve their goals and maintain their organizational and societal status” (p.103).

Inevitably, these interactions spark a power-struggle between reporters and sources, often contextualised in the form of the news media's "watchdog" role in checking and interrogating government or big business (p.104). An important point of concern for researchers is how normative coverage paradigms call for reporters to seek out commentary from authoritative and influential sources, leaving figures who possess such authority and influence to better manage their agendas within news coverage (p.109). As a response, reporters, ideally speaking, incessantly mine information and court sources to challenge influential governmental or business authorities (p.104), while sources with high-levels of power and influence attempt to impede the watchdog efforts of journalists (p.105). Often times, the reporter or source with the higher level of power and access ultimately "wins" the battle to influence the presentation and makeup of a news story.

The source of power for journalists, as Bourdieu (2005) explains, is less clear-cut and far more complicated than their inherent position to challenge, or uphold the logic of elites and their policies. Journalistic power, in part, is determined by professional competition amongst reporters. Journalists, due to the increasingly heteronomous constraints (in terms of economy and politics) on their professional lives, derive their power, according to Bourdieu, by imposing those same constraints on the fields of cultural production (social sciences, philosophy, politics) (p.41), and each other (p.44).

Due to permanent competition to appropriate a readership, journalists rival each other for imperatives such as the earliest access to news, exclusive

information, and prominent figures to elucidate their coverage. The competition between journalists to deliver the 'best' news, a "precondition of freedom" driven by commercial interests, produces uniformity, censorship, and conservatism in the news environment. Additionally, the power of journalists is also determined by less complicated considerations such as how long they have been in the profession, their ability to produce stories of social or political impact, and their organisational standing (Berkowitz 2009, p.105).

Source power, Berkowitz says, is easier to gauge, as sources within a power structure, such as government, who possess both the authority and autonomy to speak about their areas of expertise, often possess the most power to affect news (p.105). The power of sources lies not only in the ability to be able to speak on and articulate an issue in the news media, as it can also generate discussion around an issue, or to prevent it from becoming part of public dialogue in the first place (p.105-106). In summation, both reporters and sources possess the ability to present an issue to audiences within a particular context, and therefore encourage a dominant way of thinking about an issue as it runs through the news cycle (p.106).

Such a characterisation of the power-struggle between reporters and sources calls to attention how journalists present issues to the public, and how that presentation ultimately entails certain political, economic, or social benefits for individual figures or groups featured. As Cottle (2000) notes, tracing the feedback loop between elites, the news media, and mass publics calls into question whether news frames originate within the sedimented layers of wider culture, or whether

they are most influenced by institutional sources (p.430). Such a consideration will be explored within the discussion of news framing in the next section of this chapter.

VII. News framing

When the steps of the newsmaking process are put together – decisions about newsworthiness, coverage selection, and the ultimate treatment and placement of a story within the actual news text – they speak to a concept called *framing*. Entman (2007) defines framing as a process that mines certain elements of a perceived reality and assembles them into a narrative promoting a particular interpretation of a news story (p.164). In short, framing examines what is emphasised, and what is deemphasised within news coverage.

Framing, Entman elaborates, garners its power to shape the audience's interpretation of stories through *priming*. Priming elevates the importance of certain ideas within news coverage and activates schemas (memory cues) that encourage an audience to think, feel, and interpret a news story in a particular way (p.164). Essentially, framing defines problems (what a causal agent is doing at what cost, usually measured in terms of cultural values), diagnoses causes (identifying forces creating problems), makes moral judgments (evaluating causal agents and their effects), and suggests remedies (offering and justifying treatments for problems) (Entman 1993, p.52).

Similarly, Gamson (1989) defines framing as “a central organizing idea for

making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue” (p. 157). Facts, Gamson says, “possess no intrinsic meaning, and are given “meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others” (p.157). The locus of framing research, Gamson continues, should not be on the informational content of news, but rather the interpretative community that produces news (p.158). News coverage contains numerous “metaphors, catchphrases, and other symbolic devices” that journalists employ as a way of suggesting what a certain story is about (p.158).

Furthermore, those rhetorical devices act in concert with each other within the framing process to promote a particular context in which a story should be understood, while simultaneously establishing a connection with the other information present within a story to establish editorial congruency (p.158). Additionally, Hall et al. (1999) and others posit that framing establishes the criteria by which all subsequent contributions to a debate are labeled relevant, or irrelevant (p.255), precluding information that runs counter to an established narrative.

Other scholars offer definitional variations for understanding, and methodological variations for applying framing to research. Scheufele (1999) understands and applies framing through what is referred to as the *process model of framing*, where “outcomes of certain processes serve as inputs for subsequent processes” (p. 114). In particular, the processes of *frame building* (organisational or structural factors of media systems, or how individual characteristics of journalists impact the framing of news content), *frame setting* (perceived importance and

salience of frames), *individual-level effects of framing* (behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive effects of frames on audiences), and *journalists as audiences* (journalists, like audiences, consume news) all speak to various aspects of framing, and how those processes play off of each other, subsequently affecting the way in which audiences and journalists alike respond to news (p.114-117).

De Vreese, Peter, and Semetko (2001) advocate a cross-national perspective when conducting framing research in their study examining media coverage of the introduction of the Euro. A cross-national perspective is important to offset “strong ethnocentric bias, both in terms of issues examined and the geographical focus of the studies” (p. 108). Cross-national perspectives in framing research also make visible the significance of external factors influencing news frames such as the “national institutional, political, and social contexts in which news is produced,” and internal factors such as ‘the importance of cross-national differences in journalistic practices, norms, and roles within different cultures” (p.119).

As much as framing impacts psychological processes in terms of how citizens perceive and interpret events on an individual level and on a broader scale, framing is “an organizational process and product, and a political strategic tool” (Entman, et al. 2009, p. 175). Within the context of the news media, communicative frames, commonly referred to as the ‘media frame,’ pay particular attention to what the speaker or news text itself says, such as the portrayal of an issue or event by elite and authoritative sources (p.181). Those elite and authoritative sources often pursue what is referred to as ‘goal framing.’ Goal framing can explain how elites, or

journalists themselves, manipulate the “goal of an action or behavior to affect the persuasiveness of the communication” (p.182). Goal framing can also serve the purpose of focusing on a frame’s ability to “provide a benefit or gain”, or to “prevent or avoid a loss” (p.182).

Johnson-Cartee (2005) details several framing processes springing out of social-psychological and organisational considerations that social actors or movements must take into account in order to attract supporters and news media attention (p.246). One of these processes, *frame alignment*, speaks to the degree an individual’s beliefs and values are in alignment with the ideologies, objectives, and activities of a social movement (p.246). *Frame building* refers to when individuals or social movements recognise similar ideological positions, and combine efforts towards the realisation of shared goals (p.246). Another important framing process is *belief amplification*, where social movements link together two distinct ideational elements with the hopes of mobilising support for, or against an issue (p.247).

In terms of politically-oriented news, framing possesses considerable leverage in determining how audiences will interpret media narratives. Framing promotes what Entman (1993) refers to as the dominant meaning of the news text, irrespective of whether it is reproduced through televisual or print channels. Dominant meaning, as Entman says, speaks to the “problem, causal, evaluative, and treatment interpretations” with the greatest likelihood of being accepted as reality by news audiences (p.56). Thus, the dominant meaning of a text connects the audience to it by inducing them to make an empirical judgment on the event

reported, and then a moral judgment on the characters implicated within the story. Additionally, as a conceptual tool used by journalists and policy makers alike to explain reality, framing carries with it a “particular cultural resonance,” in that it “calls to mind congruent elements of schemas that were stored in the past” (Entman et al. 2009, p. 177).

Several notable examples of Entman’s understanding of framing can be found in his study examining how news media within the United States report on American foreign policy. Entman (2004) found that during the Cold War era, journalists often deferred to the logic given by administration officials justifying military interventions, or unintentionally tragic incidents. As Entman notes, administration officials and their political allies influence the news media by contextualising information they release to the press in a way that would potentially yield them greater political leverage (p.4). The news media, and the political influence they wield, arises from how they respond to commentary from political officials, and their ability to frame news in ways that favor one side over another (p.4).

When contrasting media coverage of Korean Air Lines Flight 007, shot down on September 1, 1983 by a Soviet Air Force fighter jet killing 269 people, and Iran Air Flight 255, shot down by the U.S. Navy ship the *Vincennes* on July 3, 1988, killing 290 people, Entman found that media coverage of these two tragic incidents varied considerably, but still followed cues given by the White House to explain the events (p.29). Consequently, news coverage of the Korean Air Lines tragedy held that the

Soviet government and military, through the selection and emphasis on certain words and images, “committed intentional murder, with all the moral condemnation that implies” (p.36). Conversely, coverage of the U.S. military’s downing of the Iran Air flight, another civilian airliner, was portrayed as a tragic, yet “understandable blunder – with all the excuses that implies” (p.36). Additionally, the framing of the Iran Air tragedy deflected human responsibility away from the United States for the incident, inhibiting audiences and political elites alike from developing a deeper, more critical understanding of the event (p.36).

Thus, the framing of the Korean Air tragedy by media outlets in the United States such as *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines, when contrasted with coverage of the Iran Air tragedy, encouraged “far greater empathy with those directly affected by the event; different categorizing of the event; and broad generalizing from the event” (p.36). The role of framing in the coverage of the Korean and Iran Air tragedies elicited, or inhibited an empathetic reading of news texts by implementing certain words or images. Those words or images induced audiences to understand the events through the perspective of those affected by the tragedy by virtue of moral outrage or shared humanity, in the case of Korean Air incident, or administration officials conceding a strategic or technical mistake, as in the case of the Iran Air incident (p.37). Frames, by their very nature, encourage generalising by connecting events or individuals in news coverage to familiar schemas held by an audience to “larger categories – a specific event, say, to groups or nations” (p.37).

The framing of either event suggests that the goal of all the political

maneuvering over news frames is to engender support or opposition to a policy or political actor, occasionally yielding a frame so dominant that oppositional schemas for understanding important political events are left undeveloped (p.47). Though political elites and powerful news organisations possess greater power in terms of being able to promote a dominant frame, the inherent power of a journalist, on the other hand, allows them to challenge elites by asking questions and deciding which words and images should guide the formation of a news story (p.91).

Thus, understanding the importance of framing, and the role it plays within the communicative power struggle between political elites, members of the news media, and citizens alike, is essential to illuminating the “feedback loops that trace the flow of political power among competing media, competing elites, and mass publics” (Entman et al. 2009, p.188). Entman’s research, among the work of others in the area of framing studies, is vital to my own project as it considers how and why news media covered the actions of the anti-Mubarak protesters in Egypt during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution as they did.

VIII. News coverage of international crises

The spectrum of academic literature examining the news media coverage of international crises is indeed expansive, encompassing topics such as war reporting, natural disasters, humanitarian crises, and political turmoil. What news coverage of international crises attempts to accomplish is to inform and explain events to domestic audiences within the social, cultural, and political frameworks of the

nation-state in which they reside.

To expand on that point, Clausen (2003) offers an analysis of how events taking place across the world are assimilated into media narratives for national audiences. Clausen argues that events with global ramifications, or of global interest, are “mediated according to different national, organisational, and professional strategies” (p.8). This, in a sense, updates Marshall McLuhan’s oft-repeated term ‘global village’ to ‘global villages,’ as audiences across the world are being increasingly defined by news coverage specifically tailored towards national interests (p.8).

Moreover, Clausen argues that international news is defined by through ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ features (p.14). The ‘universal’ features Clausen refers to are the global formats and genre conventions by which international news is made, with the ‘particular’ referring to “socio-cultural themes, actors and communication strategies in national media institutions” (p.14). The process by which the ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ are contextualised within a domestic framework is called *domestication* (p.14). Broadly speaking, ‘domestication’ speaks to how journalists mold international news into frames of reference that are recognisable and discernible for their colleagues and audiences in the reporting country (p.15).

Within the news production process, domestication occurs at several different levels: first, at the level of global media, domestication mediates between the global and national by disseminating international information into their own economic and political environment; at the national level, competing news

organisations provide and process information in accordance with the legal rules and political system of their country; at the organisational level, information is negotiated and processed against the norms, standards, and production processes of news organisations; lastly, at the professional level, individual producers, anchors, and correspondents negotiate and domesticate information before it is then relayed to the public as a news story (p.15).

In Clausen's study of Japanese news rooms, she found that international news managers see their job as fulfilling two professional obligations: first, they saw themselves as providing information and commentary about international affairs, which included policy and diplomatic negotiation between nations to the domestic political and economic elite; and second, as mediators of international information to the general public of the country from which they report (p.24). Such professional obligations require an intensive review of information in order to produce news with a political or economic orientation, and news producers are acutely aware of the fact that the general viewer, or reader of international news does not possess the cognitive capacity to critically consume 'high-level' political news stories (p.24).

Viewing the rest of the world through the prism of the reporting nation can preclude audiences, and journalists themselves, from critically examining foreign events of significant political and human import. Additionally, given that journalists often depend on political elites to contextualise international events for domestic audiences, dominant interests can have a disproportionate influence on news coverage. The following literature will provide an overview of how scholars have

examined how the news media covers, and makes sense of, international crises.

When international crises occur and dominate the news cycle, news media *constitute* the events that they cover (Wahl-Jorgensen 2010), in the sense that media “are the only way of accessing information about distant events,” thus making crisis coverage “both mediated and mediatised” (p.1). Within the context of international crises, forms of news coverage enabled by dominant professional media standards and practices is often situated within the nation-state, and that particular nation’s place within global geopolitical power relations (p.34). Thus, irrespective of the global reach of contemporary news organisations, journalists situate significant international events within the context of country from which they report (p.1). News media construct narratives out of political upheavals, disasters and wars within the “framework of the nation-state and its relationship to global power relations,” something Wahl-Jorgensen refers to as the “geopolitics of disaster coverage” (p.1).

Wahl-Jorgensen’s focus on the interplay between the professional practices of journalists and the construction of citizenship within news coverage of disasters offers an opportunity to examine how citizens are constructed within media coverage (p.1). On one end, news coverage makes citizens out of those who are witnessing disasters or crises unfold through the lens of media coverage, by affirming their place in the world and invoking a cosmopolitan sensibility within a viewership that they indeed have a responsibility to distant others (p.1).

Perhaps more importantly, news coverage constructs citizens out of disasters

or crises by providing them with a platform to speak, affirming their political voice while offering the opportunity to mobilise global support, whether it be political and concentrated amongst the elites of nations, or a more broader, and cosmopolitan humanitarian support (p.1). Furthermore, how do such considerations impact and mobilise the response of political elites and the citizens they represent during crises? This is an essential point to consider, especially for any academic research looking at the ways news media construct these distant 'others' as politicised citizens, such as in the case of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

Such constructions of citizenship and the legitimation of political goals in distant societies suggest that the confluence of ideology and professional practice has, at the very minimum, some role in determining the angle of subsequent news coverage (p.1). Indeed, such a consideration begs the question of how journalists not only decide what event(s) merit coverage, but to what extent, which facts and figures will be given prominence within coverage, along with the attendant discursive and political possibilities that result from such decisions (p.3).

Further considerations of how journalistic practice and ideology merge to form narratives about distant events can be understood by examining news coverage through the lens of geopolitics. Geopolitics is commonly understood as attempting to understand relations between and among regions, nations, and cultures formed in part by the "complex histories of collaboration, conflict, and colonialism" (p.9). Contained within a geopolitical perspective is the idea that hegemonic discourses and articulations uphold dominant global power relations,

rather than a mere orientation to a particular nation (p.9). Geopolitical orientations of particular nation-states, regions, or cultures can indeed penetrate the professional practices of journalists due to it informing “the allocation of resources and the prioritisation of particular stories over others” (p.10). In particular, Moeller (1999), drawing from a 1995 Pew study, outlined conflict, violence, and national interest as the criteria by which news media in the United States decide to devote coverage and resources toward international events (p.18).

Coverage of military conflict is one of the most prominent, ubiquitous, and emotionally galvanising examples of how news media cover international crises. Journalism and media studies scholars, as Tumber (2009) says, have long been drawn to the coverage of military conflict due to its dramatic nature and importance to states and their publics (p.386). The examination of news media coverage and military conflict within academia has opened up new theoretical and conceptual debates about items such as the “definitions of war and (more recently) terrorism, conflict resolution, the public sphere, political economy, information management, definitions and roles of media sources, the occupation of journalism, and objectivity” (p.386).

Within the coverage of military conflict, the importance and proximity of the conflict is often couched in terms of “our war” versus “other peoples’ wars,” a delineation which, quite logically, impacts the duration and intensity of news coverage (p.387). Another hugely important angle to the delineation between “our” war and “their” war is the impact that distinction has on the mobilisation of

domestic public opinion, which is largely formed by the internal discourse between political elites, journalists, and the public between each other and amongst themselves. Political preparation and justification are central to winning over public opinion, especially since the outcomes of military conflict are not exclusively decided on the field of battle, but within the political arena, where the role of the news media takes on an expanded role during international crises (p.388).

An oft-cited example of news media's role in shaping public opinion is Hallin's (1986) assessment of the relationship between news coverage and public support for the Vietnam War. As protests against the war moved from outside of, to the centre of mainstream acceptability, Hallin explained this shift through a 3-pronged conceptual approach. Hallin's Spheres of Consensus, Legitimate Controversy, and Deviance outline how journalists shift from upholding to challenging statements from official sources. Within the Sphere of Consensus, journalists "serve as an advocate or celebrant of consensus values (p.117)," in which a unity of viewpoints amongst political factions results in non-critical news coverage deferring to elite interpretation. When journalists are operating from within the Sphere of Consensus, critical viewpoints and public protest might, or might not receive favorable coverage, depending on the nature of elite consensus.

Within the Sphere of Legitimate Controversy, debate between political factions creates room for oppositional viewpoints to be reported on and privileged within news coverage. The news values of objectivity and editorial balance are dominant within this sphere, and allot a certain amount of space for the

dissemination of critical viewpoints, provided those viewpoints are not deemed by “most of the society as controversial” (p.116).

Lastly, the Sphere of Deviance is where the “political actors and views which journalists and the political mainstream of society” dismiss as being unrepresentative, unworthy, or too controversial lie (p.117). For example, if a protest movement should fall within the Sphere of Deviance, it would not receive favorable coverage, as the Sphere of Deviance “marks out and defends the limits of acceptable political conflict” (p.117). What can be extrapolated from Hallin’s approach is how the state and the press inform and decide upon the limits of acceptable dissent. Indeed, as Tumber (2009) notes in his summary of Hallin, the basis of why journalists report on events or interpret viewpoints in the ways that they do is linked to the degree of consensus amongst political elites (p.389).

IX. Press-state relationship

The relationship between the state and the press has been the focus of intense debate and academic deliberation over which entity possesses more leeway over the other, and under what circumstances. Within this section, I will explore several theoretical models by which to engage with the topic of press-state relations. W. Lance Bennett (1990), in his attempt to develop a theory of the press-state relationship in the United States, concluded the news media professionals, from the boardroom down to beat reporters, *indexed* the range of viewpoints within news and editorials according to the contours of debate taking place within

government circles about a particular topic (p.106). Thus, Bennett's working 'indexing' hypothesis is that non-official voices are included within news stories or editorials when those voices express opinions that are in alignment with opinions emanating out of official circles (p.106).

The implication within such a hypothesis is that news media practitioners have seemingly decided to privilege institutional voices and understandings of reality at the expense of giving leverage to public opinion mobilised against irresponsible or unrepresentative institutions (p.106). In addition, the indexing hypothesis would also suggest that the news industry has ceded to governmental figures the task of policing themselves, and that a 'democratically-minded' news media would only come into being when political elites, whether driven by dissent amongst their ranks or electoral motivations, open up policy debates to the general public (p.9). Altogether, the indexing model for exploring press-state relations suggests a world where official sources have the ability to define the contours of popular debate around an issue (p.125).

Another means by which to explore the press-state relationship is the concept of the CNN Effect. The discussion around the CNN Effect has aroused much debate, with scholars, journalists, and government figures alike all contributing thoughts on when, and if, news media influence foreign policy. To start, Robinson's (2002) work examining the 'CNN Effect' gauges the impact of news media organisations on the formation of a state's foreign policy and global politics in general. The CNN Effect, broadly speaking, does not exclusively apply to the theory's

broadcast namesake, CNN, but incorporates both the impact of both televisual and print reporting on the state's decision-making process, as Robinson examined not only CNN broadcast news, but CBS as well, in addition to print news outlets the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* (p.2).

Within the state's decision-making process, Robinson considers not only the impact of news media coverage on the policy-makers, but also politicians, analysts, and influential commentators who comprise an establishment that constitute the foreign policy elite (p.3). The focus of Robinson's analysis of the CNN Effect, then, is how international crises are represented within coverage, the tone of coverage towards foreign policy engagements (p.3), and whether those factors combined impact the decision for governments to intervene during foreign humanitarian crises.

The crux of the CNN Effect is that when there is uncertainty or active disagreement amongst elites as it pertains to a foreign crisis, the influence of news media on the ultimate outcome of a policy debate is at its greatest (p.25). Yet, when there is overall consensus amongst elites, news media exert little to no influence over the ultimate outcome of a policy (p.25). To put the CNN Effect into perspective, Robinson's own research examined the potency of the CNN Effect across several case studies of humanitarian crises during the 1990s. The CNN Effect did not exhibit a strong, if any effect, upon the outcome of a policy in the case of ground troop intervention in Somalia in 1992, ground troop intervention in Iraq in 1991, and the non-deployment of ground troops during the air war against Serbia in 1999, since

the level of policy certainty among elites was high (p.118). These three case studies illustrate the point that news media coverage did not influence, or compel elites to intervene in situations where there was already consensus among them to do so (p.71).

The case studies that did yield a strong CNN effect were the air power interventions in Bosnia during 1994 and 1995 (p.124). Debate and uncertainty amongst political elites left open a space for news media to inject their own perceptions of what should be done via critical and empathetic coverage due to a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation.

Livingston (1997) speaks of three effects that the CNN Effect may have on state policy: 1) media may act as an *impediment* to the realisation of policy goals (grisly footage may undermine a nation's morale, or act as a threat to operational security), an *agenda setting agency* (compelling footage of crises or atrocities may reorder policy priorities – ex. Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti), or as an policy accelerant (increased media coverage shortens decision-making response time for politicians) (p.293).

Jakobsen (2000) presents a different understanding of the CNN Effect, arguing that while adherents to the concept point to its ability to explain intervention and withdrawal in crisis settings, they miss the greater impact of the CNN Effect: the indirect and often unseen consequences of media coverage on conflict management (p.132). Jakobsen further explains that because conflicts are often underreported on during the pre and post-violence phases, and that coverage

of conflicts concentrates on when violence is taking place, news media give special privilege to the short-term necessities in the form of emergency relief, and deflect focus and funds away from long-term efforts aimed at preventing violent conflict and rebuilding societies crippled by war (p.132).

Such effects of news coverage, Jakobsen argues, have a far greater impact on Western conflict management (p.132). In summation, the relationship between the press and state cannot be defined by one theory examining media's circumstantial influence on state policies. Press-state relations, can, however, be best understood through overview of various theoretical models examining the how and when each party influences each other, and the ramifications that struggle has on the formulation and application of state policy.

X. Conclusion

What has been established through this chapter's discussion of news production processes and routines (Tuchman 1973, Gans 1979, Harrison 2006, Becker and Vlad 2009), objectivity (Golding 1977, Schudson 1978, Schudson and Anderson 2009), news values (Hall 1973, O'Neill and Harcup 2009), framing (Gamson 1989, Entman 1993, 2004, 2007, Scheufele 1999, De Vreese, Peter, and Semetko 2001, Johnson-Cartee 2005, Entman et al. 2009), and press-state relations (Hallin 1986, Bennett 1990, Livingston 1997, Robinson 2002), amongst other topics, is how each of these factors, separately or in conjunction with one another, influence what will become the final news product.

Within the context of distant political events, in this case the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, the news media is the public forum by which protesters sought to legitimate their aspirations to their own countrymen, and the world at-large. News media coverage also determines which aspects of protests make it into coverage, and how those pieces of a “perceived reality” are constructed into a narrative and then presented to the public. The next chapter of this literature review will explore the paradigms by which journalists cover political protest, and subsequently either legitimise, or delegitimise the goals of the protesters.

Chapter 4: Previous scholarship on media coverage of protest

I. Introduction

Critical to understanding the trajectory of this research is examining how the press has covered political protest, especially protests taking place abroad in countries of significant geopolitical import, such as Egypt. As Cottle and Lester (2011) note, the 'transnational' aspect of some protests fundamentally changes the way in which the message of protesters is communicated and mediated across the globe (p.2), thus creating opportunities for protests to mean and signify different things for journalists and the different nation-states from which they report. I would argue that such a proposition holds particular weight and significance when evaluating British and American news media coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

What I will be arguing within this chapter is that there has typically been an ideological concordance between the politically powerful and the news media in terms of how the former interprets political protest, and how the latter subsequently reports on it. It could be that this ideological congruency played a significant role in the way the anti-Mubarak protesters of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution were presented to global audiences within news coverage of the protests in both the United Kingdom and United States. Thus, within this chapter, I will first examine the normative paradigms by which news media cover political protests, often negatively, and then shift toward paradigms that allow room for positive

portrayals of political protest to emerge within news coverage.

II. Delegitimising dissent

As previous academic research would suggest, protesters and protest groups are often typically framed in terms of their purported deviancy (Boyle et al. 2004, Boyle et al. 2005, Jha 2007). Shoemaker (1984) states that “the more deviant a political group is perceived as being, the more newspeople will ridicule it” (p.66). Audiences often do not make any determinations as to whether a protest is inherently good or bad until it is projected as being a threat to their individual interests, or society as a whole (Turner 1969, p.826). Furthermore, pursuant to the topic of political legitimacy, the press, more often than not, denies protesters the status of being legitimate political players (Shoemaker 1984, p.66), thereby affecting how the viewing public interprets their role in the political process.

Journalists themselves have always relied on certain professional routines to guide their reporting, which, when combined with the economic and political interests of the news organisations they work for, tend to privilege a certain version of reality over others (Gitlin 1980, p.4). News organisations and the editorial hierarchy within them define what the story is, which is accompanied by suggestions on an appropriate tone and attitude that a journalist should take towards a certain story (p.4). Gitlin’s research on the Vietnam War protests found that the closer an issue was to the core interests of the nation-state and political elites, the less likely it was that those interests will be critically examined within the

news media (p.5). The representation of political opposition within news media, Gitlin found, followed a rather static paradigm: process the protesters, absorb what can be absorbed of the protesters' message into the dominant structure of definition and images, and push the rest to the margins of what counts as legitimate social opposition (p.5).

III. Protesters vs. police

The assumption that media treatment of protest groups determines how protesters and their ideas are perceived by the public was validated by McLeod's (1995) study of the portrayal of social protest within television news coverage (p.14). In this research, one-sided portrayals of protesters primed audience members to reject the issues they raised, and thus constrained the marketplace of ideas the mass media are supposed to represent (p.14). The focus on violence at protests undermined the protesters' intention of highlighting a governmental or commercial target, and transferred their struggle to the police (p.3), thus castigating the protesters as a group that is seemingly challenging the entity (police) tasked with upholding the rule of law in society. This set up a "protester vs. police" paradigm, which is significant as groups that challenge governmental targets could be thought of as having political goals and motivations, while those that challenge police are relegated to criminal terrain (p.3). The transference of struggle to police, McLeod found, was due in part to the fact that reporters relied on official sources at the scene of the protests, many of whom were law enforcement figures (p.3). This

negated the protesters' ability to speak for themselves; it also allowed them to be framed as initiating violence with police, and the police as responding appropriately to restore order (p.3).

Hertog and McLeod (1995), through a comparison of coverage by local print and television media outlets of the Minneapolis anarchist protests in 1986, 1987, and 1988, identified a set of five frames describing the way news media cover protest (p.5). The first of these frames, *circus/carnival*, focuses on protesters' actions, rather than their political views. Oddity and peculiarity are emphasised at the expense of the protesters' symbolic gestures or signs, and the journalist notes the shock, confusion, amusement, but never the enlightenment of bystanders bearing witness to the event (p.19). The second frame, *riot*, focuses on the purported threat protesters pose towards societal harmony, castigating protesters as criminals and highlighting the presence of police as a stabilising force (p.20). *Confrontation* treats protesters and police as combatants, and emphasises the tactics and actions of either group while marginalising or ignoring the reasons bringing protesters to the streets (p.21). *Protest*, a fairly rare frame, acknowledged protesters as a legitimate political voice, without necessarily giving support or positively portraying the protesters (p.21). The final frame, *debate*, was used even less than the protest frame, and emphasised protests as a continuing philosophical dialogue among protesters (p.22).

Further research by McLeod and Detenber (1999) considered the role of journalists in providing support for the prevailing political status quo via the *protest*

paradigm. The *protest paradigm* is a concept for examining news media narratives by providing a template for the construction of protest coverage by paying particular attention to narrative structures, reliance on official sources and definitions, the invocation of public opinion, and other techniques of legitimisation, marginalisation, and demonisation (p.4). They reason that mainstream news media have taken a “guard dog” stance towards political protest, citing that due to news organisations’ inherent ties to existing power structures, they “often cover protest from the perspective of those in power” (p.5).

McLeod and Detenber’s hypotheses predicted that given a high level of status quo support in news stories, audiences would deride the actions of protesters as a less viable form of political critique, while being less critical of those designated to keep the sociopolitical order of the day intact -- the police (p.8). They also examined hostility towards protesters, support for the protesters’ expressive rights, and the perceived newsworthiness of protest. Their hypotheses were supported, as their research showed a correlation between implicit status quo support and negative attitudes towards political protest in television news coverage (p.20).

Similar to Hertog and McLeod, Dardis (2006), in his research examining the prevalence of marginalisation devices in media coverage of protests against the Iraq War, found that of the marginalisation devices featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* - general lawlessness, police confrontation, and official sources were the three most prevalent devices present within all of the articles studied (p.130). Of the 124 articles selected, Dardis found that slightly more

stories were deemed positive toward the protesters (n=44), than negative (n=42) or neutral (n=38) (p.128). Not surprisingly, Dardis found that negative stories about the protests featured more marginalisation devices than positive ones, suggesting that journalists repeatedly emphasise the same aspects of protests, while leaving others underreported on (p.130). Dardis theorised that the use of particular marginalisation devices within news coverage can lead to perceived negative coverage of protests (p.130). Overall, Dardis' research, like that of Gitlin and others, lends credence to the argument that news media coverage of protests often leaves the reasons galvanising individuals to take to the streets unexplored within reporting.

Building on his examination of U.S. press coverage of the 2003 Iraq War protests, Dardis (2006) conducted a cross-national content analysis comparing coverage of the anti-war protests within the U.S print media to coverage of anti-war protests within the U.K. by several leading newspapers (*The Times*, *The Guardian*, and the *Telegraph*). Of the 152 articles selected, more stories were deemed neutral towards the anti-war protesters (n=61), though there was a significant difference in the number of positive-leaning stories (n=56) than negative (n=35) (p.416).

Congruent with his previous U.S.-centric research, the marginalisation devices most featured within U.K. newspapers were general lawlessness, police confrontation, and official sources/definition (p.417). The results of the cross-national research does not imply the U.K. print media is a unique platform by which citizen voice is legitimised, as general lawlessness, the most frequent

marginalisation device featured in *both* U.S. and U.K. print coverage, was implemented more frequently in the U.K. (p.420). However, it does suggest that the U.S. press is more supportive of 'status quo', establishment viewpoints than its overseas counterpart (p.420). Dardis' research is valuable, as it demonstrates how political protest that is more foreign policy-oriented is covered within the both U.S. and U.K. print news media, which is of particular importance to my own project.

Which types of political protest are reported on and why was outlined by McCarthy, McPhail and Smith (1996) in a study detailing coverage bias on the part of the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and three national television networks. They identify what newsworthy pegs protest stories are constructed around, with stories meeting one or more of the following standards: *notoriety* (in that someone featured is famous, or the actions taken "trendy"), *consequential* (actions taken during protest having a wide impact), *extraordinary* (actions taken are spectacular, large, or unusual and thus of broad human interest), and *culturally resonant* (people and actions involved emphasize that which is widely familiar) (p.480). Since news media in the United States are predicated upon market-driven rather than public-service values, and reliant upon advertisers and exclusive access to prominent cultural or political figures to generate revenue, they are expected to select and frame news in a way that is not antagonistic towards that relationship (p.481). Thus, when protests arise that challenge prominent cultural institutions or political figures, it can be assumed that journalists are not likely to cover the protesters and their goals favorably due to the relationship between politically powerful

institutions and figures, and the media outlets that cover them (p.481).

In addition to abiding by corporate interests, news pegs, and routine methods of news gathering, selection bias in media is also subject to attention cycles, which refers to the ascendance of an issue that dominates news before being relegated to obscurity (p.481). Taking this into account, news media outlets are already “focused on an issue before demonstrations on these issues themselves become more likely to be the subject of media attention,” thus pointing to the logic that media agenda-setting processes are key to understanding how protest is selected for coverage (p.495). In terms of the structure of bias across print publications, the authors concluded that protesters were marginalised in the two national newspapers they studied, even after considering the wide variation in coverage during the years 1982 and 1991 (p.496).

IV. Confrontational narratives

Watkins (2001) identified the ways in which media frames can, and sometimes do operate as manifestations of power (p.85). In his research examining coverage of the ‘Million Man March’ in Washington D.C. on October 16th, 1995, Watkins looked coverage of the event by national television networks ABC, CBS, and NBC, finding that that Louis Farrakhan, one of the chief spokesmen of the march, was the center of media coverage, and focused “on his polarizing style of racial politics,” framing the march as an expression of racism, rather than as a protest against racial inequality (p.98). Farrakhan became the center of coverage, and

center of tension within media coverage of the march, and thus gave “very little time, space, or incentive to highlight other aspects about the demonstration” (p.98). Watkins’ research is important, as it speaks to the way news coverage delegitimised the Million Man March and its aims by focusing on one of the march’s spokesmen, rather than the broader issues of race relations and community involvement that the organisers and participants hoped to highlight.

Additionally, broadcast news images enhance the accompanying text by making news narratives more persistently available within the memory of the audience (Arpan et al. 2006, p.5). In the hierarchy of news images, emotional visuals suggest a reading that is congruent with the corresponding text within the body of the story, in which audience members will be more likely to recall the details of a story because of the images attached to a story (p.5). The emotional and interpretive dominance of accompanying visuals, whether pictures or video, does not promote learning about the political or social issues from which protests arise (p.5), as they are merely a snapshot of reality, and not sufficient to contextualise the issues that are driving citizens out into the streets.

Visuals of protest violence or conflict between protesters and police become the gold standard for reporting on protest, and even if the protest being covered is mostly peaceful, the isolated bits of violence will often be the dominant visual and textual frames of the story (p.3). Thus, the visual and verbal cues combine to promote a preferred reading of protest within a news text (Hartley 1982, p.63). By no means is this sort of framing a contemporary phenomenon, as it has its roots in a

time when the nation was confronted with the polemical images of protest for the first time on such a massive scale.

V. Seminal studies examining the framing of dissent

This section is primarily devoted to the work of James Halloran et al. and Todd Gitlin's research of the relationship between political protest and the news media. Halloran et al. and Gitlin's research on how news media reported on the protests against the Vietnam War, and how the leaders of opposition movements against the United States' involvement in the conflict were framed over time, lend credence to the assertion that "people, as producers of meaning, have no voice in what the media make of what they say or do" (Gitlin 1980, p.3).

One of the most influential and oft-quoted studies examining the relationship between news media and political protest was *Demonstration and Communication: a Case Study* by James D. Halloran, Philip Elliott, and Graham Murdock. Their case study examined the way "in which two television services and most of the national newspapers" in the United Kingdom selected and presented the anti-Vietnam War demonstration that took place in London on October 27th, 1968 within coverage of the event. Media coverage of the demonstration followed an "inferential structure," whereby violence, or the possibility of it occurring, was the point from which reporting on the event sprang (Halloran et al. 1970, p.215). Indeed, this "inferential structure" has even been corroborated by recent scholarship. Boykoff (2006) found that within mainstream American print and broadcast news coverage of the Global

Justice Movement, the expectation, or potential for violence was featured within 59 percent of all news coverage examined (p.224). Furthermore, “inferential structure,” Halloran et al. (1970) explain, is not about pushing forth a media narrative condemning or supporting an event or issue (p.215). Rather, it is about a “process of simplification and interpretation which structures the meaning given to the story around its original news value” (p.215-216).

Thus, when protests are covered in the media, there is the expectation that some sort of confrontation will arise, most likely between protesters and police, which becomes the focal point of the attendant coverage of the event. Irrespective of whether a possible confrontation between protesters and police, for example, manifests as a heated exchange or a physical altercation is seemingly irrelevant, as the expectation of violence dominates media framing in such instances. Halloran et al.’s work is crucial in that it demonstrates how news media delegitimises political protest in a historically specific moment, which Gitlin’s work examining how mainstream media undermined the anti-Vietnam War movement also speaks to.

Throughout Gitlin’s (1980) research, the news media are implicated as playing a substantial role in the implosion of the anti-war movement. However, before the news media and journalists are given the status of cultural boogeyman stifling the democratic expression and political views of citizens, it should be first noted that oppositional movements in society are politically and socially isolated, and commit themselves to the vast undertaking of transforming the possibilities of

democracy in society (p.128). Such an enormous undertaking that advocates the complete overhaul of a country's political culture is without a doubt bound to meet stern resistance within that culture itself, and from news organisations as well, since they are the traditional arbiters of what is, and is not an acceptable political view or critique.

Given the growing opposition to the Vietnam War, anti-war groups like the Students for Democratic Society (SDS) came to embody the opposition movement's voice and body. But as an opposition movement such as SDS rose in media stock and attracted news coverage wherever and whenever it staged a protest, the group's image and its message still had to pass through news media channels, where its message rarely escaped intact. In the 1960s, the problem for SDS and other anti-war groups was no longer media visibility, but the struggle to repossess its image and message that had been undermined by the media since the movement was catapulted onto the national stage in 1965 (p.23).

Gitlin noted that the Vietnam protest movement (in particular the SDS), was delegitimised by news media coverage through the use of three specific frames: trivialisation, polarisation, and marginalisation (p.27). The first of the three, trivialisation, speaks to the ways in which news coverage patronizes protesters or a movement by focusing on their dress, age, vernacular, and goals. For instance, protesters might be generalised as "kids" and "bluehairs" (*Star Tribune* 2008), lending credence to the media stereotype that frames protesters as young and deviant. Polarisation is the aspect of media coverage that denies protesters

importance by emphasising counterdemonstrations, and labeling the protesters themselves as extremists or radicals (Gitlin 1980, p.27). Lastly, marginalisation pushes protesters back from the arena of legitimate discourse by framing them as unrepresentative of society at-large, and nothing more than a fringe movement with an unattainable political goal (p.27).

Additional tactics employed by news media that Gitlin noted were reliance on statements from government figures to provide context, highlighting the presence of “Viet cong” flags or communists, the presence of right-wing opposition to the protests, violence in the demonstrations, and the delegitimising use of quotation marks within the text of news stories (example: “peace march”) (p.28).

The aforementioned “tactics” that are mentioned as part of how the producers of news undermine and marginalise political protest within coverage are not explicit standards detailed within a news organisation’s handbook. What is more likely is that they are determinants of how journalists cover protests and protesters in general. According to Gitlin’s analysis of the anti-war movement in the 1960s, news outlets such as the *New York Times* shifted its framing of the protesters to coincide with President Lyndon B. Johnson’s escalation of the conflict in 1965 (p.32).

The shift in frames accorded the political elites who pursued military intervention in Vietnam with a news media environment conducive to their interests. On the topic of hegemony and news, the legitimacy of dominant viewpoints within news coverage hinges upon the practice of objectivity.

Objectivity, Gitlin observes, neutralises facts that challenge the interests of dominant political players (p.51) by giving equal treatment both sides a debate, irrespective of whether the facts contradict, or uphold one of the viewpoints being discussed. Traditionally, journalists have equated political protest with deviance, and denigrated protesters by ignoring the collective motivations behind their actions and looked to singular, ad hoc reasons that do not call into question the political logic of why they want to be heard (p.53).

In relation to the coverage of U.S. foreign policy, journalists have had to choose between two routes to explain the context and validity of American actions: a more critical take on events or policy, challenging official explanations and state-sanctioned logic, or abiding by what the President told them was right (p.66).

Political leaders and the heads of media organisations are bound by what Gitlin calls a “general community of interest,” in that both groups come from similar educational backgrounds, and share the same social contacts in addition to similar world views (p.70). Such professional and social connections, and background similarities have ostensibly opened up ways for political leaders and media elites to influence and act upon each other.

Accordingly, SDS’s struggle was not only for the ability to influence how it was represented within news coverage, but against the reporting routines that journalists relied on to cover political protest. Journalists covered the event, not the condition; the conflict, not the consensus binding oppositional groups into a mass movement; the facts that advanced a story, not the ones that contradicted

governmental rationale and media's political predispositions (p.122). For movements like the SDS, the real forces that marginalised them were not so much police presence at protests, but the media's acquiescence to supporting the Johnson administration's policies in Vietnam, in which they co-opted governmental suspicion of mass social movements (p.122).

Gitlin's study highlights the choice presented to protest groups with aspirations of legitimacy: play by conventional political rules and dialogue in order to acquire an image of credibility, or be ostracised as directionless radicals whose goals and values cannot be assimilated within mainstream political and media circles (p.290). If protest movements choose the former, their oppositional momentum is weakened, yet if they choose the latter, they run the risk of being denied the political and social legitimacy that could effect the change they desire (p.291). Hallin (1986), another scholar who has devoted a considerable amount of research examining the news media and its political role during the Vietnam era, echoed Gitlin in suggesting that since the anti-war movement was not recognised as part of the normal political process, it was rarely credited as newsworthy unless it took on a "deviant" role, mainly by provoking violence or being met with allegations of emboldening the enemy (p.194).

Overall, the media place a low value on political involvement from ordinary citizens, which may be a defining characteristic of American political culture at-large (p.196). Under two very limited circumstances is political protest and citizen voice in general favorably covered, coming either when average citizens who do not

“make a habit” of political involvement express their views, or when protest relating to a certain issue is accepted as a part of the contemporary political and social climate (p.196).

Gitlin’s research shows us that no matter how widespread protest movements may be, their acceptance or rejection by mainstream news media channels influences the extent of their political efficacy. Given what the existing literature suggests about the relationship between news media and political protest, it is important to tease out the connections between the politically powerful and the news media, and how that subsequently affects news media coverage of political protest, especially protest taking place in distant, and geopolitically significant nations.

In order for political opposition to attain the status of legitimacy, news media need to confer that status upon them. Thus, the question arises as to how the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters in Egypt were covered by the British and American print press, perhaps even in a decidedly favourable manner. The next section of this chapter shall examine the paradigms by which news media confer the status of legitimacy upon political protest.

VI. Legitimising dissent

In his research examining news from the Middle East, Wolfsfeld (1997) explains the ways in which political antagonists and protest movements gain currency within news media coverage through his *political contest model*. The

political contest model suggests that the news media is the arena in which the battle for political control and legitimacy is waged, whether it is between competing political parties, officials, or protest movements and authorities (p.3). When it comes down to securing favourable media coverage, antagonists must be presented as a credible, moderate alternative to what they are protesting against by the news media (p.115).

Conversely, when movements are framed as irrational, extremist, or potentially dangerous, they will naturally find it extremely difficult to mobilize popular support through favourable media coverage (p.115). Given the contemporary 24/7 news cycle, antagonists and political movements are presented with the dilemma of competing for an extremely competitive media space, and must prove their newsworthiness (p.21).

Additionally, another possible contributing factor towards media covering protests favourably is the dependency of protest movements on news media coverage. Protest movements often suffer from a lack of access to politically influential figures, and out of necessity they then turn to the news media in hopes of gaining access to political decision makers (p.22). Additionally, the need for external support induces protesters to reach out to the media with the hopes that news coverage may “send its message up” toward policy makers, and then “out” to the public (p.23). To go back to Chapter Two’s discussion of Foucault for a moment, Wolfsfeld’s analysis lends credence to my argument that there is a circuitous loop of power between protesters, the media, and the politically powerful, with each

participant in this loop of power legitimating and necessitating the power and importance of the others.

The conferral of legitimacy in the reporting of political conflict, Wolfsfeld notes, is most dependent on journalistic perceptions of the goals, motivations, and methods of the antagonist, versus the perceptions of whether the response on the part of authorities was legitimate (p.155). The decisions on the part of journalists as to whether a “genuine” injustice has been perpetrated, and whether the response on the part of authorities was “reasonable” or excessive, depend largely on how the information and images of protest “resonate within the political culture of each news medium” (p.155).

To expand on that point, notions of justice and injustice were featured within the BBC’s coverage of the 2011 Arab Uprisings, as researchers from Loughborough University determined that some of the reporting “constructed a narrative in which ‘the people’ were pitted against ‘brutal dictators’ (Loughborough University 2012, p.33). Furthermore, the 2011 uprisings were characterised as ‘revolutions’ occurring across the Arab world, an understanding that linked the protests with a “European revolutionary tradition” (p.33) that may have contributed BBC’s favourable portrayal of anti-government protesters across the region. Similarly, Salaita (2012) found that the anti-government protesters from across the Arab world were covered favourably within corporate American newspaper coverage of the 2011 Arab Uprisings, contradicting the longstanding Orientalist tropes about Arabs (and Muslims) within the Western press, where they had been

traditionally demonised when discussed (p.144).

Overall, the BBC's coverage of the 2011 Arab Uprisings speak to the principles of political resonance, which, according to Wolfsfeld, reflect the belief system of news organisations that is reflected in the way they cover political conflict (Wolfsfeld 1997, p.155). Wolfsfeld's research, and specifically his *political contest model*, is highly instructive and will assist me in my own work examining how and why the news media serves as the medium by which protest movements and authority figures struggle for legitimacy.

Pursuant to the topic of political legitimacy, Benford and Snow (2000) identify *collective action frames* as "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization" (p.614). Collective action frames simplify and condense reality (p.614), and thus allow individuals to make sense of the world around them. Gamson (1995) further elaborates upon three aspects of collective action frames that may contribute to the legitimization of protest groups: injustice, agency, and identity. The *injustice* aspect to collective action frames requires that human actors are responsible for hardship and suffering, whether they are governments, corporations, or other groups who may be presented as malicious in order to spark popular indignation (p.91). *Agency*, Gamson continues, speaks to the fact that the message of the protesters or movement in question has to be taken seriously, and is powerful enough to merit a response from authorities, whether it is in the form of arrests or suppression (p.95).

Lastly, *identity* “implies being a part of a ‘we’ who can do something (p.99),” and thus in the context of media coverage of a protest movement, invokes a sense of solidarity with protesters. The identity aspect of collective action frames asserts and defines a “we” who share common values and interests, as opposed to a “they” who are fundamentally opposed such values (p.99).

The relevance of collective action frames (and the attendant aspects of them as identified by Gamson) is crucial, as they outline the way in which news media coverage can legitimise political protest. Whether it is focusing on the injustice suffered by an oppressed citizenry, or bestowing protesters with a powerful sense of agency capable of meriting a response from the governments whose power is being questioned, collective action frames must be taken into account when discussing the political legitimacy that can be gained through positive media coverage of protest. Further evidence for “collective action frames” yielding positive media coverage was uncovered by Luther and Miller (2006), who found that frames presented by anti-war groups were more apparent than those put forth by pro-war groups within American newspaper coverage of demonstrations before and during the 2003 Iraq War (p. 91).

The highly volatile anti-globalisation protests in Seattle saw protesters battling the same media logic that previous authors noted as being a crucial factor in denying them the credibility to challenge political authority. Jeanne Hall and Ronald Bettig (2003) noted that the coverage of the Seattle protests varied between “symbolically dividing and conquering protesters by casting them as fractious and

quarrelsome” and extolling police as “trained professionals doing a difficult and dangerous job, or as benign father figures protecting the people” (p.14).

Yet, according to Kevin Michael DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples (2002), the Seattle protests were not solely an occasion for protesters to take on the World Trade Organisation and the attendant political and business elite from around the globe, but also an opportunity for them to engage in the struggle to control their image within news coverage, or *imagefare* (p.12). Imagefare becomes a reality when protest groups engage in *image events*, in which they stage elaborate and sometimes illegal activities specifically to court and maintain media coverage, which can have the subsequent effect of allowing them to engender support among civilians and other protest groups across national and geographic barriers (Cho 2008, p.12). Image events have become an inherently important aspect of contemporary political protest by virtue of their ability to give protesters greater leverage, and the opportunity to legitimise their actions within news media coverage.

DeLuca and Peeples’ (2002) suggest that because the Seattle protesters engaged in sometimes illegal image events during the WTO protests, such as symbolic property violence (smashing storefront windows, etc), coverage from national television networks and influential national newspapers escalated during the most heated days of the protests (p.141). The symbolic property violence dominated the media narrative that focused on protestors vs. police, irrespective of whether the story came in the form of “breaking news”, or more substantive background stories.

For example, the breaking news stories coming out of Seattle mainly focused on the violent images that were broadcast on television screens all over the world, yet the background stories gave considerable leeway to protestors who sought to highlight the issues that make the WTO a controversial institution (p.139). DeLuca and Peoples conclude that though there are two very strongly positioned sentiments vying for credibility with the global audience, the *imagefare* that was the Seattle protests nonetheless expanded the discourse beyond protesters protesting for the sake of being disobedient (p.144) and portrayed them as embodying a real political message questioning the logic of contemporary global commerce and its attendant effects on citizens worldwide.

Cammaerts (2007) credits new media technology like the internet for providing protesters with the ability to control their own self-representation via websites and social networking (p.265). This increased digital presence forces journalists to grant protesters at least some leeway within news coverage. Given that the internet represents a digital stronghold for protesters, they can use it as a foundation from which to craft their own representations within the news media and to the public. Protest groups are now adopting the mantra “Don’t hate the media – *be* the media (p.276),” as a recognition of the fact that in order to counter negative media portrayals of their goals and activities, they need to define and legitimate themselves to the public through their own words and actions, and by using platforms such as the internet where they can control their message without being subject to the reductionism of mainstream news media coverage.

VII. Conclusion

Within this chapter, I have argued that there is an ideological foundation upon which coverage of political protest is based, which may become even more relevant as it relates to the geopolitical significance of the country in which the protests are taking place (Herkenrath and Knoll 2011). As the discussion began with the ways in which news media delegitimise political protest (Turner 1969, Halloran et al. 1970, Gitlin 1980, Shoemaker 1984, McLeod and Detenber 1999, Watkins 2001, Boyle et al. 2004, Boyle et al. 2005, Boykoff 2006, Jha 2007), to the ways it can be legitimised within media coverage (Wolfsfeld 1997, Benford and Snow 2000, DeLuca and Peebles 2002, Loughborough 2012, Salaita 2012), a theme emerges from the literature indicating that the politically powerful are in a unique position to influence the way journalists report about events taking place abroad (particularly political protest), thereby affecting the way citizens interpret and understand the world beyond their national borders. Perhaps the relationship between the politically powerful and the journalists that report on them may have impacted the way news media covered the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

In summation, this entire literature review has explored topics ranging from the construction of a politicised citizenry within the news media, the influence of power on the construction of political reality in news coverage, news production and journalistic routines, to the reporting paradigms emanating from news media coverage of political protest. In the next chapter, I will detail the methodological foundation of my research project, where I will unpack my research sample and

explain how I conducted my research on the topic of British and American newspaper coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

Chapter 5: Methodology

I. Introduction

Within this chapter, I will be describing the methodological concepts used to pursue my research and the constituent elements of my research design and sample, which includes the publications and dates that constituted my data set. To begin, I conducted a content analysis of news coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Conducting a content analysis allowed me to determine the frequency by which certain characteristics of the news stories I examined occurred over the course of my sampling period, in addition to isolating and unpacking important themes in order to substantiate their significance within my research project.

Conducting a framing analysis allowed me to determine how the dominant themes revealed by my content analysis were constructed within news coverage of the protests, allowing me to unpack and carefully examine the narratives about the protests, its participants, and what they sought to achieve. Framing analyses are typically performed through content analyses (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000, Dimitrova and Connolly-Ahern 2007), thus combining these two methodological approaches was a practical means by which to examine the discursive representation of the Egyptian protests within British and American newspapers. I used this combined approach of a framing analysis via a content analysis to answer the following research question(s) that guided my project:

Question No. 1: *Were the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters portrayed in a positive manner within newspaper coverage of the Egyptian Revolution?*

Question No. 2: *How were Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian government, and the Egyptian police and security services represented within newspaper coverage of the Egyptian Revolution?*

Question No. 3: *Who were the dominant sources that were cited or quoted within coverage, and how may have that impacted the representation of the protesters?*

Question No. 4: *What other dominant themes emerged from coverage of the Egyptian Revolution?*

Before I clarify my position with respect to content and framing analyses, I will first detail my research sample. In the next section, I will describe the research sample and coding paradigm that I implemented in order to pursue this research.

II. Research sample and coding scheme

My research sample consisted of print news sources from the United Kingdom and the United States in order to provide an in-depth view of how the press from these two powerful Western nations reported on the events in Egypt. Cross-national research of American and British print news media has yielded rich, and substantive results within previous research comparing and contrasting coverage from both nations (Christensen 2005, Dardis 2006). Similar to Dardis' (2006) study, the aim for this research project was to identify, and then examine mainstream, establishment broadsheet newspapers that would produce the *most common* and *most likely seen* coverage (p. 414). Additionally, again drawing from Christensen (2005), this is not a review of the U.S. or U.K. print news media as a

whole, but rather an analysis of the stories chosen from the selected publications (p.114).

The newspapers I chose to examine from the United Kingdom were *The Daily (and Sunday) Telegraph*, *The Times (and Sunday Times)*, *The Independent (and The Independent on Sunday)*, and *The Guardian (and The Observer)*. These papers were chosen due to their political leanings (Conservative: *The Daily Telegraph & The Times*, Liberal: *The Guardian* and *The Independent*) and circulation numbers (Dardis 2006, p.414), amount of coverage devoted to foreign affairs, and integrity of their archived print coverage.

Taking cue from Dardis' other (2006) study, the newspapers I chose to examine from the United States were *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today* (p.124). Similar to the U.K. newspapers I chose, these American newspapers were included within my data set due to their circulation numbers, the amount and influence of their coverage devoted to foreign affairs, and accessibility of their archives (p.124). In terms of the political leanings of these publications, the *New York Times* is generally accepted to have a more liberal stance, with the political orientations of the *Washington Post* and *USA Today* harder to assign a distinctly liberal or conservative label.

To reiterate, the aim was not put forth a sample representative of all the foreign affairs coverage of the Egyptian Revolution in the United States, but to assemble coverage from publications encompassing the most comprehensive, and widely disseminated coverage of international news. While the inclusion of *USA*

Today within a research sample comprised of “elite” broadsheet newspapers might be controversial to some, the publication has been widely regarded as evolving from an “infotainment” publication to one whose reportorial quality and influence is taken seriously not only by their competitors, but by the political establishment of the United States as well (McCartney 1997).

The length of my data set examined coverage from the dates of January 24th, 2011 (the day before the protests commenced) to February 21st, 2011, ten days after Hosni Mubarak resigned as president of Egypt. All articles about the protests in Egypt within this timeframe were coded, but those that did not specifically address the protests in Egypt were discarded, and therefore did not factor into the final data set. Altogether, 386 articles from British newspapers were included within my sample along with 225 articles from American newspapers, bringing the grand total of the number of articles examined within my content analysis to 611.

The dates chosen for this study were an attempt to accumulate the greatest amount of coverage possible, and to help me determine if there were any significant changes within the results of my content analysis over the course of the sampling period. The articles were obtained by performing a Nexis UK search for relevant newspaper coverage by using the search terms “Egypt + protests” within the time period indicated in the preceding paragraph. The search terms I used were purposely general so as to accumulate the greatest number of potentially compatible results on Nexis UK.

As previously noted, I was responsible for choosing which articles to include

within this data set, and also coded each article to ensure of the consistent application of the research design. The categories coded for within my content analysis were determined by conducting an initial pilot study featuring tentative categories to gauge their salience within newspaper coverage, whereupon some were discarded, amended, or even added in light of the results from that preliminary run. It is also important to note that considering I derived my research sample from Nexis UK, only the text of the newspaper articles included in my research was examined, since Nexis-generated search results do not feature images or original page layouts.

To expand a bit on one of the coding categories to be discussed in the coming empirical chapters, the most significant category examined the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition within news coverage of the revolution. Thus, positive news coverage of the anti-Mubarak opposition movement was characterised by explanatory, in-depth reporting on the reasons behind the protests and the goals of the protesters, was optimistic of outcome of the protests, and highlighted violence against anti-Mubarak protesters. Additionally, both the journalist who wrote the story, and the majority of the commentary from selected news sources included within coverage would have described the anti-Mubarak opposition or protests similar to the aforementioned terms included above.

Neutral reporting would neither be convincingly supportive, or critical of the anti-Mubarak opposition or protests. This category also sought to accommodate divergent viewpoints within coverage. For instance, if the journalist reporting on the

revolution contextualised it in the favourable terms (e.g. “pro-democracy” (Shabi, 2011)) described within the previous paragraph, yet included commentary from sources who were overwhelmingly pessimistic about the possible outcome of the protests (e.g. Israeli commentators (2011)), then the news story would have been determined to be neutral in its tone towards the anti-Mubarak opposition.

Finally, reporting that was critical of the revolution would have focused on the negative implications of the protests in terms of regional and Western national security, expressed concern over who would rule Egypt should Mubarak fall, or would have described the anti-Mubarak opposition as unrepresentative of Egyptians, disorganised, or akin to a roaming mob. Additionally, both the journalists and their sources within the reporting would have described the protests and protesters in terms similar to the ones just described.

Though I attempted to make my coding categories and their attendant definitions as comprehensive and relevant to the research project as possible, there were obvious challenges and potential pitfalls that come along with being solely responsible for analysing all of the articles included with my data set according to the categories that I created. One pitfall to speak of was that this research did not feature a secondary coder, which could have increased confidence to the findings presented herein and brought to light any inconsistencies with which I applied my coding scheme. Furthermore, another coder might have identified other dominant themes that could have been explored within the coming empirical chapters. That said, time constraints (i.e. the amount of time needed to train a secondary coder)

prohibited me from including one in the conduct of my research. Nonetheless, I am confident that I applied my coding scheme consistently and accurately given that the coding was conducted over the course of several months, and not sporadically over the course of a year or longer. Finally, full details of the coding categories examined within this research can be found within the appendix of this dissertation, where I have included the actual master coding sheet.

Moving beyond the research sample, I will now introduce the methodologies deployed within this project, discussing their utility and limitations within the context of previous scholarship.

III. Content Analysis

Content analysis is a long-standing method for analysing the content of textual material as it relates to spoken, written, and visual texts. Within this section of my methodology, I will give a brief history of content analysis, define the concept, explain its shortcomings, and identify how I will use the concept within my own research.

In 1948, the term *content analysis* first appeared in the text entitled *The Analysis of Communication Content* (Krippendorff 2004, p.8), paving the way for subsequent adaptations of the concept to be reconfigured for contemporary usage.

Berelson (1952) defined content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p.18). Berelson’s approach, though useful as a departure point for

further exploration of content analysis within a communications-research based framework, is problematic for several reasons. To start, Berelson's attachment to *quantitative* content analyses ignores the *qualitative* aspect of communication research, which is vitally important, particularly within the arena of political analysis (Krippendorff 2004, p.19).

More importantly, however, I accept Krippendorff's main criticism of Berelson's conception of content analysis, that being his insistence upon determining the "manifest content" of textual material (p.20). The notion of "manifest content" is particularly troublesome, as it assumes "content is *contained* within messages, waiting to be separated from its form and described," and thus always residing *within* the text (p.20). If one is to accept that definition of content, then meaning can only be derived from what is common amongst different interpretations of a text (p.20). This is an important distinction to note within my own research, as the results of my own content analysis do not wish to posit one definitive, universally accepted account of British and American news media coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, but to reveal the dominant themes and narratives within the news texts that I examined.

Krippendorff (2004) offered a more contemporary definition of content analysis, elaborating that it entails the close and "systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessarily from an author's or user's perspective" (p.3). Content analyses are vital means by which to understand how news media report on social phenomena (Payne and Payne 2004, p.52), such as

political protest. My own content analysis of British and American print news media coverage of the Egyptian Revolution looked at the style and quantity (p.3) of coverage featured in publications that reported on Egyptian protests. For instance, my own content analysis examined factors such as the location of story, representation of the anti-Mubarak protesters, dominant news sources, geopolitics, and the presence of social media, to name a few.

Assimilating the results of my content analysis was the next step of my research, and within the next section of this chapter I will explain the type of analysis that allowed me to determine how the dominant themes within the news coverage were constructed and presented within the reporting on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

IV. Framing Analysis

Within this section of my methodology, I will explain the multidisciplinary concept of framing by identifying its beginnings, elaborating upon its controversies and shortcomings as a conceptual tool, and explaining its importance within political communication and journalism studies research. I will demonstrate its instrumentality to my own research project, and why, when pursued through a content analysis, framing is not only an adequate, but indispensable tool by which to examine how the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution were represented within coverage by British and American print news media.

Indeed, as Gunter notes, content analyses should go beyond a recitation of quantitative data, and explore “the interpretive procedures that can define the weight of a media message in terms of its potential impact upon the language” (Gunter 2000, p.57). To that end, and taking cue from Cushion’s research examining how the political opinions and ideas of young people were reported within the UK news media, I will incorporate headlines, quotes, and detailed examples from coverage within the empirical chapters of this project in order to illuminate how the dominant themes of this research appeared within actual news coverage (Cushion 2006, p. 80).

Moving on, Tannen argues that “structures of expectation” constitute the frames that individuals use to make sense of the world, and see the connections between their present experiences and that which they have heard about, or experienced before (Tannen 1993, p. 14-15). As a conceptual model and tool, the use of framing traverses academic disciplines such as psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and communications, among others. Yet, in Tannen’s terms, what unifies these branches of research and their application of framing is not that they perceive individuals as uncritical subjects that objectively interpret reality, but as “veterans of experience” whom categorise events and people in relation to one another, and to prior experiences (p. 20-21).

Thus, in relating framing to newswork, framing can serve the interests of political authority by affording those with the power to impact the presentation of events (whether they are journalists or politicians) a model by which to organise

their own interpretation of reality for mass dissemination. Molotch and Lester (1974) previously commented that news is a reflection of “the practices of those having the power to determine the experiences of others” (p.111). Conversely, framing can also be used by academic researchers to expose the machinations of power, and how power and its ideological underpinnings are diffused throughout communicative bodies in order to substantiate and legitimate certain political endeavors or opinions. Robert Entman offers a more concrete and germane explanation of framing, and its centrality to political communication and journalism studies research.

Entman (2004) explained framing as the process of “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (p.5). Thus, if we specifically relate framing to news reporting, it offers journalists, and by extension citizens of any given nation, a way to grasp and understand the world beyond their own cultural and political periphery. Entman identifies two classes of framing as it is performed within news reporting, those being *substantive* and *procedural* framing. Within political news, *substantive* framing functions as a means by which to perform at least two of the following tasks: defining effects or conditions of an event as problematic, identifying causes, conveying moral judgments, or endorsing remedies or improvements (p.5).

On the other hand, *procedural* framing has a much narrower scope and function, suggesting the evaluation of political actors’ legitimacy based on their

technique, success, and representativeness (p.6). Since my own research project examined the political legitimacy of the Egyptian opposition protesters, my own perspective of framing is influenced by Entman's definitions of both *substantive and procedural* framing, since it examines both the legitimacy and representativeness of political actors (such as the anti-Mubarak opposition, and Hosni Mubarak himself).

The preceding scholars offered definitions of framing that speak to the concept's centrality to political communication and journalism studies research, the foundation from which I proceeded to carry out my own research project. Evaluating the notion of 'political legitimacy' was, without any doubt, a very complicated task. Framing, as a conceptual tool, presents researchers interested in journalism studies and political communication research the means by which not only to understand news itself, but also "how the news product comes to be shaped and presented as it is, and – even more importantly – why" (Johnson-Cartee 2005, p. 218).

Altogether, while content analyses can identify how often certain themes appear over the course of a sampling period and therefore allows researchers to gauge the quantitative significance of a particular theme, framing analyses allow researchers to understand how those dominant themes are constructed within news coverage. With that stated, I believe I am able to answer my research questions by combining these two methodologies.

V. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the methodological approaches employed within this research project, outlining their utility and applicability to my own research while acknowledging their limitations as well. Starting in the next chapter, I will begin presenting the results of my content analysis, first looking at how the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters and Hosni Mubarak (and the Mubarak-led Egyptian government) were represented within the reporting on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution from British and American newspapers.

Chapter 6: Framing the participants

I. Introduction

Within this chapter, I will argue that the anti-Mubarak protesters were portrayed in a decisively positive manner within newspaper coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution from the United Kingdom and United States. Indeed, the portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters is the one of the most significant findings of this research project, given that their voice was provided with a platform by which to articulate their political demands and grievances within both British and American newspapers, fulfilling their role as the preeminent institution of the public privileging the voice of citizens (Habermas 1989).

With the key finding and argument of this chapter stated, I will also demonstrate the less-dominant ways in which the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were portrayed within newspaper coverage of the revolution. Moving beyond the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters, this chapter will also demonstrate how then-Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government were portrayed as overwhelmingly repressive within British and American newspapers. Also discussed within this chapter is the representation of Egyptian police and security officials, who, like former president Mubarak and the Egyptian government, were portrayed as repressive and a threat to the citizens and stability of Egypt.

The logic behind examining the representation of the anti-Mubarak

opposition protesters, along with Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian government, police and security forces was, firstly, to determine if there was a single dominant frame by which they were contextualised within coverage of the revolution. Secondly, since there was a dominant frame by which these different factions of Egyptian society were presented within newspaper coverage, the next step was to unpack how that frame was constructed within reporting on the revolution. With that clarified, I will first discuss the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters.

II. Portraying the anti-Mubarak opposition

A. Positive coverage

As previously stated, the most significant finding of this research project is that both British and American newspaper coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution conferred political legitimacy upon the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters through overwhelmingly favourable news coverage . Table 1.1. illustrates the extent to which the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were given positive, neutral, and critical newspaper coverage from both the United Kingdom, and United States:

Table 1.1. Tone towards anti-Mubarak protesters within British and American newspapers

	% of British newspapers	% of American newspapers
Positive	66	66
Neutral	21	19
Critical	6	13
Could not be determined	7	2

The fact that 66 percent of the articles from the British sample and 66 percent of articles from the American sample portrayed the anti-Mubarak opposition favourably indicates the extent to which they were conferred with positive media coverage. Indeed, this is all the more striking when compared with the amount of newspapers articles from either country that portrayed the protesters in neutral and critical terms.

To expand on the importance of these results, there is a wide body of academic literature indicating that protests and protesters are often portrayed in a negative, critical manner, and given no sociopolitical currency within news coverage. Thus, the portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters stands diametrically opposed to scholarly work discussed within Chapter Four that explored how news media covers political protest, where protests and protesters were typically found to be denied the status of legitimate political players within research by Halloran, Elliott, and Murdock (1970), Gitlin (1980), Shoemaker (1984), and McLeod (1995), amongst others. Since the opposite is true in the case of British and American news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, what did such supportive,

positive coverage look like within the actual news articles? The following excerpt from an article penned by an Egyptian novelist that appeared within *The Guardian* serves as an example of how the protesters were constructed as a positive opposition movement:

Meanwhile the citizens on the ground have come into their own. Tahrir is about dignity and image as much as it is about the economy and corruption. People are acutely aware of how much their government has messed with their heads, worked to divide them, maligned them to the world. “She says we only care about a slice of bread,” a young labourer says, “We care about bread. But we also care about pride.” A bearded man with a wife in a niqab says: “We’re all Egyptian. Was I born with a beard?” He grins: “When Mubarak leaves I’ll be able to afford a razor!” (Soueif, 2011)

Within this article, the Egyptian novelist and commentator Ahdaf Soueif presents the anti-Mubarak protesters not as an irrational, partisan movement advocating for the ascension of one particular community to the top of Egyptian politics, but as a collective unified by very tangible, universal grievances: lack of economic opportunity and endemic corruption. Beyond that, the protesters are presented as a movement galvanised by humanistic motivations to reclaim lost dignity and pride that seemingly encompasses a broad swatch of Egyptian society, hence Soueif’s reference to the Mubarak government that “worked to divide them” and a bearded Muslim who offered the unifying proclamation that “we’re all Egyptian” (Soueif 2011). Such themes were also present within the coverage of the immediate aftermath of Mubarak’s dismissal from power by the Egyptian military, as evidenced by an editorial from *The Times* on February 12th, 2011:

The spontaneous eruption of joy was something that Egypt never expected to see. People of all trades, classes, and religions waved flags and cheered, thronged the streets of Cairo, embraced the bemused soldiers and chanted slogans hailing freedom, democracy and a new beginning. The unfolding of history, which President Obama prematurely believed was happening on Thursday, has now happened. It has been this generation's Berlin Wall moment. Egypt, the Middle East and politics throughout the Arab world have been changed forever. It is certainly time. (*The Times*, 2011)

While the above excerpt reports on the protests in Egypt in terms of their historical significance ("this generation's Berlin Wall moment"), the diversity intrinsic to the protest movement ("People of all trades, classes, and religions waved flags and cheered") and a quest for self-determination ("slogans hailing freedom, democracy, and a new beginning") previously unattainable to Egyptians, those themes do not represent the majority of coverage which reported on the protests favourably. Rather, the previous two articles illustrate a type of analytical depth that was simply not indicative of the majority of coverage. Indeed, most of the articles in which the overall tone of the protests was determined to be positive perhaps included the voice of the protesters detailing their motivations or emotions via a few key quotes. Similarly, a statement from an individual or group acknowledging the validity of the demands of the protesters may have been included within the coverage as well, such as this excerpt from an article published within *The Daily Telegraph* on February 1st, 2011:

The army issued a statement promising it would not fire on demonstrators who are planning "million-strong marches" in the capital Cairo and Alexandria today. Military leaders acknowledged that the crowds had "legitimate grievances". (*Freeman, Spencer, and Waterfield*, 2011)

Reporting from the American newspapers echoed themes first described within reporting from British newspapers, contextualising the protests an assertion of Egyptians' efforts to assert their political voice and address the longstanding economic, political, and social grievances galvanising the protests against President Mubarak. As David Sanger from *The New York Times* wrote:

President Obama declared on Tuesday night that an "orderly transition" in Egypt must begin now," but he stopped short of demanding that President Hosni Mubarak leave office immediately.

Mr. Obama used his four-and-a-half minute speech from the Cross Hall of the White House to embrace the cause of the protesters in Egypt far more fully than he has at any previous moment since the uprising against Mr. Mubarak's 30-year-rule began. (Sanger, 2011)

Furthermore, nods to the historic nature of the protests appeared within reporting from *The New York Times*, which, similar to the editorial published within *The Times* of London calling the protests "this generation's Berlin Wall moment", spoke of the uprising as a paradigm shift between the governed and governing within the Arab world's most populous country:

But he made clear that the process started by the protesters could not be reversed. "We've born witness to the beginning of a new chapter in the history of a great country," Mr. Obama said, casting it as a natural successor to other moments of transition in a society that goes back thousands of years. (Sanger, 2011)

While it is apparent from Sanger's reporting that U.S. President Barack Obama has yet to fully abandon Hosni Mubarak, it is clear from Obama's statement that there is an inexorable gravitation on his part toward more fully supporting the

protesters, thus resulting in the article being coded as *positive*. The following article from *The Washington Post*, however, was much more straightforward in its positive coverage of the protests, citing the popular discontent with the Mubarak government and unity of cause shared by the protesters. The headline of the story sets the tone for what follows in the article written by journalist Leila Fadel, likening the situation in Egypt through the long-held dream of an activist that now has its chance to be born into reality:

Headline: A once-imprisoned activist finally sees what he dreamed of for Egypt

Body: From the center of Tahrir Square, Hossam el-Hamalawy surveyed the sea of people around him.

He could feel it, he said. Victory was close.

“I’ve dreamed of this for a very long time, and it’s finally happening,” the well-known blogger and activist said. He stood completely still in the center of the hundreds of thousands of people who flooded into this downtown square from every direction. “No words can describe it.”

For so many, this fight had started just eight days ago. But Hamalawy, 33, has been fighting against a feared ruler for 13 years. (Fadel, 2011)

From the tone of the headline to Hossam el-Hamalawy being physically situated in the midst of the protests as described by Fadel, el-Hamalawy becomes the embodiment of the struggle of the “hundreds of thousands” of demonstrators around him, and the means by which Fadel tells their story as well. Aside from the unity of purpose and resolve shared amongst the protesters, also present within the coverage is a celebratory atmosphere and camaraderie, humanising the protesters:

He (el-Hamalawy) walked through the crowds Tuesday kissing and congratulating friends and strangers.

“So finally we lived the day, we will see it,” a friend told him.

“Indeed, indeed,” el-Hamalawy replied. “Today is like a wedding.”

He snapped pictures of banners and protesters sharing water and food to sustain each other. On the first days of these demonstrations, he used Twitter to transmit minute-by-minute accounts of the growing popular movement.

“I would love to think that I was a drip in this big ocean,” he sighed as he walked through the unprecedented crowds. “We feel so close now, so close. Mubarak is stubborn, though, and he won’t go in silence.” (Fadal, 2011)

In addition to the communal atmosphere where Fadal quotes el-Hamalawy describing himself as a “drip in this big ocean” in which he is symbolically and literally written into the heart of within in the article, a level of technological sophistication is noted as well. The article reveals that el-Hamalawy and other protesters possessed the technological savvy and critical ability to circumvent the control of the Mubarak government in order to disseminate their own narrative of events, in this case via social media such as Twitter. In summation, the American sample of newspaper coverage portrayed the protesters positively to almost the same degree as the British sample, in addition to repeating similar themes such as unity and purpose shared across the various demographic groups in Egypt.

Considering the fact that 66 percent of articles within British newspapers, and 66 percent of all articles within American newspapers were coded as *positive*, it is difficult to convey the depth and editorial nuances through examples. What the previously included examples from British and American newspaper coverage of the

revolution do speak to, however, is the stark contrast between the normative paradigms detailed within previous academic work of how protest is typically delegitimised within news coverage (Halloran et al. 1970, Gitlin 1980, Shoemaker 1984, Hertog and McLeod 1995, McLeod and Detenber 1999, Boyle et al. 2004 & 2005, Jha 2007), to how the coverage of the Egyptian Revolution did not just cover the protests favourably, but gave prominence to the economic, political, and social dynamics driving the protests, sometimes all within the same article. The frequency and context of how the anti-Mubarak protesters were coded as neutral shall be discussed next.

B. Neutral coverage

As previously mentioned, 21 percent of articles from British newspapers, and 19 percent of articles from American newspapers were determined to be neutral in their tone towards the anti-Mubarak protesters. Similar to the percentage of articles from either the British or American sample that covered the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters favourably to nearly an identical degree, there was little distinction to be made between newspapers from either country in terms of how often their reporting covered the protesters in a neutral tone. A neutral article was defined by not being able to convincingly determine whether the tone of the article was supportive, or more critical of the protests and protesters.

One of the clearest examples of this type of coverage comes from an article published within *The Daily Telegraph* on February 3rd, 2011. Within this feature

story, anxiety is very clearly expressed over the role that the Muslim Brotherhood could play in Egyptian politics, and the domestic and international ramifications of that likely scenario following the downfall of Hosni Mubarak. Consider the following headline and a few excerpts from the body of the article:

Headline: THE ZEALOTS IN THE WINGS; Political and economic instability are now the order of the day in Egypt, says Praveen Swami – and the highly motivated Muslim Brotherhood are most likely to be the beneficiaries

Body: It is becoming increasingly clear that continuing protests, and mounting international pressure, will force out Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's president. It is much less clear, though, what will come next: a democratic era that might transform the Middle East or a descent into chaos that could see the rise of an Islamic order that will undo Egypt's relationship with the West, threaten Israel, and give new life to radical movements across the region.

Has a grim sunset been mistaken for a glorious dawn? For days now, articulate, English-speaking members of Egypt's middle class have been reassuring the world that their protests are not about to be hijacked by Islamists. But the secular middle class, which has thrown its weight behind Nobel peace laureate Mohamed ElBaradei is disorganised and lacks a wide social base. (Swami, 2011)

While the headline of the story draws attention to what journalist Praveen Swami says is the reality of Egypt at present – economic and political instability – it also clearly indicates who stands to gain the most in a post-Mubarak Egypt: the Muslim Brotherhood. However, what most pointedly accounts for this article's designation as *neutral* in its tone is Swami's take on what the protests against Hosni Mubarak will likely instigate; either a transition to a democratic mode of governance, or the ascendance of an Islamist movement as the kingmakers of Egyptian politics that could transform Egypt's geopolitical relationship with

Western powers and Israel.

Furthermore, in the second excerpt that is quoted, Swami posits the question whether the educated, English-speaking protesters in Egypt have the requisite social cache and organisational capacity needed to appeal to broad swathes of Egyptian society and keep the Muslim Brotherhood from assuming the role of de facto leaders of the anti-Mubarak movement in the aftermath of Mubarak's resignation. The main point Swami seems to be making is that while there may be a linear path to a post-Mubarak Egypt, it is far from certain what will unfold afterwards. Should the Muslim Brotherhood take power in Egypt in the aftermath, its intentions cannot be accurately gauged, as indicated by her statement that "experts are divided on whether the Brotherhood has a new face, or is wearing a mask" (Swami, 2011).

Other articles that were deemed neutral in their tone towards the anti-Mubarak opposition focused on clashes between pro and anti-Mubarak protesters, detailing violence emanating from either side. Drawing on another article from *The Daily Telegraph*, the following headline and selected excerpts from the body of the article indicates the emergence of violence between pro and anti-Mubarak protesters:

Headline: Dilemma for army as battles rage; Egypt's revolution begins to turn ugly

Body: Thugs riding horses and camels charged and whipped up the protesters, and dropped concrete blocks onto them. By nightfall, several buildings were ablaze after being petrol bombed, as the army made belated attempts to keep the two groups apart.

...

The Daily Telegraph watched as several of the men involved in the mounted charge were dragged from saddles and given severe beatings. The crowd in the square then began defending its turf, manning barricades and pelting pro-government supporters with rocks. The two sides also fought running battles in the side streets, tearing up slabs of paving to throw at each other, mounting charges and counter charges. (Freeman and Spencer, 2011)

Given that both pro and anti-Mubarak demonstrators were described as antagonising and inflicting physical harm unto one another, this story was determined to be neutral in its tone towards the anti-Mubarak protesters, given that both sides were described as perpetrating violence to some degree. While the pro-Mubarak demonstrators within the story are described as initiating the physical confrontation with the anti-Mubarak demonstrators (“Thugs riding horses and camels charged and whipped up the protesters..”), the latter group responded in kind by pulling those leading the charges off of their horses or camels and, to quote the story again, giving them “severe beatings”. Thus, neither group held the moral high-ground, and were involved in a tit-for-tat exchange of intimidation and violence in this news story.

Articles that were neutral in their tone towards the protesters within American newspapers spoke to different issues brought to the fore within some of the coverage of the revolution. Topics included reports analysing the possible impact of the protests on oil prices or the viability of the Suez Canal (Hauser, 2011), to reports on the initial ambiguity of the Obama Administration in terms of who they should stand with: the protesters on the streets of Egypt, or Hosni Mubarak, a longtime U.S. ally who has enjoyed the cordiality of every American presidential

administration since he took power in 1981. A story published in *The New York Times* by journalist Mark Landler contextualised the divisions within the Obama Administration, who sent Frank Wisner, a seasoned American diplomat and former U.S. ambassador to Egypt with close ties to Hosni Mubarak, to better gauge the latter's intentions so the administration could form a more cohesive policy with respect to the ongoing protests:

“That’s the kind of guy you would choose to have that conversation,” said Daniel C. Kurtzer, a former ambassador to both Egypt and Israel. “The key question, which we don’t know the answer to, is whether the administration has reached a decision on whether Mubarak should go.”

Publicly, the administration has continued to insist that Mr. Mubarak’s future was a matter for the Egyptian people. Neither Mr. Obama nor Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton addressed the matter on Monday, suggesting that they wanted to see how events on the ground were playing out before saying anything more.

...

Mr. Kurtzer said it made sense for the administration to open a private channel, after a week of public statements.

“There are a lot of reasons to do this, even if you haven’t made the ultimate decision of whether he should stay or go,” he said. (Landler, 2011)

What is evident within this article is that the grievances motivating the Egyptian protesters receive no attention whatsoever, and that the outcome of the protests is seemingly for the Obama Administration to decide. Though it is mentioned that the Obama Administration’s public stance is that the future of Egypt is to be dictated by the Egyptian people, the last quote in the article from Daniel Kurtzer seems to contradict that when he says “even if you (the Obama Adm.)

haven't made the ultimate decision of whether he (Mubarak) should stay or go." Given that the focus of the story seemed to be on the Obama Administration's process for developing a policy towards the protests, possibly determining their outcome, and given the absence of the voice of the protesters or their motivations within the story, this article was subsequently determined to be neutral in its tone.

Similar themes could be found within an article from *The Washington Post*. Here, the outcome of the protests was in question, anti-Mubarak opposition leaders were split as to whether they should entertain talks on a governmental transition with newly minted Egyptian Vice President Omar Suleiman, and violence between pro and anti-Mubarak camps was noted. Furthermore, anxiety over the role of the Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to mixed-signals given by various members of the Obama Administration were included as well. Speaking to the dissonance within the opposition:

Egypt's opposition groups fractured Saturday over an invitation from Vice President Omar Suleiman to begin talks on a government transition, as President Hosni Mubarak gave little indication that he is willing to cede the levers of power. (Witte, Sheridan, DeYoung, 2011)

Additionally, violence between pro, and anti-Mubarak factions and American anxiety over the Muslim Brotherhood's role in the protests contributed to the article's ambiguous stance towards the revolution:

After violent clashes between protesters and pro-Mubarak gangs on Wednesday and Thursday – and rising concern in Washington that radical elements in the Muslim Brotherhood were seeking advantage in the chaos,

administration officials promoted the dialogue with Suleiman. (Witte, Sheridan, DeYoung, 2011)

Further anxiety over the role of the Muslim Brotherhood and the ambiguous position of, and apparent discord within the Obama Administration is detailed:

In her remarks in Munich, Clinton called on the (Egyptian) government to take further steps. But she also warned that if the transition is not carried out in an orderly, deliberate way, there are forces “that will try to derail or overtake the process, to pursue their own specific agenda” – an apparent reference to the Muslim Brotherhood – “which is why I think it’s important to support the transition process announced by the Egyptian government, actually headed now by Vice President Omar Suleiman.”

In addition to Clinton’s remarks, the perceived dissonance in the administration’s message Saturday was exacerbated when Frank Wisner, a former diplomat dispatched by Obama last week to help ease Mubarak from power, said that the Egyptian president should stay in his post for the near future. (Witte, Sheridan, DeYoung, 2011)

Not only was the outcome of the protests far from certain, but pro and anti-Mubarak camps were described as being responsible for violence in the streets, and certain factions within the Obama Administration seemed to take divergent views in terms of how they should proceed, with Frank Wisner, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt, commenting that Mubarak should stay in power in the near term, doing the opposite of what President Obama dispatched him to Egypt to do. With that said, the emphasis of the story was on the Obama Administration’s efforts to find consensus and gain traction with the events in order to encourage a transition process.

Additionally, while the motivations of the protesters were acknowledged via the invitation to transitional talks and President Obama praising their “passion and

dignity”, the anxiety that the Muslim Brotherhood could start to lead the events came up within commentary from Hillary Clinton, indicating further discord within the Obama Administration and leading to this article’s designation as neutral.

As previously mentioned in the discussion of British newspapers, the amount of articles deemed neutral within the American sample did not yield a significant result in quantitative terms. Yet, when the percentage of positive and neutral articles are added together, a significant result does emerge, in that 85 percent of articles from American newspapers (and 87 percent from British newspapers) were either positive or neutral in their tone towards the anti-Mubarak protesters, meaning a much smaller, and much less significant percentage of articles were determined to be critical of the anti-Mubarak protesters. News stories that were critical in their tone will be discussed next.

C. Critical coverage

Articles critical of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were not significant in any way, given that 6 percent of articles from British newspapers, and 13 percent of all articles from American newspapers were determined to be critical in their tone of the anti-Mubarak protesters. Articles that were critical of the revolution did not follow a set framework by which the protesters or protests in Egypt were looked upon unfavourably. Instead, they spoke to a broad range of concerns that one might speculate to emerge in critical coverage of the protests, namely Israeli national security, American, British, and their allies’ geopolitical

interests in general, and the stability of the Egyptian state in a post-Mubarak environment, with such sentiments seemingly echoing a “better the devil we know” approach to understanding the protests and lamenting at what is perceived to be the likely outcome.

Journalist Richard Norton-Taylor, reporting for the *The Guardian* on February 1st, 2011, covered the reactions of anonymous Western intelligence officials and analysts who expressed their concerns of what political change in Egypt could mean for Western national security. The lead of the story, for instance, explicitly states that Egypt could supplant Pakistan as the country harbouring the greatest potential terrorist threat to the U.K. should the protests gain further traction (“Egypt has the potential to take Pakistan’s place as the country posing the greatest threat to Britain’s security”) before applying the ostensible threat that the protests hold to the Middle East and Western nations more broadly:

Turmoil in a state western counter-terrorism agencies have been able to rely on would also have “far-reaching consequences for the Arab-Israel relationship and regional instability”, a former senior intelligence official said.

There would also be serious implications for European security, yet neither Europe nor the US could influence events in Egypt now, analysts warned.

EU countries have been promoting the cause of political and judicial reform as they have in other countries, including Afghanistan. But European governments, and their security and intelligence agencies in particular, have wanted stability above all. “They have to talk the talk, but don’t expect (reform) to happen,” is how one observer described their attitude. (Norton-Taylor, 2011)

The key points emerging from the paragraphs included above is that the

protests occurring throughout Egypt could pose a direct national security threat to the United Kingdom, along with leading to heightened tensions between nearby Arab countries and Israel. Additionally, it is stated that nations belonging to the European Union are not truly interested in democratic reform in Egypt (e.g. “European governments, and their security and intelligence agencies in particular, have wanted stability above all”) and see stability as best achieved through the maintenance of the current political order. It is for these reasons that the article was deemed to be critical in its tone towards the anti-Mubarak protests.

Similar concerns were echoed within an article published in *The Times* on February 1st, 2011, addressing how the fall of the Mubarak government will impact Israel’s national security, and that ‘the West’ needs to act to quickly and decisively so that stability in the Middle East is preserved while paying lip service to the advancement of democracy within Egypt. Interestingly enough, in both of these articles, the grievances that drove the Egyptian protesters into the streets are mentioned only in passing, establishing a hierarchy of importance in that the perceived bedrock of geopolitical stability in the Middle East, the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, is generally thought to be incompatible with the emergence of a democracy in Egypt. Take the headline of the story:

Headline: Egypt and the World; The consequences of Mubarak’s troubles for Middle East peace should worry Israel and the West. An orderly transfer of power is necessary (The Times, 2011)

In the headline, the downfall of Hosni Mubarak and his government is

presented as a threat to Middle East peace and by extension Israel and 'the West', which one could infer, without controversy, to mean the United States and the European Union. Continuing on, the relationship between Egypt and Israel is couched in ancient history:

Each year, as the weather turns warmer, Jews meet to celebrate one of the most important of their festivals. Passover commemorates delivery from slavery in Egypt, and freedom to make their way to what Jews call the promised land. Even for those disinclined to believe the biblical account, the geopolitics of this story are clear – since ancient days the politics of Egypt and the fate of the people of Israel have been intertwined. (The Times, 2011)

Thus, given the historical legacy linking Egypt and Israel in this article, of paramount importance is that 'the West' respond appropriately to the anti-Mubarak movement in Egypt, which would seemingly entail encouraging democratic reform alongside the removal of Mubarak from power while making sure that the structure of the current system stays intact. The incompatibility of the ideas contained within this recommendation can be accurately summed within the following excerpts. First, there comes a subtle, yet downplayed reference to part of what was galvanising protesters across Egypt, as the article briefly encourages a shift away from an authoritarian system and towards democratic reform:

Nevertheless, the West has to choose a policy because its interest and its aid to Egypt dictate that it cannot simply stand and wait. First, it should determine that an authoritarian regime such as President Mubarak's may be a partner for a period, but can never be a stable part of a peaceful Middle East. George W. Bush was right to believe that democracy and peace belong together. (The Times, 2011)

Yet despite that recommendation, the right to self-determination that is intrinsic to democratic systems of governance plays second fiddle to the stability of the current geopolitical relationship between Egypt, Israel, and 'the West'. Indeed, the fear is that a truly democratic Egypt responsive to the will, desires, and grievances of its citizens would lead to a calamitous result on par with the fall of the Shah and ascendance of a revolutionary, Islamic government in Iran:

Second, it must avoid a violent collapse that allows power to be decided by mobs on the street. Iran is a terrible example of the consequences of that. It would be worth accepting that a new regime might not be as supportive of the peace process as the current one, if the result of an Iranian-style disaster is avoided.

Which leads to the conclusion that Western policy must now be to organise an orderly transition from the Mubarak presidency to a new, more democratic, but still stable regime. There is no time to lose. (The Times, 2011)

Thus, there is ostensibly more to lose than to gain for Israel and 'the West' by a genuine democratic movement in Egypt, so *The Times* implores Western powers to influence events by urging Mubarak from power and encouraging a transition to a more democratic 'regime'. In addition to geopolitical ramifications, a topic which will be discussed in much greater detail in an upcoming chapter, other forms of negative, critical coverage touched on the economic ramifications for Egypt and beyond in terms of loss of investment, decrease in tourism, and possible impacts on the Suez Canal, a vital transport link between Europe and Asia.

Publications from the United States spoke to similar themes as the ones discussed within British newspapers, such as: security implications for Israel,

potential impacts on oil markets and the viability of the Suez Canal, geopolitical ramifications for the United States, and how the protests might impact the status of minorities in Egypt, to name a few. In the following paragraphs a few of the articles will be discussed in order to provide context for some of the critical coverage within American newspapers.

Speaking to the geopolitical ramifications for the United States, a story published in *USA Today* linked a post-Mubarak government with a decreased capacity for the U.S. to pursue anti-terrorism efforts in the Middle East. As the headline and lead of the story explain:

Headline: Transition could weaken U.S. anti-terror efforts; Egypt is key partner and 'enforcer'

Lead: Egypt's role in aiding U.S. counterterrorism efforts across the Middle East – through intelligence assistance, interrogation tactics and more - could be diminished after a new government takes hold in Cairo, intelligence experts say. (Hall and Wolf, 2011)

The story then provides specific detail in terms of how Egypt under Hosni Mubarak has played a critical role in assisting two U.S. presidential administrations in their counterterrorism efforts. The first official quoted is Michael Hayden, former CIA chief during the George W. Bush administration, and Robert Gibbs, then press secretary for Barack Obama:

From the body of the story: Egypt has long been “a good intelligence partner” for the United States, says former George W. Bush administration CIA chief Michael Hayden, now a consultant with the Chertoff Group. “Any diminution of healthy cooperation with the Egyptian service would be harmful ... to both countries.”

...

As one of the United States' closest allies in the Middle East, officials say the Egyptians have shared valuable intelligence and have provided other useful counterterrorism assistance, particularly in the decade since the 9/11 attacks. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs says the U.S. has had "an important partnership" on counterterrorism under President Hosni Mubarak and his intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, named a week ago as the country's new vice president. (Hall and Wolf, 2011)

The overall theme of this article is that if the Mubarak government falls, it will, without question, be a damaging blow to American counterterrorism efforts in the Middle East. The story also cites unnamed U.S. officials commenting that "the Egyptians have shared valuable intelligence and have provided other useful counterterrorism assistance."

Speaking to the other themes that were previously touched on, a *New York Times* article about the possible impact of the protests on the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel quoted an Israeli minister who commented that "People here will feel that there is no point in a peace treaty if after 30 years it can be broken" (Kershner, 2011). Furthermore, another article from *The New York Times* likened the protests to a "political contagion" that might "spread to larger oil producers around the Middle East," already causing a 10 percent spike in the price of oil (Krauss, 2011).

Lastly, to round out the discussion of critical coverage within U.S. newspapers, an article from *The Washington Post* described the possible danger faced by Egypt's Coptic Christian community should an Islamic government take power:

Lead: With attacks already increasing in the Middle East, the populist uprising in Egypt has triggered fears among some that the region's largest non-Muslim population – Egypt's 7 million Coptic Christians – could be at risk.

...

Copt leaders in the United States said they are terrified that a new Egyptian government with a strong Islamic fundamentalist bent would persecute Christians. They are quietly lobbying the Obama administration to do more to protect Christians in Muslim countries and are holding prayer vigils and fasts, such as one that ended Wednesday evening at Copt churches across the country, including four in the Washington area.

"The current situation for the Copts stinks, but [longtime Egyptian President Hosni] Mubarak is the best of the worst for us," said the Rev. Paul Girguis of St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church in Fairfax County, which has about 3,000 members. "If Muslim extremists take over, the focus will be extreme persecution against Copts. Some people even predict genocide." (Boorstein, 2011)

Though the outcome of the protests in Egypt was not put in certain terms, what could be derived from the story was that *if* Mubarak was forced to abdicate his position, the situation for Egypt's Coptic Christians could go from bad to intolerable. In fact, the Reverend of the Coptic Church that was quoted in the story, Paul Girguis, went as far to say that the situation for his co-religionists in Egypt could end up in genocide, and that Coptic leaders in the United States took the level of threat to such a degree that they began lobbying the Obama administration to do all that they could to assist Coptic communities in the Middle East.

The aforementioned articles are not meant to be understood as exhaustive representations of the British and American sample of newspapers, encompassing every angle and nuance that could have led an article to be deemed positive, neutral,

or critical. The purpose of including text from the articles that are described in the above sections is to show how the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were portrayed within coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, as the overwhelmingly positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak protesters is one of the most significant findings of this research project. With that said, the focus will now shift to how then President Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government were described.

III. Representing then-president Mubarak and the Egyptian government

This section of the current chapter will address how British and American press portrayed Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government within coverage of the revolution. The purpose of this category was to provide context for the main finding of the research by examining if other factors influenced the positive, supportive coverage that the anti-Mubarak protesters received. In that respect, this category is important in determining if there was a strong correlation between the positive coverage that the protesters received, and an unfavourable, negative representation of then president Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government.

Moving onto the actual results, the majority of newspaper articles from both the United Kingdom and United States portrayed Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian Government as repressive, in that former president Mubarak and/or the Egyptian Government were cast as one or more of the following: dictatorial, autocratic, authoritarian, unwilling to implement reform or step down, or directing Egypt's security forces to violently suppress the protests. Table 1.2. offers a more concise

picture of how President Mubarak and the Egyptian government were portrayed within newspaper coverage of the revolution:

Table 1.2. Portrayal of Hosni Mubarak and/or Egyptian Government within coverage

	% within British newspapers	% within American newspapers
Repressive	54	60
Embattled	17	16
Legitimate	0	2
Could not be determined	29	22

To provide a few examples of how President Mubarak and/or the Egyptian Government were cast as repressive within coverage, consider the following excerpts from British newspapers:

From *The Guardian*: Amid all the confusion, the first cracks in the 30-year-old dictatorship began to appear. A young policeman who moments earlier had been smashing protesters with a baton was forced to fall back, dropping his shield and helmet as he fled. Two protesters of the same age picked them up, ran towards him and handed them back. "We are not your enemy," they told the terrified conscript. "We are like you. Join us." (Beaumont and Shenker, 2011)

From *The Times*: Egypt's popular uprising was descending into a bloodbath last night after President Mubarak, fighting for his political survival, unleashed thousands of violent supporters on the pro-democracy demonstrators occupying the centre of Cairo. (Hider and Whittell, 2011)

From *The Observer*: One of the tottering pharaoh's last desperate gambits has been to send out paid thugs to try and cow those campaigning for freedom. (Rawnsley, 2011)

It is clear in the above articles that Mubarak is represented as repressive,

given the description of his rule in *The Guardian* as a “30-year-old dictatorship”, *The Observer’s* description of him as a “pharaoh”, and *The Times* commenting that he “unleashed thousands of violent supporters on the prodemocracy demonstrators”.

Next, 17 percent of British newspapers cast Mubarak and the Egyptian Government as embattled, in that they were beleaguered by protests and calls to step down and/or to implement reform, or their position in power was cast as tenuous or in jeopardy. Consider the following examples of how Mubarak and his government were cast as embattled:

From *The Guardian*: Egypt’s embattled president, Hosni Mubarak, last night bowed to the pressure of millions of people massing on the streets, pledging to step down at the next election and pave the way for a new leader of the Arab world’s largest country. (Shenker, Beaumont, Black, and McGreal, 2011)

Also from *The Guardian*: Egypt’s fractured opposition movement has rallied together to emphatically reject talks with the ruling National Democratic Party on political reform, insisting that Hosni Mubarak must stand down immediately before any dialogue can begin. (Shenker, 2011)

From *The Times*:

- **Headline of article:** ‘Democracy, let’s hope that happens’; As Mubarak faces losing power and banishment from his country, Damian Whitworth speaks to Egypt’s last king about the painful legacy of having to leave home

- **From the body of the same article:** Outside Ahmed Fuad’s II’s study in a rented house in Switzerland there are long views across vineyards towards Lake Geneva and the mountains beyond. But inside Fuad has eyes only for the events flickering on his television screen, events that could force Hosni Mubarak, despite his insistence that he will die on Egyptian soil, to join a rather exclusive club – that of exiled Egyptian heads of state. (Whitworth, 2011)

Reflecting on these articles, not only is Mubarak’s grip on power specifically

referred to as “embattled” within the story from *The Guardian*, but under another, his status is further put in question by opposition protesters refusing any sort of negotiations with his ruling National Democratic Party until he himself leaves office. Additionally, in the above article from *The Times*, the headline of the story infers a tenuous grasp on power given its inference that “Mubarak faces losing power and banishment from his country”, a notion further substantiated by the fact that the article draws on the thoughts of Egypt’s last exiled ruler, King Fuad II, on the protests in Egypt. Finally, ex-president Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government were not cast as the legitimate leaders of Egypt within any articles from British newspapers.¹

Similar to the British newspapers, the majority of articles from the American publications portrayed Hosni Mubarak or the Egyptian government as repressive (60 percent). The type of coverage found within the American newspapers was, more or less, similar to what was found within the British press, replete with references to Mubarak or members of the Egyptian government portrayed as authoritarian, dictatorial, or as architects of repression. For example:

¹ Should they have been cast as *legitimate*, the articles would have described Mubarak and/or the Egyptian government in or more of the following ways: in full control of the situation within the country, the right leaders for Egypt despite flaws in leadership being mentioned, as having the support of the Egyptian people, international community, or other influential institutions within Egypt (e.g. the military).

From *The New York Times*:

Headline: EGYPT OFFICIALS WIDEN CRACKDOWN; U.S. IN TALKS FOR MUBARAK TO QUIT

From the body: The campaign was a startling blend of the oldest tactics of an authoritarian government – stoking fears of foreigners – with the air of sincerity of a repentant order. (Shadid, Kirkpatrick, Fahim, and El-Naggar, 2011.)

And *USA Today*: **Headline:** Suleiman’s reputation holds dread for some; Power shift to Egypt’s No. 2, one ‘who cracks heads,’ is keenly watched

From the body: “Suleiman’s a thug wearing a silk tie; a really nasty, mean guy,” McGovern says. “He makes Mubarak look like a fuzzy puppy. A guy like that who gets into power is unlikely to let it go.” (Strauss, 2011)

In the above article from *The New York Times*, Egypt’s governing elite, as led by Mubarak, is cast as repressive given their employment of “the oldest tactics of an authoritarian government” by resorting to xenophobia in the form of attempting to generate fear in the Egyptian populace of foreigners. Secondly, *USA Today* notes the promotion of Omar Suleiman by Mubarak to Egypt’s vice presidency and how his possible takeover will not change the character of the government. Within this article, a U.S. official referred to Suleiman as a “really nasty, mean guy” who “makes Mubarak look like a fuzzy puppy”.

Almost identical to the results from the analysis of British publications, American newspapers were found to have portrayed Hosni Mubarak or the Egyptian Government as embattled within 16 percent of the 225 articles. The context of Mubarak’s or the government’s portrayal as embattled, yet again, was similar to that of the British sample. For instance:

From the *New York Times*: The country's newly named vice president, Omar Suleiman, and other top military leaders were discussing steps to limit Mr. Mubarak's decision-making authority and possibly remove him from the presidential palace in Cairo – though not to strip him of his presidency immediately, Egyptian and American officials said. (Kirkpatrick and Sanger, 2011)

Here, the reach of Mubarak's power is noted by Egyptian and American officials as being capped by just-appointed vice president Omar Suleiman and top figures from the Egyptian military. Additionally, officials from both are cited as suggesting that while Mubarak may not be removed from power immediately, his days in office appear to be numbered.

There were four articles within the American sample in which Hosni Mubarak and the concurrent Egyptian government were found to be cast as legitimate, in that they were portrayed as the rightful, or best leaders for Egypt.²

While the number of articles in which Mubarak was cast as legitimate was not significant whatsoever, interestingly enough three of the four articles in which Mubarak was portrayed as such were published in the Letters to the Editor section. Take this excerpt from a Letter to the Editor that appeared within *USA Today* on February 15th, 2011, for example:

² It should be noted that articles were examined past his resignation from office on February 11, 2011. The logic behind such a decision was that even though Mubarak was out of office, it was still necessary to code for this category to determine if there was any change in the tone toward Mubarak and the Egyptian government, possibly accommodating a "better the devil we know" attitude that may have arisen amongst British, American, other non-Egyptian politicians and government officials, non-Egyptian citizens, or perhaps even Egyptian citizens themselves.

Ousted Hosni Mubarak might have been many things, but if you take a look at the neighborhood in which Egypt resides, it is not a place for the timid or indecisive. Egypt has been kept a relatively safe place, which grew a very lucrative tourist trade. Mubarak honored a peace treaty so despised by some people that his predecessor was assassinated over it. He kept a powerful military in check. (Guerin, 2011)

Concern emanating from readers over the geopolitical ramifications of the downfall of Hosni Mubarak's government was the dominant focus of the other two Letters to the Editor, both of which posited that Mubarak or his government was the best option for Egypt, the Middle East as a whole, and by extension the United States and/or the United Kingdom. Consider the following two letters published within *The New York Times*, for instance:

Does the White House really want the Middle East to explode? Thousands of demonstrators do not necessarily represent 80 million Egyptians. Let's not forget the lessons of history. The path of the French Revolution went from popular demonstrations against the monarchy to Robespierre and the Reign of Terror. The Russian Revolution went from overthrowing the czar to Lenin and Stalin. The Iranian upheaval went from a pro-American shah to a fanatic anti-American theocracy.. Our abandonment of a good friend for nearly 30 years is not only dishonorable but will also lead to loss of influence throughout the Middle East. (Kean, 2011)

Like most of us, President Obama sympathizes with, as well as admires, the Egyptian antigovernment demonstrators. Still, they are just crowds of people on the street. Is it wise policy to turn against a sitting government – especially an ally – simply because people have taken to the streets? Aren't such demonstrations, in other situations, called mob rule? Turning on Mr. Mubarak suddenly and viciously, as the Obama Administration has done, not only puts American interests in Egypt at the mercy of a chaotic event with an unpredictable outcome, but also buttresses the image of the United States as an unreliable, fair-weather friend in the Middle East. (Reifler, 2011)

Though the concerns expressed by citizens within these examples are not unique, and similar to sentiments expressed by U.K., U.S., and other non-Egyptian elected officials (more on that in the following chapters), what is fascinating is that their seemingly grudging approval of Mubarak's tenure, and their subsequent critical outlook on the outcome of the protests does not seem to stem from a deep-seated antipathy towards the protesters themselves. Rather, they reflect an anxiety about what a post-Mubarak Egypt portends for U.S. interests in the Middle East, and given the supportive and positive tone of news coverage towards the protesters, it is not surprising that such considerations did not enjoy widespread currency within the reporting on the revolution in Egypt. While this section of the chapter was devoted to examining how the governmental elite of Egypt were portrayed within coverage of the protests, the following shall speak to the portrayal how another arm of the state was portrayed, that being Egyptian police and security officials.

IV. Portraying Egyptian police and security forces

Though the majority of articles from British and American newspapers did not feature Egyptian police or security officials, discussing their portrayal within news coverage of the revolution is still important, as it offers yet another opportunity to demonstrate how this research differs from previous scholarship examining news coverage of political protest. Indeed, the portrayal of police and security officials (whether in uniform or plainclothes) within newspaper coverage of the revolution diverged from McLeod and Detenber's 'protest paradigm' (1999). In

short, the ‘protest paradigm’ is a means of understanding how political dissent is typically shown to be a threat to the democratic process and public safety within news coverage, and how the police are commonly understood as the guarantor of social order. In a stark contrast from the ‘protest paradigm’, Table 1.3. illuminates just how dominant the portrayal of police and security officials as repressive was within British and American newspaper coverage of the revolution:

Table 1.3. How were Egyptian police and security officials represented within coverage?

	% of British newspapers	% of American newspapers
Repressive	31.6	25.7
Sympathetic	0.3	0.4
Neutral	1.2	0
Could not be determined	66.7	73.7

While the sheer magnitude of between the Egyptian police and security services’ contextualisation as a repressive force within newspaper coverage indicates the protest paradigm’s irrelevance within the reporting on the Egyptian Revolution, it is still worth mentioning, as it speaks to how the coverage of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters deviated from previous scholarship examining media coverage of protesters that sought to challenge the authority and logic of the state. Indeed, rather than cover the revolution “from the perspective of those in power (p.5)” (e.g. Mubarak, the Egyptian government) or the entities tasked with maintaining order in society on behalf of the state (e.g. the Egyptian police), newspaper coverage instead castigated the Egyptian police and security forces as

undermining the social order, rather than promoting it.

Indeed, not only were they cast as repressive, but sometimes brutal in their suppression of the protests, as exemplified within reporting from *The New York Times*. The headline of the story employs the verb “crush” to describe the state’s reaction to the burgeoning revolution, setting the stage for describing the reaction of the police and security forces to the protests that followed:

Headline: Egypt Intensifies Effort to Crush Wave of Protests, Detaining Hundreds

From the story: The skirmishes started early in the afternoon, and soon, small fires illuminated large clashes under an overpass. Riot police officers using batons, tear gas and rubber-coated bullets cleared busy avenues; other officers set upon fleeing protesters, beating them with bamboo staves.

Egypt has an extensive and widely feared security apparatus, and it deployed its might in an effort to crush the protests. But it was not clear whether the security forces were succeeding in intimidating the protesters or rather inciting them to further defiance.

...

The protesters seemed far more worried about burly plainclothes security officers, part of the feared state security services. The officers carried wooden planks, short clubs, and other crude weapons, and as they stormed the gatherings, they beat anyone who happened to be standing in the way, including reporters. (Fahim and Stack, 2011)

What is striking about this excerpt from *The New York Times* is that journalists are *not* covering the protests through “the perspective of those in power” per the protest paradigm (McLeod and Detenber 1999, p.5). The journalists are, however, describing to news audiences how it was the police and security officials that were responsible for the wanton violence and intimidation depicted in the

story, and not the protesters. This finding also diverges from McLeod's (1995) "protester vs. police" paradigm, where protesters who challenged the police had their actions relegated to the terrain of criminal activity (p.3).

The fact that the article describes riot police and plainclothes security officers as using brute, if not potentially deadly force (e.g. rubber bullets) against protesters (and nearby reporters) demonstrates how the violence depicted in this story was a crude, calculated move on the behalf of police to end the protests, rather than showing "the police as responding appropriately to restore order" (p.3), per the protester vs. police paradigm. Furthermore, the absence of Egyptian police officers as sources contributes to their representation as a brutal, potentially deadly force. The absence of police as sources represents yet another divergence from the "protester vs. police" paradigm, in that law enforcement officials are typically relied upon as official, on-the-scene sources during protests to explain the nature of the event (p.3), which they were not in this story. That disparity between the violent portrayal of the police, the seemingly peaceful nature of the protesters, and the absence of the police as a source was made all the more acute within a story from *The Sunday Times*.

Reporting from *The Sunday Times* expanded on what the above story from *The New York Times* reported in terms of the actions of Egyptian police, where journalists Marie Colvin and Uzi Mahnaimi painted a sympathetic, intimate portrait of an Egyptian protester named Mohamed Salah. The following excerpt from Colvin and Mahnaimi's story details the death of Salah, who was first humanised within the

story by describing his aspirations to transcend his impoverished upbringing before being shot and killed by Egyptian police forces five days before President Mubarak resigned:

Mohamed Salah did everything he could to make a success of his life. Despite coming from a Cairo slum, he managed to graduate from high school – a success normally confined to children of the wealthy and members of Egypt’s ruling party.

Like many in Cairo, however Salah had had enough by the time anti-government protests broke out nearly two weeks ago. Unfortunately for him, so had the police.

Last Wednesday, as pitched battles broke out in Tahrir Square, the centre of the rebellion, Salah was in a crowd that gathered outside the police station in the Imbala district, a few miles north down the Nile.

A police officer named Mohamed Mktar climbed on top of the building and, in full view, shot an automatic weapon into the crowd. Salah, 25, was struck in the chest.

“They brought his body to my door,” his father said a few hours later. “I laid him on this bed. I sent for a doctor because I would not believe he was dead.” (Colvin and Mahnaimi, 2011)

An emotional scene is created through the inclusion of the quote in the last paragraph from Salah’s father, detailing his initial disbelief that his son had actually been killed, and the naming of the police officer (Mohamed Mktar) responsible for his death, described as deliberately shooting his automatic weapon into the crowd of protesters gathered. Given the fact that Salah’s father brought his body to a bed, and summoned a doctor in a hopeless effort to save his son, the audience is compelled to identify with the anguish and grief of a father who had just lost his son to an untimely and violent death, and to condemn the brutality of the police officer’s

action.

The description of Salah's death at the hands of an Egyptian police officer once again shows how the representation of the police diverges from McLeod's (1995) "protester vs. police" paradigm, where the actions of the police (and *not* the protesters) in this instance are not only seemingly criminal, but tantamount to murder. Overall, the repressive, highly negative representation of the Egyptian police and security services within news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution buttresses previous results elucidated earlier within this chapter, where actions of the protesters were portrayed as legitimate, while Hosni Mubarak and the concurrent Egyptian government were portrayed as oppressive and authoritarian. The following section will end this discussion by summarising the results and scholarly contributions of this chapter.

V. Conclusion

In summation, this chapter has demonstrated that there is a clear, unequivocal distinction to be made between the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters within news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, and that of Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian government, police, and security forces. The results presented herein indicate that no significant, or even remotely noteworthy differences emerged from the analysis of both British and American newspaper coverage in this regard.

Indeed, the anti-Mubarak protesters were framed in a positive manner

within British and American newspaper coverage to an identical degree (U.K.: 66 percent, U.S.: 66 percent). The protesters were cast as neutral within both samples to a nearly identical degree, with only two percentage points separating the British and American samples (U.K.: 21 percent, U.S.: 19 percent). There was a slightly bigger divergence in terms of the extent to which the news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution covered the anti-Mubarak protesters to a critical degree, but it was a negligible difference at most (U.K.: 6 percent, U.S.: 13 percent).

Similarly, the representation of then President Hosni Mubarak and the concurrent Egyptian government also spoke to the lack of any significant differences in the coverage from British and American newspapers. Mubarak and the Egyptian government were framed as repressive within either sample to a similar extent (U.K.:54 percent, U.S.: 60 percent), and as embattled to a nearly identical degree (U.K.: 17 percent, U.S.: 16 percent). Lastly, the gap between Mubarak and the Egyptian government's representation as legitimate was even closer (U.K.: 0 percent, U.S.: 0.02 percent). Such results not only reflect the strength of the design of the content analysis and consistency with which it was implemented, but also elucidate how different the results of this project are from the previous academic literature on the topic.

On a broader, more conceptual level, the positive representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition indicates that the British and American newspapers featured within this study adequately fulfilled their function as a public sphere where Egyptian citizens could articulate their grievances and thereby challenge the

governing elite of their country, albeit through the international press. I would argue that the overwhelmingly favourable portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition within news coverage points towards the news outlets examined in this study functioning closest to the Habermasian conceptualisation of the public sphere, in that the public sphere created through media coverage is propelled by a consensus view of who were the legitimate political actors during the revolution (the anti-Mubarak opposition), and who were illegitimate (Mubarak, police and security forces). This means that, by default, the *agonistic public sphere* proposed by Mouffe in her critique of Habermas does not apply to this dissertation, since the findings indicate that there is an unequivocal, consensus view of 'right' and 'wrong' apparent within the reporting on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Another important conceptual point to highlight is that the positive representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition indicates a lack of evidence for Edward Said's concept of Orientalism (which holds that the peoples of the Middle East are typically defined as violent, extremist, and irrational in Western political and media discourses) from being relevant to the current empirical discussion.

In more practical terms, previous scholarship examining the ways in which the news media covers political protest is clear in demonstrating that the reporting on protest often denigrates it as disruptive or focuses on the potential for conflict or violence (Halloran et al. 1970, McLeod 1995, McLeod and Detenber 1995, Arpan et al. 2006, Boykoff 2006), casts it outside of the political mainstream (Gitlin 1980, Shoemaker 1984, Hallin 1986, McCarthy et al. 1996), or focuses on individuals at the

expense of a movement's message (Watkins 2001). McLeod and Detenber previously argued that mainstream news media outlets take a "guard dog" stance towards political protest, covering them from the perspective of those in power (McLeod and Detenber 1999, p.4), but the fact that the anti-Mubarak opposition was covered in such an overwhelmingly positive manner indicates that the news media reported on the Egyptian Revolution from the perspective of Egyptian citizens protesting against their government.

The positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition grants them political agency, which diverges from Pamela Shoemaker's finding that "the press, more often than not, denies protesters the status of being legitimate political players" (Shoemaker 1984, p.66). Furthermore, the favourable media coverage that the anti-Mubarak opposition received also indicates that the majority of the coverage did not focus on the possibility of violence occurring, unlike Halloran et al.'s (1970) and Boykoff's studies (2006).

The overwhelmingly favourable media coverage accorded to the anti-Mubarak opposition also confirms Gamson's (1995) research elaborating how collective action frames may contribute to the legitimation of political protest within media coverage. Within this chapter, we see how the constituent components of collective action frames are at play within the reporting of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. The portrayal of Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian police and security forces as overwhelmingly repressive, and as responsible for the chaos and violence in the streets of Egypt speaks to the *injustice* aspect of collective action frames,

where human actors are found to be responsible for hardship and suffering, sparking indignation (p.91). The *agency* aspect of collective action frames is best exemplified by the positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition, indicating that they are an opposition movement underpinned by various grievances that should be taken seriously (p.95). Lastly, the *identity* aspect of collective actions frames generates solidarity with the anti-Mubarak opposition who want to be in command of their political destiny, and antipathy towards the Mubarak-led political order who are “fundamentally opposed to such values” (p.99), which again is best exemplified by the positive portrayal of the former, and repressive portrayal of the latter entity.

The results presented herein also support Wolfsfeld’s (1997) political contest model, which sought to demonstrate how political movements gain currency within media coverage. Within this research, it has been demonstrated that the journalists covering the revolution largely deemed the goals, methods, and motivations of the protesters as legitimate, and the response of the authorities (Mubarak and his security forces) as illegitimate. The portrayal of the protesters also supports the results of Salaita’s (2012) research, in which it was noted that one of the more important developments arising out of American newspaper coverage of the 2011 uprisings across the Arab world was the positive representation of the anti-government protesters.

The political legitimacy enjoyed by the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters is made all the more acute given the portrayal of Hosni Mubarak and the concurrent Egyptian government, where, due to being framed as repressive, they were mostly

denied the status of legitimate political players within news coverage.

Altogether, we can see that both the quantitative and qualitative data presented herein represents a different understanding of how news media covers political protest, belying Gitlin's (1980) claim that "people, as producers of meaning, have no voice in what the media make of what they say or do" (p.3). While it is important to note that Gitlin's work examined American news media coverage of a domestic political movement (SDS) that spoke out against the Vietnam war, it still begs the question of how the anti-Mubarak opposition, a foreign political movement, was accorded with such favourable media coverage within British and American newspapers.

With that said, the next chapter will largely focus on the role of news sources within coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, what individuals and groups comprised the anti-Mubarak opposition per their description within British and American newspapers, and what the dominant motivating factors were driving the protesters into the streets of Egypt. Specifically, which sources were quoted most frequently, in what order they appeared in the individual news stories, and who they were found to be supporting (between the protesters and Mubarak/the current status quo) will begin the discussion of factors that contributed to the framing of the anti-Mubarak protesters as legitimate.

Chapter 7: Covering the revolution

I. Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the most important findings of this research, which were that the Egyptian opposition protesters were covered in an overwhelmingly supportive fashion, while Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian government, police, and security forces were portrayed as repressive. Moving beyond the representation of the opposition protesters and Mubarak, the current chapter will argue the importance of news sources, and sourcing patterns as key determining factors contributing to the positive portrayal that the opposition protesters within news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution received. It will begin the analysis by first discussing which sources figured most prominently within coverage from British and American newspapers, and how the context of their inclusion contributed to the positive representation of the anti-Mubarak protesters. Furthermore, an idea introduced within this chapter (and that will be analysed in greater detail within subsequent empirical chapters) is how news media outlets in dominant Western nations (such as the United Kingdom and United States) make sense of politics abroad, particularly within nations of vital geopolitical importance to them, such as Egypt.

There is good reason to examine sources and sourcing patterns within media coverage since it not only reveals 1) whose voice is included (and whose is not), but to what extent they are included, and 2) the order in which certain sources appear,

which is important as the sources who are quoted first can, as noted within Chapter Two, “set the limit for all subsequent discussion by framing what the problem” or issue is (Hall 1999, p.255). Beyond that, however, examining sources and sourcing patterns addresses how news is constructed and how audiences come to understand the news that they are consuming. Referring back to Chapter Two’s discussion of the influence of power, I reference Hall’s (1999) discussion of primary definers, a term that encompasses powerful institutions, interest groups, and people that are part of, or connected to the governing elite of a nation, and can thereby *frame* an issue in a manner that promotes a particular interpretation of a debate or event (Entman 2007, p.164).

Within the following section of this chapter, I will be looking at which sources embodied the role of primary definers, and how the interplay between journalists seeking out, and giving a certain editorial latitude to sources granted them the agency to influence their representation within coverage of the Egyptian Revolution. Indeed, scholars such as Tuchman further outline the importance of who is quoted in news stories, contending that “quotations of other people’s opinions are presented to create a web of mutually self-validating facts” (Tuchman 1978, p.95) in which journalists professionally validate their work by including comment or opinion from sources.

In addition to discussing which sources figured most prominently within news coverage of the revolution, the constituent elements of the anti-Mubarak opposition that appeared most frequently shall also be discussed (e.g. individual

protesters, group protesters, Mohamed ElBaradei), along with the reasons for protesting that were cited as motivating factors driving Egyptian citizens into the public squares and streets of their country. Any notable divergences between British and American newspaper articles shall also be explored, and the extent to which British and American news media outlets acted as a “preeminent institution of the public” (Habermas 1989, p.181) in serving as a platform in which Egyptian citizens could articulate their views on the protests will also be considered.

II. Sourcing the revolution

To begin, my research revealed that the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were most frequently cited or quoted as the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth sources within the British newspaper coverage of the revolution. Within the American newspapers, the anti-Mubarak opposition was most frequently cited or quoted as the first source, with U.S. officials (including President Barack Obama and then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton) being most frequently cited or quoted as the second, third, fourth, and fifth source within the American press.

To further unpack the results of who appeared most frequently as the first source, Table 2.1 lays out the primacy of the anti-Mubarak opposition and U.S. officials in quantitative terms as the preeminent sources within both British and American newspapers. What is striking about these results is how often Hosni Mubarak or someone from the Egyptian government appeared as the first source compared to the opposition protesters, and how in terms of official governmental

sources or agencies, the presence of U.S. officials far outpaced that of other officials (particularly British), as indicated within Table 2.1. below:

Table 2.1 Most frequently mentioned as first source – British (n=314) and American (n=191) Newspaper Samples³

UK - Source	Percent	US - Source	Percent	
1. Anti-Mubarak Opposition	25%	1. Anti-Mubarak Opposition	20%	
2. U.S. Officials	11%	2. U.S. Officials	19%	
3. Foreign Head(s) of State/Politician(s)	7%	3. Non-Egyptian News Agency/Journalist	9%	
4. Hosni Mubarak (tie)	6%	4. Foreign Head(s) of State/Politician(s)	9%	
4. Business source (tie)	6%	5. Hosni Mubarak	6%	
5. U.K. Officials	6%			
Total	61%	Total	63%	

With the overall top sources introduced, I will now focus on the top two sources from both the British and American print press as a way to begin the discussion of which sources served as primary definers (to use Hall's term), and how their dominance contributed to the legitimization of the anti-Mubarak protesters within the reporting.

What can be determined by comparing the top sources from British and American newspapers is that the British press gave considerably more weight to the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters. Taking a different tack, American publications

³ This table accounts for articles in which at least one source was included, rather than the total number of articles from either sample.

balanced the weight of the protesters within their coverage with that of U.S. officials, given the fact that neither source appeared significantly more than the other.

Another interesting angle to the current discussion is how many times new media functioned as a news source within the reporting from British and American newspapers. Altogether, new media or information communication technologies (ICTs) did not at all figure prominently as a source within British or American newspapers. This reveals something interesting about the way news media outlets cover international politics in a difficult, if not sometimes dangerous setting, as Egypt was during the 2011 revolution. What I would suggest considering the diminutive presence of social media and ICTs as a news source within the British and American press is that such technologies will not impact the way journalists cover political events in a foreign country if they are able to report (in some capacity) from the nation in which the event is taking place, as they were able to do in Egypt.

This is not to suggest that the reporting environment in Egypt was a space bereft of hostilities towards international media outlets and the journalists reporting for them, but what it does indicate is that social or new media does not figure prominently as a news source, even in a hostile reporting environment. This finding is corroborated by Knight (2012) who, in researching the use of social media as a source within coverage of the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests (another hostile reporting environment), determined that journalists “relied most on traditional sourcing practices: political statements, expert opinion, and a handful

of ‘man on the street’ quotes for colour” (p.68). Ansari (2012) found that questions emerged on the reliability of information emanating from social media networks during the 2009 Iranian protests, so perhaps similar considerations compelled British and American journalists covering the 2011 Egyptian Revolution to rely on more traditional sourcing methods themselves.

After all, consider the fact that social media or ICTs were used as a source within the British press only 10 times throughout the course of the four week sampling period, versus the fact that it was used as a source within American newspapers 54 times (over 5x as much than the British press). Indeed, within the American press, social media was used as the first source within five articles, as the second source within five, and as the third source within a further six articles. By contrast, social media and ICTs were not used as the first source within any articles from the British press, appeared as the second source within two articles, and did not appear as the third source within any articles.

Perhaps the relative significance of the number of times social media and ICTs were *not* used as a source within the British press versus the number of times that it *was* used within the American press suggests that the American newspapers were perhaps more likely to use them as a source because of the geographic distance separating the United States and Egypt. Given the financial costs of maintaining foreign bureaus (Sambrook 2011), perhaps social media (specifically Facebook & Twitter) acted as a primary source of information (Archetti 2011) for some of the journalists writing for American newspapers.

Despite social media's diminutive presence within British and American newspaper coverage, it did, at points, serve as a medium by which news outlets could glean commentary that was ostensibly emanating from inside Egypt and present it as an authentic voice or voices echoing the sentiments of the Egyptian people. For instance, several articles published in *The Independent*, one of which was entitled "Egypt in tweets", also touched on the utility of the 'speak2tweet' service, explaining that:

The ban on the internet in Egypt was circumvented by Google and Twitter yesterday, which launched a service to enable people caught in the unrest to post messages. The 'speak-to-tweet' system allows people to leave a voice message which is posted on Twitter. By yesterday evening more than 800 had been posted, and many of them in Arabic has been translated.

"I am a writer and I just want to tell people in the free world who are afraid that Islamic fanatics can take over, that this will not happen in Egypt. When Egyptians enjoy real freedom, they will never let fanaticism take over" (unidentified Egyptian). (*The Independent*, 2011)

The obvious implications of Google and Twitter's joint venture is that it

- 1) allowed protesters and Egyptian citizens to disseminate information beyond their borders and bypass a state-imposed internet blackout through the creation of a digitised public sphere enabling instantaneous transnational communication (Dahlberg 2001, Papacharissi 2002, Barton 2005, Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2012), and 2) the above excerpt, by virtue of its inclusion within coverage from a British newspaper, indicates that 'speak2tweet' could generate sympathy from international audiences (in addition to non-Egyptian journalists). Additional coverage from *The Independent* further demonstrates how news media used Twitter

as a reporting tool (despite how infrequent that was) by gathering, and publishing tweets from prominent and ordinary Egyptians alike:

Egypt today is a free and proud nation. God bless. – Mohamed ElBaradei via Twitter, former Egyptian statesmen and former Director General of the IAEA.

YES I lived to see the day!! OMG!! I lived to see this day!! OMG!!! #jan25 #tahrir – Fadwa M, Egyptian citizen, via Twitter. (*The Independent*, 2011)

What is clear given the examples from coverage included above is that these platforms gave Egyptians with internet access a way to circumvent state control of the electronic information environment in Egypt, and in some instances, gave journalists covering the events a way to incorporate commentary from Egyptian citizens into their reporting. Despite the speculative nature of the points raised in the discussion of new and social media as a news source, it was interesting to note that despite new media offering journalists a way to incorporate a diverse array of voices into their coverage, they mostly relied on traditional methods of reporting to communicate and contextualise political dissent.

Altogether, given the fact that both the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters and U.S. officials were the dominant sources within either country's coverage, I will detail just how these two sources were portrayed within news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution in terms of which of the constituent components (e.g. street protesters, Muslim Brotherhood, President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton) figured most prominently, and in the case of U.S. officials, which side of the protests they were found to be as supporting. But first, the composition of the anti-Mubarak

opposition and the reasons for their protesting will now be discussed in order to understand who the anti-Mubarak opposition was comprised of, and what was motivating them to fill the streets of Egypt according to the journalists covering the revolution.

III. Introducing the anti-Mubarak Opposition

The opposition to then Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was by no means a monolithic movement that could be accurately described as solely comprised of secular-minded, educated Egyptian citizens who coordinated their protests and disseminated information through social media, or on the opposite end, the Muslim Brotherhood.

Thus, before expanding on the various elements that the anti-Mubarak opposition was comprised of, three dominant characteristics (in terms of the discernible physical, political, economic, or religious characteristics of the opposition that could be gleaned from the reporting) of the anti-Mubarak opposition appeared more frequently than all others within British and American newspapers. Of the 200 articles from the British sample in which at least one characteristic of the opposition was noted, the opposition was most frequently described as first youth-driven (defined by references to 'youth', 'young', or protesters less than 30 years of age) within 34 percent of those 200 articles, then Islamist (24%, defined by references to Muslim Brotherhood or someone advocating for an Islamic government to follow Mubarak), and then as comprised of males (24%).

Nearly identical findings emerged from American newspapers. Of the 135 articles in which at least one characteristic was mentioned, the opposition was yet again most frequently described as led by the youth within 42 percent of those articles, then as being comprised of men (19%), and lastly as Islamists (16%). It is worth clarifying that the label 'Islamist' most often referred to the Muslim Brotherhood or an individual that was noted as belonging to the group, and did not necessarily carry an exclusively positive or negative connotation. While it is perhaps interesting that being young, male, and/or an Islamist were the dominant three characteristics with which the opposition to Mubarak was described, it says more about who journalists were able to interview, or who they focused on within their reporting.

Indeed, one of the purposes of this research was to find out who the protesters were according to how they were portrayed within news coverage of the revolution. It is important to note before discussing results that the following figures are not to be understood as representative of how many times certain elements of the anti-Mubarak appeared as sources, but merely represent how many times they were mentioned within the articles from either country's top newspapers.

With that stated, the elements of the opposition coded for were as follows: street protesters, individuals or individual protesters, Mohamed ElBaradei, Egyptian politicians, political groups or organisations, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the online opposition. Street protesters and an individual or individual protester were

simply just that: either a reference to the street protests engulfing Egypt during the revolution, or an individual or individual protester that were either active participants within, or identified and sympathised with the larger opposition movement.

While some of these response categories are self-explanatory for the most part (street protesters, individual protester(s)), a few of them deserve further clarification. First off, Mohamed ElBaradei is a former Egyptian diplomat, Nobel laureate, and former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency who was either seen as a prominent, or *the* leading opposition figure. ElBaradei was a response category on his own given his stature within Egyptian and international politics. *The Guardian* ascribed him the status of opposition leader within the lead of a story published on the 31st of January, 2011, signifying his political clout:

Egyptian opposition leader, Mohamed ElBaradei, last night predicted change within the next few days as Western leaders pointedly declined to throw their support behind the country's embattled president, Hosni Mubarak. (Shenker and Black, 2011)

The article further elaborated upon ElBaradei's prominence and the apparent buy-in from organised opposition groups in terms of their acceptance of him as their leader, stating that:

ElBaradei, the former chief UN arms inspector and de facto leader of the opposition, called for the president to step down at once as demonstrators massed in Cairo's central Tahrir square to ignore a night-time curfew. ElBaradei, who is now backed by the powerful Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition groups, said he wanted to negotiate about a new

government with the army, which he described as “part of the Egyptian people”. (Shenker and Black, 2011)

Contrary to *The Guardian's* reporting that cast ElBaradei as the leader and spokesman of the anti-Mubarak opposition, a story published within *The New York Times* on the same day offered a more cautious analysis of ElBaradei's cache amongst the Egyptian opposition, reporting that his status as “leader” was far from certain despite the headline proclaiming that “In Egypt, Opposition Unifies Around Government Critic”:

Though lacking deep support on his own, Dr. ElBaradei, a Nobel laureate and diplomat, could serve as a consensus figure for a movement that has struggled to articulate a program for a potential transition. It suggested, too, that the opposition was aware of the uprising's image abroad, putting forth a candidate who might be more acceptable to the West than beloved in Egypt. (Shadid and Kirkpatrick, 2011)

The point to be taken away here is that despite the contradictory reports over Mohamed ElBaradei's status as opposition leader, he nonetheless possesses a level of clout inside and outside of Egypt that merited him being a separate response category from other Egyptian politicians. ElBaradei's clout was important to take into account to determine whether or not journalists covering the protests looked at his stature and outspoken criticism of the Mubarak government and therefore conferred the status of “leader” upon him, irrespective of the veracity of such a claim.

Next, the Egyptian politician(s) response category referred to current or former Egyptian political figures who were outspoken critics of the Mubarak-led

Egyptian government, and secondly, less significant in stature than Mohamed ElBaradei. The type of figures falling into this category were 1) Ayman Nour, a dissident politician who was jailed by Mubarak after challenging him for the presidency in 2005, 2) Amr Moussa, a former Egyptian diplomat and former Secretary General of the Arab League, and 3) Osama al-Ghazali Harb, a former member of Mubarak's National Democratic Party that went on to co-establish the liberal-leaning Democratic Front Party with Yehia Al-Gamal in 2007, amongst others.

Following Egyptian politicians, some of the types of political groups or organisations featured within coverage were the Egyptian Association for Change (founded by Mohamed ElBaradei), the Council of Wise Men, socialists, 'leftists', and references to formal or loose coalitions of political groups. Since references to a 'loose coalition' is somewhat of an undefined, nebulous characterisation, here is an example of what that would have looked like within coverage:

Among those who joined for the first time in talks with Omar Suleiman, Mubarak's newly appointed vice president, were leaders from the banned Muslim Brotherhood movement, along with a **loose coalition**⁴ of political parties, intellectuals and protest organizers. (Whitlock and Witte, 2011)

The net for this category was cast wide in an attempt to accommodate the various manifestations of political groups in Egypt at the time, whether they be highly organised or 'loose coalitions' of groups that did not include the Muslim Brotherhood, who will be discussed next.

⁴ Bold added by author to help clarify the response category being discussed

The Muslim Brotherhood was included within this research not only due to their turbulent relations with the Egyptian government, but also due to their preeminence within Egyptian social and political life. The group itself was founded by Hassan al-Banna in Ismaïlia, Egypt in 1928, and its platform was dedicated to advancing the Qur'an as the guiding document to all areas of life. While there was no uniform way in which the group and its effect on the protests was presented within coverage, their dominance could not be ignored, with *The Daily Telegraph* describing them as "Egypt's largest opposition group" (Blomfield, 2011) and *The Times* of London describing the Brotherhood's relationship with the Egyptian state in sympathetic tones:

Yesterday's talks with a range of opposition parties marked the first time a top regime official had sat down with the Muslim Brotherhood, whose members it has spent years arresting, imprisoning and torturing. Such an encounter was unthinkable days ago. (Fletcher, 2011)

Contrary to the tone with which *The Times* described the Muslim Brotherhood, an article with the headline of "Israel Worries That Egypt's New Face May Not Be a Friendly One", published within *The New York Times* a day after Hosni Mubarak was forced from the presidency, offered a more bleak characterisation of the Brotherhood and what sort of role that they may play in a post-Mubarak Egypt:

Eli Shaked, a former ambassador to Cairo for Israel, gave a bleak analysis of Egypt's prospects, saying by telephone that it had too few institutions, educated people and political parties to move to a democratic system. He feared that the only force organized enough to take over was the Muslim Brotherhood, which he described as anti-American, anti-Israel, and anti-peace. (Bronner, 2011)

The logic behind elaborating on the Muslim Brotherhood and how it was described in not necessarily a positive, but certainly a sympathetic tone by *The Times*, and as an ominous presence who could pose a threat to Israel and regional peace by *The New York Times* is to show the group's significance not only to Egypt, but indeed international relations as well, as demonstrated by the excerpts from those two publications.

The last element of the anti-Mubarak opposition that was examined was defined as the 'online opposition', which referred to the opposition to Hosni Mubarak emanating from social networks or blogs. Similar to the 'political group' designation, there was not one overarching, uniform way to describe the online opposition, as it could have referred to a protester describing their use of Facebook to coordinate the protests (who, incidentally, would have also overlapped with 'individual or individual protester' designation), or, for instance, a highly organised online group dedicated to documenting the injustices of the Mubarak-era government or calling for its removal.

Examples of highly organised online opposition groups with a notable amount of sociopolitical capital were the April 6th Youth Movement and the "We are all Khaled Said" Facebook page. The April 6th Youth Movement was founded in 2008 as an online rallying point for Egyptians to debate the country's economic, political, and social issues, with *The New York Times* describing the movement as a "Facebook-based group of mostly young Egyptians that has received wide attention for its lively political debate and helped mobilize the protests that have swept Egypt

in the last two days” (Landler and Lehen, 2011). Within the same story published by *The New York Times*, the leaders of the group were noted as having “been jailed and tortured by the police” (Landler and Lehen, 2011) as another indicator of their oppositional authenticity.

To summarise which elements of the anti-Mubarak opposition that were the most prominent within coverage, the street protesters were mentioned within 256 articles (66%) from British newspapers, and thus by far the most prominent element of the anti-Mubarak opposition mentioned. Following the street protesters, the Muslim Brotherhood appeared within 113 articles (29%), followed by individual protesters in 93 articles (24%), and Mohamed ElBaradei, who was mentioned within 69 articles (18%). What is compelling about these results, and deserving of further analysis, is the emphasis on the protesters in the streets throughout Egypt. There are obvious reasons for this, one of them being that despite the restrictions and dangers faced by reporters while covering the protests in Egypt, they were still able to move within the country, cover events as they happened, and talk to those participating in the protests.

American newspapers mirrored British publications in that the most prominent elements of the anti-Mubarak opposition that appeared in coverage of the revolution were the street protests or protesters, who were included within 201 (89%) of the 225 articles, the Muslim Brotherhood (89 articles, 40%), and individuals espousing an anti-Mubarak viewpoints (48 articles, 21%). What can be inferred from these results is that the vast majority of reporting concentrated on, or

at least gave reference to, the protesters out in the streets, which is unsurprising given the fact that the anti-Mubarak opposition (and more specifically, the street protests and individual dissidents) and its constituent components were most frequently cited or quoted as the first source within either country's papers.

Secondly, the prominence of the Muslim Brotherhood within reporting from either country is worth noting as well, especially given the group's initial reticence to participate in the protests that commenced on January 25th, 2011. Given their long-standing clout within Egyptian political and social life, it was not surprising for them to be featured within reporting as the protests grew and showed no signs of abating. For instance, an article published within *The Guardian* on February 8th, 2011, examined the Brotherhood's take on the mass protests and what sort of role the group would play in Egypt should President Mubarak be forced from office.

Furthermore, it is also important to note the lack of attention dedicated to the online elements of the anti-Mubarak opposition. Altogether, the online opposition was included within only 28 articles from British newspapers (7%), and within 6 articles (3%) from American publications. Online opposition groups such as the April 6th Youth Movement, a Facebook group that arose in 2008 and predicated upon economic justice issues, or the "We are all Khaled Saeed" Facebook page, created to honour the aforementioned individual whose death at the hands of Egyptian police served as a rallying point for Egyptians decrying the human rights abuses of the Mubarak government, were not prominent in any fashion. While this section revealed the emphasis on street protesters, the Muslim Brotherhood, and

individual protesters within coverage, the next will explore what sort of specific political, economic, and social issues spurred them into the streets, and argue how they contributed to the positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition overall.

IV. A platform for the airing of grievances

What is interesting and significant about what motivated the anti-Mubarak opposition is how much attention within the reporting on the revolution was devoted to acknowledging the myriad grievances compelling them to fill the streets of Egypt. Going back to back the work of scholars such as Hertog and McLeod (1995) and Gitlin (1980) amongst others, we see that there is a paradigm by which the motivations and aspirations of the protesters are not only delegitimised, but cast outside of the contours of mainstream political debate (Hallin 1986). Given that the opposite is true in the case of British and American newspaper coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, what types of grievances that were featured most prominently within coverage, along with specific examples of how they actually appeared within the individual news stories will follow next.

Both the British and American samples of newspaper coverage overwhelming mentioned political motivations as the dominant factor galvanising the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters compared to economic or civil/human rights-oriented grievances, as demonstrated by Table 2.2 below:

Table 2.2: Percentage of stories mentioning the orientation of grievances motivating anti-Mubarak opposition

	British Newspapers	American Newspapers
Political	73%	89%
Economic	24%	24%
Civil/Human Rights	24%	30%

Thus, political motivations were cited to an overwhelming degree within coverage, as they were included within 280 (73 percent) articles of the British newspapers examined. Likewise, the analysis of American newspapers revealed that 200 (89 percent) of the 225 articles mentioned political reasons as a motivating factor behind the protests. The political motivations included within coverage often varied in terms of specifics, but generally referred to: limits on political expression, demand for political reform, demand for the removal of President Mubarak, censorship, lack of adequate channels for citizens to express their political grievances, the authoritarian nature of the Mubarak government, and more specifically the emergency law that had been in place following the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on October 6th, 1981, designed to stymie all non-governmental political activity.

While these political considerations are not mutually exclusive and overlap with other concerns (such as the emergency law not only criminalising political activity, but violating civil rights through arbitrary detention), they nonetheless serve as points of reference in terms of the types of grievances that were noted within coverage. For instance, the lead of an article entitled “Egypt awaits

nationwide ‘day of revolution’” published in *The Guardian* on January 25th, 2011, stated:

Egypt’s authoritarian government is bracing itself for one of the biggest opposition demonstrations in recent years today, as thousands of protesters prepare to take the streets demanding political reform. (Shenker, 2011)

While the headline of the article suggests a mass political movement gathering strength given the inclusion of the word ‘revolution’, the text quoted above lays out a very clear, practical demand emanating from the anti-Mubarak opposition: political reform. The article then goes beyond that general demand and lays out the specifics of what that reform would entail:

Demonstrators are calling for the country’s interior minister to be sacked, a perpetual emergency law which suspends basic civil liberties to be cancelled, and a new term limit on the presidency that would bring Hosni Mubarak’s 30-year rule to an end. (Shenker, 2011)

What can be taken away from this article is that not only were political grievances driving Egyptian citizens into the streets, but that they were in the streets with specific points of contention in mind, namely ending the emergency law and imposing a term limit on the presidency that would effectively bring Hosni Mubarak’s tenure as president to an end. In a *New York Times* op-ed published on the day that Mubarak resigned from office, Mohamed ElBaradei, former Egyptian diplomat and key opposition figure, outlined what he felt were the “Orwellian” aspects of the Mubarak “regime”, a term used surely to connote the Mubarak government’s illegitimacy in his view. Running from the aforementioned emergency

law to the Mubarak government's complicity in the extraordinary rendition program, whereby the country served as a detention or torture site for those suspected of involvement with terrorism by Western governments, ElBaradei laid out a damning indictment of the current political order:

Under three decades of Hosni Mubarak's rule, Egyptian society has lived under a draconian "emergency law" that strips people of their most basic rights, including freedom of association and of assembly, and has imprisoned tens of thousands of political dissidents. While this Orwellian regime has been valued by some of Egypt's Western allies as "stable," providing, among other assets, a convenient location for rendition, it has been in reality a ticking time bomb and a vehicle for radicalism. (ElBaradei, 2011)

According to ElBaradei, not only is the Mubarak government responsible for turning Egypt into a nation devoid of any meaningful political expression since it is an "Orwellian regime," but is inducing the rise of Islamic radicalism due to its ruthless and repressive character. Similarly, the political context of the protests was also touched upon within *The Times* of London (albeit in less detail), where the lead of the story spoke to the revolutionary rumblings emanating from the streets of Cairo:

.. Within six hours, the men and women of Cairo, matched by people in cities and towns up and down the country, had set in train the beginnings of a revolution.

...

What had started with mere chants and placards – "Down, Down, Hosni Mubarak! Dictator!" – left the capital in chaos. (Khalil and Hider, 2011)

Within this article, the political motivations galvanising the protests are more

general and lack any specifics beyond calling for the removal of Hosni Mubarak from office. Despite the lack of specifics, the reporting still points to the charged, impassioned atmosphere within Cairo by describing the protests as the “beginnings of a revolution” and quoting the protesters who were referring to Mubarak as a “dictator”, implying widespread disillusionment with the status quo, and a desire for immediate change. A February 2nd editorial entitled “Egypt’s transition”, published within *The Washington Post*, spoke to the political demands of those protesters rallying against Mubarak:

The bulk of the protesters seek his (Mubarak’s) immediate removal, as does the opposition coalition that has formed to represent them. That alliance is coalescing around a moderate platform calling for a transitional government and the organization of free and fair elections. But if Mr. Mubarak tries to hold on, it could embrace more radical demands or lose influence to extremists. (The Washington Post, 2011)

In the *Washington Post’s* editorial, citizens are yet again cast as united by specific politically-oriented grievances, with the writers of the piece insinuating that the demands of the protesters are indeed practical and tangible in nature given the headline of the editorial suggesting that the status quo will not continue, and the call for “free and fair elections” to hasten the onset of a transitional government. Even more pointedly, the *Post* puts the onus of responsibility on Hosni Mubarak to heed to the demands of the protesters and not cling to office.

Beyond political grievances, economic motivations were cited within 99 articles (24 percent) of the articles from British newspapers, and 53 articles (24 percent) from American newspapers. Generally speaking, economic motivations

spoke to points of contention such as economic mismanagement, corruption, unemployment, lack of upward mobility, poverty, the price of commodities, and demands for higher salaries, amongst others. As the *New York Times* reporter Michael Slackman noted within a story published on January 29th, 2011, the government of Hosni Mubarak presided over a worsening economic situation in the country, with Egyptian citizens turning their malaise into ire directed at Mubarak:

The litany of complaints against Mr. Mubarak is well known to anyone who has spent time in any coffee shop or on any corner chatting in any city in Egypt. Life gets harder for the masses as the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer. Even as Egypt's economy enjoyed record growth in recent years, the number of people living in poverty actually grew.

"I graduated from the university about 16 years ago, and the only jobs open to me were cleaning other people's houses," said Ali Suleiman one day last week as he stood in the center of the city, offering a common lament. "I am lucky I was able to start selling newspapers. I have three daughters, and I make about 20 pounds," or \$3.50, a day. (Slackman, 2011)

Slackman then puts the responsibility of the economic disparity in Egypt squarely on Mubarak's shoulders, following newspaper seller Ali Suleiman's comments with a seething critique of the president's inability to elevate the prospects of Egypt's underclass:

That is Mr. Mubarak's Egypt, a place where about half the population lives on \$2 a day or less, and walled compounds spring up outside cities with green lawns and swimming pools and names like Swan Lake. It is a place where those with money have built a parallel world of private schools and exclusive clubs, leaving the rundown cities to the poor. (Slackman, 2011)

Indeed, it is not just Egypt's underclass that was portrayed as reeling from the country's economic problems. As an article from *The New York Times* with the

headline “Labor Actions Across Egypt Lend Momentum to Anti-Mubarak Protests” indicates, such motivations were not just voiced by Egyptian citizens out protesting in streets across the country, but also by journalists employed by the mouthpiece for Egypt’s then-ruling National Democratic Party, the newspaper Al-Ahram:

The protests at the newspaper, Al Ahram, by freelance reporters demanding better wages and more independence from the government, snarled one of the state’s most powerful propaganda tools and seemed to change its tone: On Wednesday, the front page, which had sought for days to play down the protests, called recent attacks by pro-Mubarak protesters on Tahrir Square an “offense to the whole nation.” (Fahim and Kirkpatrick, 2011)

The sentiments in the above text were once again articulated through comments by the journalists at Al-Ahram later in the story:

In Al Ahram’s lobby, journalists called their protest a microcosm of the Egyptian uprising, with young journalists leading demands for better working conditions and less biased coverage. (Fahim and Kirkpatrick, 2011)

Thus, the substandard wages cited by reporters working at al-Ahram incentivised them to break ranks from the official line of the paper and offer a bold, direct critique aimed at the pro-Mubarak demonstrators who attacked opposition protesters. Although the text quoted above incorporates political motivations into the story as well given that the reporters demanded “more independence from the government,” it nonetheless buttresses the headline of the article crediting labor actions with broadening the base around which the opposition protesters coalesced. Indeed, the strengthening effect of economic concerns on the anti-Mubarak opposition overall extended across the country, with the *Times* reporting that:

Increasingly, the political clamor for Mr. Mubarak's ouster seemed to be complemented by strikes nationwide. While many strikes seemed to focus on specific grievances related to working conditions, labor leaders suggested they were energized by protests against Mr. Mubarak.

Rahma Refaat, a lawyer at the Center for Trade Union and Worker Services, said "Most of those on strike say that we have discovered that the resources of our country have been stolen by the regime." (Fahim and Kirkpatrick, 2011)

What can be taken away from what the *Times* reported is that the economic grievances (poverty, poor working conditions, theft of resources on the behalf of the Mubarak-led government) predating the current protests only served to reinforce the convictions of those demonstrating against Mubarak and his government. Jon Alterman of *The Washington Post* suggested as much when he wrote the day after Hosni Mubarak's resignation from the presidency that:

Hosni Mubarak's departure from power does little to address the fundamental issues that brought protesters to Cairo's Tahrir Square for the past 18 days. In fact, their protests were never about Mubarak but about a sclerotic political system and an economic system that was full of cronyism corruption. (Alterman, 2011)

While one may take issue with Alterman's assertion that the protests were never about Hosni Mubarak and his performance as a head of state, what can be taken away from Alterman's reporting is that economic grievances were instrumental to the overall potency of the anti-Mubarak protests. Altogether, the salience of economic concerns present within coverage also verifies the fact that opposition to Hosni Mubarak and his government was not solely grounded on political grievances, but tapped into longstanding economic problems in Egypt such

as corruption, poor working conditions, unemployment, and substandard living wages. Economic grievances, however, were not alone in their ability to buttress and substantiate the overwhelming dominance of political motivations within news coverage of the revolution. Indeed, calls for the implementation of greater civil and human rights also played a role in showcasing the motivational diversity of the opposition to Mubarak and his government, which will be discussed next.

When speaking of human or civil rights, what is generally being referred to are issues such as torture, violent repression, police brutality, calls for freedom, calls for dignity, and arbitrary detentions stemming from the emergency law, amongst others. With that defined, an article containing a reference to any of the just-mentioned issues would have been determined to be motivated by concerns surrounding the state of human and civil rights in Egypt. Issues pertaining to human and civil rights figured slightly more prominently within American newspapers, as 67 articles (30%) cited such concerns as motivating factors behind the protests.

British media were not too far away in terms of results from this response category, with 92 articles (24%) citing human and civil rights as galvanising factors behind the protests. Following suit from economic grievances, concerns over human and civil rights were secondary to the dominance of the political motivations cited within coverage. Despite that, they nonetheless helped humanise, and gave a voice to those lamenting the state of civil society in Egypt. Going back to the Michael Slackman article published in the *New York Times*, Slackman contextualises the emergency law that was enacted in 1981 as a key

benchmark in degrading Egyptian civil society (something alluded in the headline of the story: “Compact Between Egypt And Its Leader Erodes”) that simultaneously opened the door to gross excesses by the nation’s police force:

Mr. Mubarak kept the emergency law in place so that his government had the ability to arrest and detain without charge, to limit public gatherings, to operate a special state security court. His police culture fostered a sense of impunity for law enforcement that led to widespread reliance on torture. (Slackman, 2011)

Slackman then describes a couple of instances of where the police go beyond arbitrarily detaining Egyptian citizens to being accused of participating in gruesome acts of torture, with the case of Khaled Said serving as an especially poignant example of how the impunity of the police force resulted in the most severe type of human rights violation, that being the deprivation of one’s life:

One case that drew widespread international condemnation involved a cell phone video of police officers sodomizing a driver with a broomstick. In June 2010, Alexandria erupted in protests over the fatal beating by police officers of Khaled Said, 28. The authorities said he died choking on a clump of marijuana, until a photograph emerged of his bloodied face. Just last month, a suspect being questioned in connection with a bombing was beaten to death while in police custody. (Slackman, 2011)

Slackman’s contextualisation of the state of human and civil rights in Egypt and their contribution to the overall anti-Mubarak sentiment prevalent within coverage from either sample of the uprising was something of an anomaly. When grievances relating to human and civil rights were mentioned within coverage, it was often not elaborated upon in such detail. Andrew Rawnsley, in a piece for the

Guardian, argued the anti-Mubarak opposition's aspirations were, first and foremost, to aspire towards Western-style form of governance (along with the attendant human rights that that entails), however wrong or right that assertion was. As he put it:

They want what we have in the west: rule of law, enforceable human rights, independent courts, free and fair elections, and representative government. (Rawnsley, 2011)

The purpose of including the above quote is not to dispute or support Rawnsley's view that the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters are united by a vision of a post-Mubarak Egypt that will feature political, judicial, and electoral systems comparable to those of Western nations. More than anything, Rawnsley's quote exemplifies the brief, ephemeral nature of the majority of the references made about human and civil rights when they were cited as motivating factors behind the protests.

So far in this chapter, I have established who are the top sources within British and American newspaper coverage, who the anti-Mubarak opposition are, which elements of the opposition figured most prominently within coverage, and what sort of grievances drove Egyptians out into the streets to protest against the Mubarak-led government. While unpacking who the anti-Mubarak opposition were and what sort of grievances galvanised their movement is undoubtedly important to understanding why the opposition protesters were accorded such favourable media coverage, there was another a second, highly significant source within

coverage whose constituent components and reactions to the events in Egypt need to be understood as well, with that being U.S. officials.

The next section of this chapter will begin by outlining which American political officials or institutions figured most prominently within coverage and who they were determined to be supporting. Additionally, what sort of impact the inclusion of American political or governmental officials had on the positive portrayal of the opposition protesters within the British and American print news publications will also be examined. Further to that, the next section will begin to address the broader issue of how news media makes sense of politics outside of their own national borders.

V. Prominence, influence, and role of official opinion

The next section of this chapter will reveal how the inclusion of American official opinion within news coverage of the Egyptian revolution was not a decisive factor contributing to the positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak protesters. Rather, the inclusion of US officials was more about satisfying the profession journalistic norm of providing 'objective' news coverage, which I will address within the concluding remarks of this chapter. But first, let us retrace the findings presented earlier within this chapter, in which American officials were found to be quoted or cited second-most as the first and second source within coverage from the British newspapers, while falling just short of being most frequently cited or quoted as the first source within the American press. U.S. officials, however, appeared most

frequently as the second source within the American press, with the anti-Mubarak opposition following just behind.

This is where the samples start to diverge, in that while the British press accorded the greatest amount of leverage to the opposition protesters, American newspapers followed a different track, one that saw American officials rise as a go-to source within coverage. Whether this is merely a reflection of the fact that the United States is the most significant non-local nation to the region given that it is deeply intertwined within the geopolitics of the Middle East, or whether it is due to the fact that it is the world's preeminent superpower at the moment is open to question.

The discussion of the impact of American officials on the positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak protesters will begin by analysing the extent to which President Barack Obama, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and other American officials were included within coverage, and who they were determined to be supporting within the reporting on the protests. With that clarified, President Obama's presence and role within coverage will be analysed first.

A. U.S. Officials: President Barack Obama

President Obama was not featured to a significant degree within either British or American publications, and therefore I argue that when he was included within coverage, Obama himself did not have a decisive impact on the positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition. To start, Obama was mentioned within 57

(15 percent) articles from British newspapers and 27 percent of all articles within the American press. By comparison, Britain's own Prime Minister, David Cameron, was only included within 9 percent of all articles from the British press (and only 2 percent of all articles published within the American newspapers). While this is obviously not a surprising finding on its own, what is worth mentioning about the inclusion of Barack Obama is that when British print news media sought the voice of official opinion to contextualise the protests in Egypt, they were more likely to turn towards President Obama to do so, rather than their own prime minister.

Table 2.3 shows which side of the protests President Obama was found to be supporting (when it could be determined) within news coverage of the revolution:

Table 2.3: Who was President Obama supporting within coverage?⁵

	U.K. Newspapers	U.S. Newspapers
Anti-Mubarak Opposition	53%	24%
Neutral	31%	70%
Mubarak/Mubarak-led government	16%	6%

The most significant point emerging from this discussion is that President Obama was found to be supporting the anti-government opposition over Mubarak within either country's press by a notable margin. Obama was determined to be supporting the opposition within 53 percent of the articles that he appeared in from

⁵ Percentages have been rounded

the British press compared to 24 percent of articles within American newspapers, and his stance was coded as neutral within 31 percent of British newspapers versus 70 percent within American newspapers. Given that Obama's stance toward the anti-Mubarak protests was, for the most part, either supportive or neutral within either sample, it begs the question of which side Hillary Clinton and other U.S. officials were supporting, and how the results for either of those parties differed from that of Obama.

Overall, it is difficult to ascertain whether Obama's inclusion within the reporting and the position he took towards the anti-Mubarak opposition (when it could be determined) had a definitive impact on the representation of the protesters, at least in the immediate sense. However, Obama's (and that of other U.S. officials, more importantly) presence perhaps acted as a means by which to project an 'objective take' on the events in Egypt, particularly within American newspapers where although the opposition was most frequently cited as the first source just ahead of U.S. officials, those two sources switched positions in terms of who was most frequently cited as the second source, with neither of those two sources outpacing each other in this respect. The ostensible equalising effect of those two categories on each other, and whether U.S. officials truly were included as a 'balancer' to the presence of the anti-Mubarak opposition was further revealed by who Secretary of State Clinton and the other American officials were determined to be supporting.

Lastly, the results pertaining to how often President Obama was included

within coverage indicates a certain primacy ascribed to American officials within the reporting, which one would obviously expect within American newspapers. However, whether or not British media reflexively include the voice of American officials to lend a sort of legitimacy to their reporting on events within a country of enormous political import to both the United Kingdom and United States (such as Egypt) will be analysed further.

B. U.S. Officials: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

Similar to the results for President Obama, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did not feature heavily within coverage from British or American newspapers. Within the British press, Clinton was included within 38 (10 percent) news stories. Clinton's position (when it could be determined) towards the revolution within British media coverage is displayed within Table 2.4 below:

Table 2.4: Who was Hillary Clinton supporting within British newspapers?⁶

Anti-Mubarak Opposition	20%
Neutral	40%
Mubarak/Mubarak-led government	40%

Shifting to the American press, Clinton was included in 33 (15 percent) articles, with Table 2.5 below laying out her position (when it could be determined) within reporting from American newspapers:

⁶ Percentages have been rounded

Table 2.5: Who was Hillary Clinton coded as supporting within American newspapers?⁷

Anti-Mubarak Opposition	10%
Neutral	55%
Mubarak/Mubarak-led government	34%

An interesting point to note here is the divergence between who President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton were determined to be supporting most frequently. Though Obama's position, on average, could be described as neutral within the American media and supportive of the revolution within the British media, he was found to be supporting the anti-Mubarak opposition more than Mubarak or the Egyptian government when analysing both the British and American media together. Secretary of State Clinton's position, on the other hand, was found to be pro-Mubarak more often than not.. This seemingly reflects the discord within the Obama administration, which, in previous articles, struggled to project a unified response to the revolution before eventually throwing their weight behind the anti-Mubarak opposition.

While it is difficult to explain the mechanics driving the discord within the Obama administration regarding their official stance on the Egyptian revolution, it was an issue that was touched upon within some of the reporting on the protests, particularly within articles that included Frank G. Wisner, a former U.S. ambassador to Egypt dispatched by the Obama administration to Egypt to relay the American position to Hosni Mubarak. In an article with the headline "Obama furious over

⁷ Percentages have been rounded

Egypt remarks by ‘monster’ Clinton” published within *The Times* on February 14, 2011, the disunity within the Obama administration came into focus, describing the divergent positions taken by Obama on one side with Clinton and Wisner on the other, and how they are trying to mitigate any damage to the American/Egyptian relationship caused by the rift between the two camps:

A rift has opened at the heart of the US Government, with Mr. Obama furious that a delegation led by the Secretary of State had publicly undermined his attempts to pressure President Mubarak to stand down.

The confusion peaked after Mr. Obama was told that Frank Wisner, a former State Department official acting as an envoy to Egypt, had told a security conference in Munich that Mr. Mubarak should stay in office to oversee reforms. At the same summit, Mrs. Clinton emphasised that an orderly transition to democracy “takes time”.

Mr. Obama who has already called for reforms “right now”, was seething at the remarks which contradicted his position, his aides said yesterday. (Hines, 2011)

What comes out within the reporting from *The Times* is that Wisner (along with Clinton, given her comments at the same security conference), complicated the Obama administration’s efforts to convince Hosni Mubarak that he should step down. Wisner’s comments and the apparent rift they caused within the Obama administration over how to respond to the protests in Egypt were noted within reporting from journalist Robert Fisk, a well-known, outspoken critic of Western foreign policy in the Middle East, who brought to light Wisner’s business connections to the Mubarak-led government, casting into disrepute his status as an independent arbitrator without any stake in Mubarak’s survival as president, or the

continuation of the current political order of Egypt:

Frank Wisner, President Barack Obama's envoy to Cairo who infuriated the White House this weekend by urging Hosni Mubarak to remain President of Egypt, works for a New York and Washington law firm which works for the dictator's own Egyptian government.

Mr. Wisner is a retired State Department 36-year career diplomat – he served as US ambassador to Egypt, Zambia, the Philippines, and India under eight American presidents. In other words, he was not a political appointee. But it is inconceivable Hillary Clinton did not know of his employment by a company that works for the very dictator which Mr. Wisner now defends in the face of a massive democratic opposition in Egypt.

So why on Earth was he sent to talk to Mubarak, who is in effect a client of Mr. Wisner's current employers? (Fisk, 2011)

Wisner's comments, despite not receiving widespread coverage, nonetheless offer an explanation for the divergence between Obama and Clinton's posture toward the protesters, and are important to note for several reasons. Firstly, the Obama administration did not project a unified front in terms of whether they were backing the Mubarak-led government or the opposition protesters, with the data from which side of the protests President Obama was backing versus Hillary Clinton corroborating that point.

Secondly, the fact that Obama and Clinton were the most frequently cited examples of 'official opinion' or figures to make it into coverage, and their divergent viewpoints suggests that their presence within the reporting had little to do with legitimising the anti-Mubarak protesters in the immediate sense. However, the divergent positions of Obama and Clinton perhaps opened a space within the reporting for the voice of the anti-Mubarak opposition to ascend to a position of

dominancy where they possessed considerable leverage in shaping how the media covered them given the disunity within the Obama Administration, which speaks to previous work from Hallin (1986), Livingston (1997), and Robinson (2000). Overall, their role seemed to have more to do with which sort of voices British and American newspapers sought out in order to make sense of how certain political officials with overwhelming global clout were reacting to the protests in Egypt, lending credence to the notion official opinion served as sort of a guarantor of 'objectivity' within coverage of the protests.

Yet, before definitively concluding that the role of American official opinion within coverage was more about providing an 'objective' voice to that of the anti-Mubarak opposition, it is necessary to see where former or current American officials of less significance than Obama and Clinton fell in terms of which camp they were found to be supporting within coverage of the revolution.

C. U.S. Officials: Former or current

Current or former U.S. politicians (excluding Obama and Clinton), officials, or general references to the government were included within 96 (25 percent) articles British newspapers. A general reference to a U.S. official or officials was most frequently cited or quoted before all others within 27 (28%) of those 96 articles, followed by a general reference to the White House or the Obama administration and related officials within 11 (11%) articles, and then Frank Wisner (former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and Israel) amongst many others who were not mentioned to

any sort of significant degree. Table 2.6 lays out their position within British newspapers (when it could be determined) below, where they found to be supporting the anti-Mubarak opposition more often than not:

Table 2.6.: Who were U.S. Official(s) supporting within British newspapers?

Anti-Mubarak Opposition	44%
Neutral	28%
Mubarak/Mubarak-led government	28%

Within the American media, U.S. officials or agencies were mentioned within 99 (44 percent) articles. Similar to the British media, a general reference to a U.S. official or officials was most often cited or quoted above all others within 14 (14%) of those 99 articles, followed by a general reference to the White House or the Obama administration and related officials within 9 (11%) articles, and then lastly a whole litany of current or former American officials not mentioned to any sort of significant degree.

Table 2.7 demonstrates that though the dominant position of U.S. officials (when it could be determined) within the American news coverage was one of neutrality, their statements within the press did, however, support Mubarak more often than the anti-Mubarak opposition:

Table 2.7: Who were U.S. Officials coded as supporting within American newspapers?⁸

Anti-Mubarak Opposition	11%
Neutral	68%
Mubarak/Mubarak-led government	21%

Though American officials were coded as supporting the anti-Mubarak opposition more frequently within British newspapers than within the American press, they were more frequently coded as supporting Mubarak within the American press.

With that said, the inclusion of American officials, and the fact that their position was typically neutral more often than not, suggests that their inclusion within coverage, as previously suggested, was more about serving as a point of reference for the journalists covering the events in Egypt, and did not impact the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition within news coverage of the protests.

Altogether, while the significance of American officials as a news source within the reporting from British and American newspapers indicates there was a routine to the way the Egyptian Revolution was covered (perhaps underpinned by the need to balance the voice of the anti-Mubarak opposition with a more ‘objective’ take), the positive representation of the protesters and the emphasis on their motivations problematises the notion that journalists incorporating official opinion within their reporting will end up affirming the logic of politically powerful sources

⁸ [Percentages have been rounded](#)

(Tuchman 1973, p.62).

Indeed, the overall neutral stance of U.S. officials towards the anti-Mubarak opposition gives credence to the suggestion that disunity amongst American elites possibly provided the journalists covering the events in Egypt greater editorial agency within their coverage. Thus, while objectivity and elite disunity may help explain the results presented within this chapter, there is a need to consider what other factors may be at play, as focusing exclusively on journalistic routines and their possible effects on coverage (e.g. objectivity and resulting media biases), along with the opinion of political elites contextualises the role of journalists as uncritical stenographers merely reproducing the opinion of political elites, rather than as “active and thinking agents who purposefully produce news through their professional practices” (Cottle 2000, p.22).

To further expand on that idea, the positive representation of the protesters, their dominance as a news source, and the attention given to the myriad motivations compelling them to fill the public spaces of Egypt can be best contextualised by Cottle’s (2000) work included within Chapter Three. There, Cottle questions whether news frames originate within the sedimented layers of wider culture, or whether they are most influenced by institutional sources (p.430).

Considering the results presented within this chapter, it could be that the wider cultural values (i.e. democratic notions of accountability) and the political role of the press in countries such as the United Kingdom and United States possibly had more to do with the positive framing of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, rather than

commentary from American political elites, whose overall position towards the protests was one of neutrality. This is a useful point to end the discussion of the role and impact of American officials within the reporting on the protests, and highlights the different perspectives for understanding how the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were legitimised within the reporting on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Further complexities and perspectives will be examined in greater detail within the concluding remarks of this chapter.

VI. Conclusion

What has been demonstrated within this chapter is, first and foremost, that the anti-Mubarak opposition was most frequently cited or quoted as the first source within coverage from British and American newspapers, and therefore possessed considerable leverage in terms of shaping their own representation within reporting on the Egyptian Revolution. This finding from my research indicates that the British and American press, within coverage of the revolution, fulfilled their purpose as viable, democratic public sphere that “acted as a preeminent institution of the public” in the Habermasian, traditional sense of the term (Habermas 1989, p.181). The dominance of the anti-Mubarak opposition as a source within the British and American press also corroborates Curran’s (1991) notion of the public sphere, in which he saw news media playing a central role in challenging political elites (p.29).

More specifically though, British and American newspapers functioned as a

'transnational public sphere' (Fraser 2007) where the anti-Mubarak opposition could access, explicate the logic and the myriad grievances driving their movement to the global public through these Western media outlets. The newspapers examined within this research served as a conduit by which Egyptian citizens could voice their political grievances, thereby assisting in the creation of a politicised citizenry where Egyptians themselves could define what the revolution was about through their own voice. This speaks to the findings of Salaita (2012), whose scholarship demonstrated that the favourable news coverage accorded to the anti-government protesters during the Arab Uprisings of 2011 contradicted longstanding tropes pertaining to the representation of Arabs and Muslims within Western media, which yet again demonstrates the inapplicability of Said's (*Orientalism* and *Covering Islam*) work to the results of this research project.

Additionally, the dominance of the anti-Mubarak opposition as a source indicates a different relationship between the press and dissident voices within news coverage than what has been suggested by previous scholarship, where it has been argued that journalists often neglect dissident voices and index their coverage towards the perspective of the politically powerful (Tuchman 1978, Bennett 1990, McCarthy et al. 1996, McLeod and Detenber 1999).

While I have noted how the results presented within this chapter differ from previous scholarship, they do also speak to the applicability of Hallin (1986), Livingston (1997), and Robinson's (2000) work, where disunity amongst political elites with respect to a particular policy creates an opportunity for news coverage to

deviate from normative reporting paradigms, which subsequently heightens the effect of the media on the position of political officials and policy outcomes. This can be best exemplified by the stance of U.S. officials within the reporting on the revolution, where they were more or less neutral in their stance towards the anti-Mubarak opposition. Even some of the reporting (Hines, 2011) noted active disagreement within the Obama Administration in terms of who the United States should be supporting, with then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and special envoy to Egypt Frank Wisner seemingly undermining President Obama's attempt to pressure Hosni Mubarak to leave office (2011). It could be that the aforementioned disunity amongst American political elites created a space within coverage for the anti-Mubarak opposition to gain more credibility as a dominant news source, and thereby influence the way they were covered by the news media.

Another interesting finding pertaining to the subject of news sources indicated that new or social media did not function as a prominent source of information or context within the reporting on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution from British and American establishment newspapers. This may be due, in part, to the questionable nature of information emanating from these networks during a political crisis, which was a point discussed in research conducted by Ansari (2012).

Secondly, the fact that political grievances were overwhelmingly cited as central motivating factors galvanising the anti-Mubarak opposition framed their protests not as some directionless movement, but as guided by specific grievances that were articulated by the opposition within coverage. I would also argue that that

same dominance as the first source cited within British and American newspapers provided the anti-Mubarak opposition with the power to influence the coverage of the revolution as 'primary definers' (Hall 1999) of their motivations, corroborating more recent scholarship in which the elevation of citizens to such an influential status has been noted as well (Kunelius and Renvall 2010).

Without a doubt, the anti-Mubarak opposition's status as 'primary definers' contributed to the overwhelmingly positive coverage that was accorded to them within coverage from either country's press. Further to that, the prevalence of political motivations within coverage highlights a divergence from van Dijk's assessment that news media ignore 'universally-desirable' concepts such as freedom and democracy as they pertain to Western-client states (van Dijk 1995, p. 27), which was certainly not the case within British and American reporting on the revolution.

Beyond demonstrating the linkage between the positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition and their role as a source within news coverage of the revolution, another discussion started within this chapter is of how news media makes sense of politics outside of their own national borders. Germane to this discussion is the status of American political or governmental officials within the British press, where they played a secondary role (in comparison to the weight of the anti-Mubarak opposition), and edged out the anti-Mubarak opposition as the most frequently cited second, third, fourth, and fifth source within the American press. What this suggests is that the presence of American officials within either

country's newspapers was a way for journalists to abide by the professional norm of 'objectivity'.

If we go back to Schudson's (1978) notion of objectivity within Chapter Three, we see that the voice of American officials acted as a 'non-Egyptian' balancer (as they were largely neither for or against the revolution) to the voice of the anti-Mubarak opposition, and to lend an authenticity to the coverage by seeking out secondary opinion from political officials as a way of abiding by the scientific method as the "best or true path to knowledge" (p.7). This was especially the case within the American newspapers, since both American officials and the anti-Mubarak opposition were featured roughly the same amount.

Moreover, I would argue that the presence of American officials within coverage can also be explained by drawing upon Tuchman's conceptualisation of journalistic routines, which was discussed within Chapter Three. Tuchman (1973) argues that journalists must routinise the handling of unexpected events in order to provide information to the public, which they do by establishing contexts and parameters by which breaking or unexpected news can be defined and reported on (p.129). Tuchman's assessment is particularly germane to the topic of news media coverage of political protest in a foreign country, especially one that is a vitally important nation to Western interests, such as Egypt.

However, another angle to the findings presented within this chapter is given the dominance of the anti-Mubarak opposition as a source within British and American reporting, and the emphasis on the political motivations (e.g. struggling

against a repressive government) underpinning the protests, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution represented an event that was in alignment with Western-oriented political values and ideologies. Thus, it was seemingly compatible with a European revolutionary tradition in the sense that it was a struggle against repression, and for political self-determination (Loughborough University 2012). Therefore, the focus on the anti-Mubarak opposition and their political motivations within coverage was due, in part, to the political ideologies inherent to countries like the United Kingdom and United States that become infused within the newsmaking process and are then projected onto the citizens of another nation (van Dijk 2009, p.27), a point which is particularly salient given Egypt's relationship to both nations. The next chapter will continue the discussion of how news media makes sense of political events in distant nations, examining the extent to which geopolitical considerations were featured within news coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

Chapter 8: Covering the revolution through an international lens: Geopolitics

I. Introduction

Geopolitics can be defined in many ways, whether it refers to influence of geography and natural resources on international relations, or perhaps addresses how national interests impact the way in which countries interpret political movements taking place beyond their borders. Saul Bernard Cohen (2003), a prominent scholar of geopolitics, defined the term as “the analysis of the interaction between, on the one hand, geographical settings and perspectives and, on the other, political processes” (p.12). Geopolitics also tends to be concerned with questions of power, given that political elites attempt to influence individuals and groups in their own country, and around the world by conveying their understanding of, and responses to foreign events as the most logical (Entman 2004, p.147).

Furthermore, Cohen (2003) elaborates that “geographical settings and political processes are dynamic, and each influences and is influenced by the other”, and that geopolitics, as a “mode of analysis”, seeks to address the “consequences of this interaction” (p.12). Keeping in line with Cohen’s approach to geopolitics as a “mode of analysis”, and bearing in mind the influence of political elites in how citizens make sense out of events in foreign nations, I will be focusing on the geopolitical ramifications included within news coverage of the revolution.

Previous research examining the newsworthiness of global events within the U.S. media found that the normative deviance of an event, its relevance to the United

States, the potential for social change, and its geographic proximity all contributed to their inclusion within American media coverage (Chang et al. 1987, p.410).

Further research has indicated that events taking place in nations of political and economic significance to the United States are likely to be covered within the American news media (Shoemaker et al., 1991). On a broader level, Clausen (2003) argued that is through the process of 'domestication' by which journalists assimilate global events into frames of reference that their colleagues and audiences within the reporting country can understand (p.15).

Although the aforementioned scholarship from Chang et al. (1987) and Shoemaker et al. (1991) explains why global events are covered within American news media, I would extrapolate their work to include the United Kingdom in the context of this research. These considerations, particularly Egypt's economic and political significance to the United States and the United Kingdom, are important to understanding how and why some of the geopolitical considerations to be discussed (British and American interests) were included within coverage of the revolution, how often (particularly within U.S. media), and how they were presented within the coverage.

II. Laying out the terrain

My research revealed that geopolitical considerations were frequently mentioned within both the British and American newspaper coverage of the revolution, and therefore represented one of the more significant results of the

project overall. With that stated, 232 (60 percent) of articles within British newspapers mentioned at least one geopolitical consideration, while 171 (76 percent) of all articles from the American press included a geopolitical angle as well, thereby indicating the significance of this category, and the need to unpack it further.

Geopolitical ramifications took many forms within the reporting, whether focused on the aforementioned implications for American national security, American relations with the Arab world, Israeli national security, or the likelihood of protests spreading to other countries across the Arab world and how that might permanently alter political dynamics within the region. With that said, this chapter will argue that geopolitical ramifications were a dominant angle within newspaper coverage from the United Kingdom and United States, and thereby essential to how journalists from these publications covered the events to explain to their readership how the revolution would reverberate not just over the borders of Egypt (in the case of Israel), but indeed well beyond (in the case of the broader Arab world). Table 3.1 indicates which angles were predominant within either sample⁹:

⁹ Articles were multi-coded to reflect the amount of, and diversity of geopolitical angles present within news coverage. Subsequently, the percentages presented within Table 3.1. reflect which geopolitical angles were most frequently mentioned within British and American newspapers.

Table 3.1 Most frequently mentioned geopolitical considerations within U.K. and U.S. samples of newspaper coverage

U.K. Newspapers	% of total mentions (n=479 total mentions)	U.S. Newspapers	% of total mentions (n=352 total mentions)
1. Implications for Middle East	25.8	1. U.S. Interests	39.4
2. 'Arab Spring'	23.5	2. Implications for Middle East	24.1
3. U.S. Interests	23.5	3. Implications for Israel	18.1
4. U.K. Interests	13.7	4. 'Arab Spring'	16.1
5. Implications for Israel	12.3	5. U.K. Interests	1.9

An important point to mention before discussing the influence of geopolitics within the coverage of the Egyptian Revolution is that the categories to be discussed are not mutually exclusive. For instance, one could make the argument that the implications of the protests for Israel and implications for the broader Middle Eastern region are intricately connected, since the Egyptian government as led by Mubarak maintained a peaceful relationship with Israel due to the 1978 Camp David Accords. Therefore, the decision on the part of any successor government in Egypt to dismiss the treaty would not only impact Egyptian and Israeli relations, but relations between Israel, its neighboring countries, and indeed the United States, being that it was the primary external supporter of the rapprochement between Egypt and Israel.

The categories to be discussed were conceived with the idea in mind that I wanted to see which particular angles (whether they be American, Israeli, or

regional) appeared most frequently within coverage. Since there was no one particular geopolitical angle that was overwhelmingly dominant within both samples, I shall begin by discussing how the Egyptian Revolution was described as part of what many commentators and politicians called the 'Arab Spring'.

III. 'Arab Spring'

Articles that contextualised the Egyptian Revolution as part of the 'Arab Spring' described the protests in Egypt as stemming from Tunisia's own revolution that sent their former president Ben Ali into exile in Saudi Arabia, and/or posited the protests in Egypt as the catalyst that would lead to the spread of further protests across the Arab world. Thus, any articles containing a passive reference to the Tunisian revolution, or any that provided a detailed analysis of where the protests would like spread in the wake of first Tunisia, and now Egypt were marked as belonging to this category. Of the geopolitical angles present within British newspapers, this was the second most prominent, as it accounted for 24 percent of any reference. Within American newspapers, the 'Arab Spring' angle was cited fourth-most of the five geopolitical angles examined within this project, comprising 16 percent of all mentions.

While this specific angle was not predominant within either British or American newspapers, it does, however, speak to what prism the journalists covering the revolution were looking through when reporting on the events. The following excerpts demonstrate the variation with which this angle appeared within

coverage; ranging from an ephemeral reference to carefully articulated positions couching the revolution in Egypt as the next milestone of the 'Arab Spring'. The following short excerpt from *The New York Times* is an example of a more generic, passing reference to the protests in Egypt possibly spreading to other countries in the Arab world, such as Algeria and Yemen:

The impact of Egypt's uprising rippled across the Arab world as protesters turned out in Algeria, where the police arrested leading organizers, and in Yemen, where pro-government forces beat demonstrators with clubs. (Fahim, 2011)

While the above excerpt from *The New York Times* speaks to the revolution galvanising protesters from Algeria to Yemen, author of the novel *The Road From Damascus*, Robin Yassin-Kassab, specifically addressed the political repression and economic desperation linking the protests in Tunisia and Egypt in *The Guardian*, and how it will alter the sociopolitical dynamics of the Arab world:

The initiators of what is now perhaps a growing intifada organised the protests in the name of Khaled Said, a blogger beaten to death by police who has now become Egypt's Mohammed Bouazizi (the street vendor whose self-immolation was the catalyst for Tunisia's uprising).

First there was Tunisia and now there is Egypt. "Days of rage" have become common from Amman to Sanaa to Damascus. Presidents throughout the region are announcing reforms to stay ahead of their people and to survive. We are witnessing a fundamental realignment of citizen-state relations throughout the Arab world. (Yassin-Kassab, 2011)

Yassin-Kassab then contemplates the likelihood of such protests arising within Syria, writing that the political and economic conditions and state of civil

society constrained by entrenched authoritarianism that inspired the protesters to take to the streets of Tunis, and then Cairo, is certainly present within Syrian borders as well:

With its young population, and a bureaucracy run by the same authoritarian party for four decades, Syria is by no means exempt from the pan-Arab crisis of unemployment, low wages and the stifling civil society, conditions that brought revolution to Tunisia. Nevertheless, in the short to medium term, it seems highly unlikely that the Syrian regime will face a Tunisia-style challenge. (Yassin-Kassab, 2011)

The Tunisian revolution was contextualised as the catalyst for the political upheaval across the Arab world elsewhere as well. Tunisian writer Nouri Gana commented that his own country's revolution would instigate knock-on effects throughout the Arab world, and lead to a revitalised agency of citizens across the region to move out from under repressive governments and reshape the social and political spheres of their own countries:

Grassroots change in the Arab world is inevitable. Egyptians, Libyans, Jordanians, Yemenis, Palestinians – almost all Arabs are struck by Tunisian fever. It is no longer a question of place, only a question of time. The real achievement of Tunisia is that it demonstrated that the hope for change is alive and well. The worst crime of dictatorships is the politics of fear they use to engineer the consent of their people – the slow and steady dispossession of all will to freedom and self-determination. (Gana, 2011)

In a similar vein, the “fundamental realignment of citizen-state relations” that Yassin-Kassab spoke of was expanded upon in reporting from *The Sunday Times* as well. The political, economic, and civil-human rights issues uniting the cause of the protesters across the Arab world were described as not only having the potential to

change the relationship between the governed and governing, but perhaps the relationship between the “West” and the citizens of the Arab world:

The young have become powerful leaders against the corruption, nepotism and cronyism in their countries. Dramatic change in Arab societies should not be a cause for fear in the West but an opportunity to engage with the new Arab citizen. (Shaikh, 2011)

In summary, the examples of the ‘Arab Spring’ angle provided here couched the protests in terms of an inexorable march towards political change in the Arab world. The ‘Arab Spring’ angle, in and of itself, seemingly indicated a more positive interpretation of what the protests in Egypt could portend for the wider Arab world. Drawing from the articles described within this section, the presence of this geopolitical angle represented the arrival of a new era in which the political, economic, and civil destinies of the region’s citizens are determined by themselves, and not constrained by entrenched, repressive governments.

Before concluding the discussion of this category, it is interesting to note how coverage from British and American newspapers differed when they included geopolitical ramifications within their reporting. Previously, I mentioned that the ‘Arab Spring’ was the second-most (just beyond ‘Implications for U.S. interests’) frequently included geopolitical angle within British newspapers, while being the second-least frequently mentioned angle within American newspapers. I argue that this is reflective of the current global order, in which United States is the sole global superpower, hence leading U.S.-based media to cover distant events through the prism of American interests, while non-U.S. media (in this case British newspapers)

offer a decidedly less American and British-centric interpretation of the geopolitical ramifications of the Egyptian Revolution, as previously indicated by Table 3.1.

Nowhere is this argument more acute than in terms of the appearance of U.S. interests within coverage, which I will turn to next.

IV. U.S. interests

‘Implications for U.S. interests’ was the most frequently mentioned angle within coverage from American newspapers, and the third-most frequently mentioned angle within the British press (despite being, more or less, mentioned just as frequently as ‘Implications for the Middle East’ and the ‘Arab Spring’).

Coverage examining the implications for American interests yielded some of the most detailed analysis published within British and American newspapers.

Generally speaking, this was a broad, catch-all category that included references to a wide variety of subjects such as annual American aid to Egypt (which, according to *The Daily Telegraph* (2011), totaled \$1.5 billion, of which \$1.3 billion went to the Egyptian military), national security (e.g. terrorism), business interests, the flow of oil through the Suez Canal, how the U.S. would deal with the collapse of the Mubarak government and its subsequent replacement, and the U.S.’ relationship with the Egyptian military, to name a few. It is important to mention that this category was not partial to ostensibly negative impacts on U.S. interests, but also mentioned positive ones, in that American national security or regional stability might be enhanced, rather than degraded, by the emergence of a

democratic government in Egypt.

This category, more than anything, speaks to how media outlets from a certain country make sense of politics outside of their own borders, which is particularly salient when discussing American newspapers given Shoemaker et al.'s (1991) assertion that significant social or political events taking place in nations of political and economic significance to the United States are likely to be featured within media coverage.

When discussing the geopolitical ramifications of the protests in Egypt, newspapers from the American newspapers often did so through the prism of American interests. While that is unsurprising, what is noticeable is the considerable depth given to the impact of the protests on American interests in Egypt within the British press. Simon Tisdall, writing in *The Guardian*, expanded on how American financial aid to Egypt undercut the Obama administration's initial position of neither supporting the opposition protesters nor then-President Mubarak. Tisdall further elaborated that the protesters were, by proxy, demonstrating against the American financial assistance that in part enabled the continuation of the Mubarak government, irrespective of the public position of the American political establishment:

Caught off guard by the escalating unrest in Egypt, the Obama administration is desperate to avoid any public appearance of taking sides. But Washington's close ties to President Hosni Mubarak's regime, plus annual financial support worth about \$1.5bn, undermine its claim to neutrality.

While the U.S. favours Egyptian political reform in theory, in practice it props up an authoritarian system for reasons of self-interest. It behaved in much

the same way towards Saddam Hussein. That's why, for many Egyptians, the US is part of the problem.

Obama maintained he had "always" told Mubarak that reform was "absolutely critical". But he also wobbled back in the other direction. "Egypt's been an ally of ours on a lot of critical issues. Mubarak has been very helpful," Obama said. (Tisdall, 2011)

Critically important is the last paragraph where President Obama, despite his assertion that he had previously pressed Mubarak on the necessity of political reform, acknowledged Mubarak's centrality to American national interests, meriting the claim that opposition protesters are not only at odds with Mubarak, but his external financiers, that being the United States:

That's because, in his final analysis, the US needs a friendly government in Cairo more than it needs a democratic one. Washington wants Egypt, the Arab world's most populous and influential country, in its corner. In this sense, Egypt's demonstrators are not just fighting the regime. They are fighting Washington, too. (Tisdall, 2011)

Another article from Tisdall, published in *The Guardian* on February 1st, 2011, further underscores the tension in the United States' public statements in favor of democratisation, and its deep investment in the political status quo in Egypt to ensure the longevity of its myriad interests within the country. Tisdall writes:

Foreign policy veteran Leslie Gelb urged Obama to take a "realist" approach. "Let's stop prancing about and proclaiming our devotion to peace, 'universal rights', and people power," he wrote. The US must act swiftly to protect its political, economic and security interests. Mubarak was the "devil we know". Chief among the devils the US did not know was Egypt's Islamist Muslim Brotherhood. "Baloney and wishful thinking aside, the MB would be calamitous for US security . . . If they gain control, it's going to be almost

impossible for the people to take it back. Just look at Iran,” Gelb argued. (Tisdall, 2011)

The inclusion of Leslie Gelb’s commentary within the article highlights how the revolution in Egypt could impact U.S. interests, be they political, economic, or security. Of particular interest is Gelb’s assertion that the Muslim Brotherhood would be “calamitous” for American security interests, likening a post-Mubarak environment dominated by the longtime Islamist movement to a sort of geopolitical catastrophe on par with the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, which deposed the Shah of Iran and longtime U.S. ally, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Furthermore, Gelb, seemingly acknowledges the disconnect between American principles (“our devotion to peace, ‘universal rights’, and people power”, as he put it) and its policies, cautioning that the Obama administration should quietly work behind the scenes to nudge Mubarak into leaving power so as to not perturb the United States’ relationship with its other allies in the Middle East:

Obama should keep quiet in public while privately trying to persuade Mubarak to begin a gradual transition, culminating in UN-supervised elections in 12 months’ time, he added. Defenestrating Egypt’s wounded pharaoh now would only convince other regional allies that the US could not be trusted. (Tisdall, 2011)

The aforementioned tension between American principles and its policies was put into stark relief within an op-ed in *The New York Times* written by then-Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, becoming something of a primary theme within the reporting featuring American interests. Kerry (also the chairman of the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time the article was published) acknowledged the disconnect between American rhetoric from policy, even citing American-produced tear gas and F-16 fighter jets used by the Egyptian security forces and army to intimidate citizens in the streets:

Given the events of the past week, some are criticizing America's past tolerance of the Egyptian regime. It is true that our public rhetoric did not always match our private concerns. But there also was a pragmatic understanding that our relationship benefited American foreign policy and promoted peace in the region. And make no mistake, a productive relationship with Egypt remains crucial for both us and the Middle East.

To that end, the United States must accompany our rhetoric with real assistance to the Egyptian people. For too long, financing Egypt's military has dominated our alliance. The proof was seen over the weekend: tear gas canisters marked "Made in America" fired at protesters, United States-supplied F-16 fighter jets streaking over central Cairo. Congress and the Obama administration need to consider providing civilian assistance that would generate jobs and improve social conditions in Egypt, as well as guarantee that American military assistance is accomplishing its goals – just as we are trying to do with Pakistan through a five-year nonmilitary assistance package. (Kerry, 2011)

Despite his acknowledgment of the disconnect between principle and policy, Kerry hedged on delivering any sort of direct criticism of Hosni Mubarak and his government, instead offering a tepid recognition of the resentment felt by the Egyptian people towards their leadership, whom he indirectly referred to in the next excerpt as one of America's 'stable allies'.

Altogether, this section reveals the richness in which the United States' geopolitical interests were covered within some of the reporting on the Egyptian Revolution (demonstrated here by reporting from *The Guardian* and *The New York*

Times), highlighting the significant political, economic, and security interests that the United States has in the country. As indicated by the examples included above, there was a stark contradiction between the public statements issued by American officials in support of the protests, and calculated interests in the country in which the erosion of the political status quo in Egypt would be detrimental to American interests.

This dichotomy is best represented by the op-ed from then-Senator John Kerry, in which he pledged to reorient American aid towards enriching the lives of Egyptian citizens rather than the military, and foreign policy veteran Leslie Gelb, who urged a “quiet” transition from Mubarak to a new government so American interests could be preserved while keeping groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood from winning the presidency, an event which he said would prove “calamitous” for the United States. The coverage that featured and explained American interests in Egypt was not about offering a resolution to the contradiction between principle and policy, but about expanding upon the possible global reverberations of the protests before and after Mubarak fell.

Thus, we can see Chang et al.’s (1987) scholarship at play within the media coverage that described American interests. In Chang et al.’s work, the normative deviance of an event (in the case of Egypt: widespread political and social unrest), its relevance to the United States (American political, economic, and security interests in Egypt all described), and potential for social change (calls for Mubarak’s removal) all contributed to the inclusion, and contextualisation of American

interests within coverage of the revolution (p.410).

Finally, the contradictory interests of the United States could be reflected in terms of whether American officials (elected and non-elected) were determined to be supporting the anti-Mubarak opposition, or Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government within coverage. The previous chapter indicated that, on balance, U.S. officials were neutral in terms of whether they supported the opposition protesters, or President Mubarak's government. I argue that conflicting American interests, most notably between the desire to see democratisation within a region dominated by authoritarian governments, and the necessity to ensure the survival of vital geopolitical interests in Egypt, were decisive factors playing into the neutrality of American officials. This dichotomy was not exclusive to the United States. Similarly, the geopolitical interests of the United Kingdom, another dominant player in global politics with historical ties to the Middle East, were examined and will be discussed next.

V. U.K. interests

The geopolitical interests of the United Kingdom were similar to American interests, referring to British security, economic, and political interests in Egypt. Given that over half of my research sample was comprised of coverage from British newspapers, I wanted to see if the geopolitical interests of the United Kingdom factored into news coverage as well. Thus, if implications for British interests were reflected within coverage, how were they contextualised and presented within the

reporting, and if they were not, then what does their absence suggest in terms of how these publications make sense of political protest outside of their own borders?

To begin, of the 479 total mentions of geopolitical considerations included within British newspapers, only 66 (14 percent) spoke to implications for British interests. Those numbers were even lower for the results from American newspapers, where only 7 (2 percent) of the 352 geopolitical considerations mentioned included a reference to British interests. This result should not come as a complete surprise, considering the United Kingdom's relationship with Egypt is overshadowed by Egyptian-American relations, which is best exemplified by American financial support for the Egyptian military.

That said, the United Kingdom still has substantial political interests in Egypt, with the country's public sector information website noting a "long history of strong shared interests with Egypt" (Gov.uk.). That "long history" referred to also includes the United Kingdom's colonial legacy, which lasted until the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 removed the monarchy from power, and simultaneously ended the British occupation of Egypt. In contemporary times, British interests in Egypt include developing economic and political links between the British and Egyptian governments, the flow of energy through the Suez Canal, and national security interests such as counter-terrorism, all of which are issues that the United Kingdom shares with the United States.

Furthermore, since the United States is the sole global superpower whose interests in the Middle East (and thereby Egypt) are more or less in sync with that of

the United Kingdom's given the close relationship between the two countries in international affairs, it is not all that surprising that American geopolitical considerations within British newspapers were featured more prominently than those of the United Kingdom. The dearth of British geopolitical interests included within coverage means that I will not be devoting much space to them by way of examples and analysis. However, as an example of British interests included within coverage, Simon Jenkins, a prominent conservative commentator writing for the left-wing *Guardian* newspaper, reacts to a statement from the Foreign Office, which speaks to the political ties the United Kingdom has with Egypt:

Britain, with a history of ineptitude in handling Egypt, offered its pennyworth at the weekend. The Foreign Office said: "We don't want to see Egypt fall into the hands of extremists . . . We want an orderly transition to free and fair elections, and greater freedom and democracy in Egypt."

Who cares what Britain "wants" in Egypt? Egypt is not Britain's responsibility any more, insofar as it ever was. (Jenkins, 2011)

Jenkins advocates a non-interventionist approach to how the United Kingdom should respond to the protests, in that United Kingdom should not interfere to ensure Mubarak stays, or is forced from power. Further to that, the above quote Jenkins included from the Foreign Office more or less mirrors what American Secretary of State John Kerry said when he suggested that "the best way for our stable allies to survive is to respond to the genuine political, legal, and economic needs of their people". Crucially, it also demonstrates the lack of contrast between British and American interests in how they were presented within

reporting on the protests. Continuing on the non-interventionist thread, Jenkins asserts that:

Egypt, Tunisia, Iran and Pakistan are all Muslim states wrestling with agonies of self-determination. The west's sole contribution has been to plunge two of their neighbours, Iraq and Afghanistan, into a bloodbath of insecurity and chaos. This is not our continent, these are not our countries and none of this is our business. We should leave them alone. (Jenkins, 2011)

Jenkins' commentary, outspoken in its advocacy for Western nations (particularly the United Kingdom) to stay out of Egypt's internal affairs, stems from the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the United States and United Kingdom (again, US and UK interests and foreign policies are presented as interlinked), and, in his estimation, the disaster that ensued. The geopolitical angle underpinning his reporting is that the United Kingdom's interest is to not interfere in the internal affairs of Muslim countries (Egypt, in this case), which will leave Egypt and the region in better shape than they would be if Western nations attempted to manage Egypt's political upheaval with the leverage they have.

The reporting by Jenkins here represents some of the more substantive analysis on the geopolitical implications for the United Kingdom, as they remained in the shadow within coverage due to the linkages with American geopolitical interests (as demonstrated by the dominance of U.S. interests within both samples). Shifting from the implications for Western nations, I will now discuss how the implications for Israel were covered, considering its status as the main Western partner in the Middle East.

VI. Israeli interests

Similar to those of the United States and United Kingdom, Israeli interests (as represented within coverage of the revolution) mainly focused on how the protests unfolding in Egypt would impact the national security of the country. Most notable of these geopolitical interests is the Camp David Accords of 1978, an agreement signed by Israel and Egypt which normalised relations (at least on the official level) between the two countries, and how the revolution may affect the continuity of this agreement between the two countries.

While implications for Israel were not especially prominent within the British or American press (see Table 3.1), their inclusion (similar to the 'U.S. Interests' response variable) yielded some of the more detailed, analytical reporting on the revolution. Despite the security interests of Israel being the prevailing theme within this section, they were not covered from an exclusively alarmist, nor supportive angle, with the reporting seemingly indicating that Israel would be taking a "wait and see" approach.

An article from Isabel Kershner in *The New York Times* published on February 14th, 2011, touches on the hedged reaction from not only Israeli political officials (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu), but from the Israeli media as well. Kershner quotes Ben Caspit, a prominent Israeli journalist, who spoke in highly reverential terms of the Egyptian protesters in their struggle against the Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government:

As Israelis began to adjust to the departure of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, their staunchest and longest-standing regional ally, the alarm and anxiety that Israel has been projecting seemed to give way on Sunday to more nuanced tones, as well as some hints of admiration for the Egyptian people and sympathy for their cause.

“It is difficult not to be awed by the new spirit, the hope and optimism that gushed forth out of Egypt,” wrote Ben Caspit, a prominent Israeli commentator, in the newspaper Maariv on Sunday. “By the courage of the masses. By the wisdom of the army, by the fight that Mubarak gave (many would have broken before he did). By the comparatively dignified way in which the Egyptian people swept out one of its greatest heroes, who became one of the strongest and most-hated rules in the modern history of this ancient people.” (Kershner, 2011)

Within the same article, Kershner quotes Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who, while not indicating his support or disapproval of the events in Egypt, nonetheless praised the Egyptian military’s commitment to honor the Camp David Accords:

Speaking at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting, Mr. Netanyahu went on to say that the Israeli government welcomed the statement of the Egyptian military that Egypt would continue to honor the peace treaty with Israel. Israel, he said, sees the 1979 peace treaty as “the cornerstone of peace and stability, not only between the two countries, but in the entire Middle East as well.” (Kershner, 2011)

Michael Oren, then Israeli ambassador to the United States, also concentrated on the implications of the protests for the Camp David Accords within an op-ed for *The New York Times* on February 20th, 2011:

For that reason, Israelis appreciated the Egyptian military’s statement affirming its commitment to the Camp David treaty. We were encouraged by the sight of demonstrators focused largely on reforming Egypt rather than on resuming hostilities with Israel. (Oren, 2011)

Oren's (and previously Netanyahu's) focus on the Camp David Accords indicates that the focus of Israeli attention (at least on the official level) seemed to be directed towards how the protests that unseated Hosni Mubarak might impact the treaty between the two countries. Despite the Egyptian military's pledge to uphold the accords, Oren wrote of what he perceived as the danger to the accords from not only the Muslim Brotherhood, but some of the uprising's youth-oriented groups, such as the Kayafa group, the April 6th Youth Movement, and even Egyptian politician (and former 2005 presidential candidate) Ayman Nour:

But we would be irresponsible to ignore the Muslim Brotherhood, which, although a minority party in Egypt, is the best-organized and best-financed group. "Resistance is the only solution against the Zio-American arrogance and tyranny," the Brotherhood's supreme guide recently sermonized, pledging to raise "a jihadi generation that pursues death just as its enemies pursues life."

And the threat to peace comes not only from religious extremists but also from some of the revolution's secular voices. The Kafaya democratic movement, for example, once circulated a petition to nullify the peace treaty. A spokesman for the April 6th Youth Movement recently demanded the halting of Egyptian natural gas shipments to Israel, which would cut off over 40 percent of our supply. And last week the reformist leader Ayman Nour declared that "the era of Camp David is over." (Oren, 2011)

The general thrust of Oren's piece is that no matter what the outcome of the post-Mubarak power struggle is in Egypt, whoever takes power will be less than amenable towards Israel, whether it be the Muslim Brotherhood, or a government influenced by one of the youth-driven, more secular opposition groups.

Similar to Michael Oren's op-ed, reporting from Laurie Goodstein expressed varying degrees of optimism and skepticism in terms of how the revolution would

affect the security of Israel. Though her reporting did not exclusively deal with what the revolution in Egypt portended for Israel (as it also touched on regional implications, and implications for U.S. interests), it nonetheless focused on the reactions from the Jewish community in the United States. As sort of a post-mortem analysis of the end of the Mubarak era in Egypt, Goodstein quotes Rabbi Steve Gutow of the U.S.-based Jewish Council for Public Affairs, who commented that:

“Certainly there are things to worry about,” Rabbi Gutow said, “but this has to be a moment to be supported and celebrated and looked at with a sense of awe.” But he, like other leaders, said he was watching warily to see who takes power in Egypt, whether the new government respects human rights, how it relates to the United States and whether it will preserve the longstanding peace treaty with Israel. (Goodstein, 2011)

Goodstein further emphasised the importance of the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, and the American Jewish communities’ guarded optimism that it would remain a fixture in a post-Mubarak Egypt:

American Jewish leaders welcomed reassurances by Egypt’s military on Sunday that the country intends to honor the treaty with Israel. Egypt has maintained what many policy makers called a “cold peace” with Israel since the treaty was signed in 1979 – a relationship that was not overly friendly, but at least allowed the two countries to avoid open aggression.

“We are very much in wait-and-see mode,” said Nathan J. Diament, director of public policy for the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. “It’s encouraging, but it’s hard to assess what the value of that statement is, not knowing who’s saying it and what their authority is.” (Goodstein, 2011)

Overall, while implications for Israeli interests did not rank near the top of the most frequently mentioned geopolitical ramifications within either sample, they

did, nonetheless, yield some of the more substantive analysis in terms of how the Egyptian Revolution might impact Israel. Indeed, as demonstrated within this section, the aforementioned Camp David Accords and how the revolution would impact them provided an opportunity for the journalists covering the protests and their aftermath to further contextualise the events through the prism of Israeli national security for their readership. Since the Camp David Accords are commonly referred to as lynchpin of stability in the Middle East, the discussion of how they may, or may not be impacted within this section serves as a useful transition to a broader discussion of how Egyptian Revolution would impact the rest of the Middle East, and greater Arab world.

VII. Regional implications

Lastly, as demonstrated by Table 3.1, one of the most significant geopolitical angles included within the reporting from British and American newspapers examined the broader implications of the Egyptian Revolution for the Middle East. This angle within the reporting sought to encompass the possible fallout from the removal of the Mubarak government in either positive or negative terms for the Middle East, and greater Arab world. For instance, the implications included within the reporting could describe a decreased ability for countries in the region to secure their borders in the absence of a strong, centralised government if they fall in the wake of the Egyptian protests, the possible rise of Islamist governments, increased terrorism, or the evolving political, social, and economic dynamics within certain

nations as a result of the Egyptian Revolution.

Of the 479 total mentions of geopolitical ramifications within British newspapers, 124 (26 percent) of them spoke to implications for the wider Middle East and Arab world, just barely outpacing the 'Arab Spring' (24 percent) and U.S. interests (23.5 percent) as the most frequently mentioned geopolitical angle within the reporting. Within the American press, the implications of the protests for the Middle East was the second most frequently included geopolitical angle, as it accounted for 85 (24 percent) of the 352 geopolitical angles included.

Comparatively speaking, implications for the Middle East were included roughly the same amount within either sample, indicating that while it was one of the more prominent geopolitical angles included within coverage, its presence within British and American newspapers was not altogether dominant.

While the regional implications featured within coverage addressed the impact of the protests across the Middle East in general terms, some of the coverage went deeper with its analysis and focused on specific nations in particular. One of these nations in particular was Iran, who experienced its own protest movement in the wake of the 2009 presidential election. The response of Iranian governmental authorities indicated a contradictory tone when they publicly congratulated the Egyptian protesters for their success, yet warned of an authoritarian, extremely threatening response to the proposed solidarity marches with the Egyptian people for their success. As reported in *The New York Times*:

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps was blunt.

“The conspirators are nothing but corpses,” Hossein Hamadani, a top commander of the corps, said Wednesday in comments published by the official IRNA news agency. “Any incitement will be dealt with severely.”

The opposition also hopes to capitalize on the contradiction between Iran’s embrace of democracy movements abroad — Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi referred Friday to “the brave and justice-seeking movement in Egypt” — and its crackdown on a kindred movement at home. (Yong, 2011)

The juxtaposition between the salutary sentiments offered by then Iranian foreign minister Salehi, and the threat to the lives of Iranians participating in any potential protests emanating from the Revolutionary Guards Corps was then thrown into sharp relief by opposition politician (and former 2009 presidential candidate)

Mehdi Karroubi:

“If they are not going to allow their own people to protest, it goes against everything they are saying, and all they are doing to welcome the protests in Egypt is fake,” another opposition leader, Mehdi Karroubi, said in an interview last week. (Yong, 2011)

What the tension between the position of the hardline elements of the Iranian government in Iran (as embodied by the Revolutionary Guards), and that of the reformists (as embodied by Karroubi) underline is the knock-on effect of the Egyptian Revolution on other countries in the broader Middle East that have experienced their own episodes of political and social tumult in recent years. Since Iran had its own protest movement during June 2009 against the results of the country’s presidential election, the regional implications of the Egyptian Revolution within this piece was that the political fault lines within Iran could possibly be

reopened in the wake of Hosni Mubarak's resignation from office. It is also important to note that given the article's mentioning of the protests in Egypt as the latest catalyst for protests in Iran, I would have also found the above article as falling into the 'Egyptian Revolution as part of the Arab Spring' category as well.

Reporting from *The Washington Post* also seized on this dynamic, in which the Iranian government's reaction to the protests in Egypt was again contextualised as highly contradictory in nature:

Abbas Abdi, an analyst critical of the government, said Iran's support for Egyptian and Tunisian protesters could boomerang.

"They do not realize that by supporting the North African demonstrations, they are also supporting protests in general," said Abdi, who was among the revolutionaries who helped topple the Shah in 1979. "In the future it will make any clampdown on protests by Iranian people a lot harder." (Erdbrink, 2011)

What emerges from this excerpt is how Iran's government, as another authoritarian system in the region, is attempting to strike a balance between supporting popular protests in other countries while trying to keep any public manifestations of political dissent from emerging within their own borders. This balancing act is best highlighted by the aforementioned reporting in *The New York Times*, where a Revolutionary Guard Corps commander referred to Iranians demonstrating in solidarity with the Egyptian protesters as "nothing but corpses", while the country's foreign minister characterised the protests as "the brave and justice-seeking movement in Egypt."

Continuing on the theme of the regional political fallout, *The Guardian* spoke

of the potential resurgence of pan-Arabism, which can be roughly defined as a movement aimed to unify Arab countries from the Atlantic Ocean to Persian Gulf as a means to promote increased ties between countries in the region, and to form a bulwark against interference from outside nations:

However this drama plays out, something quite profound is changing in the Arab world. So often written off, or thought to have been subsumed by Islamism, pan-Arabism is finding voice once again in the shape of this secular protest against dictatorship. A demonstration taking place in Jordan was cut short only by the collective wish of Jordanians to watch al-Jazeera's live coverage of the progress of this potent political force on the streets of Cairo. (The Guardian, 2011)

Since the political fallout of the Egyptian revolution is seen by *The Guardian* in this article as possibly birthing a new era of pan-Arabism, it is yet again important to note that this pan-Arabism is emanating from North African roots, and thus would have been designated as speaking to the 'Arab Spring' angle of the Egyptian protest movement as well.¹⁰

Lastly, as an example of how the protests could spawn a regional catastrophe according to the American political establishment, Greg Miller of *The Washington Post* reported that:

¹⁰ This is a point worth mentioning, as it demonstrates how I distinguished between response categories irrespective of their similarities. For example, since the above excerpt mentions a protest in Jordan (stemming from the uprisings in North Africa which the Jordanian protesters paused their protest to watch coverage of) *and* the possible resurgence of pan-Arabism across North Africa and the Middle East, this article would have been designated as including both the 'Arab Spring' and 'Implications for the Middle East' geopolitical angles. Crucially, this excerpt also demonstrates how I unpacked the geopolitical ramifications of the uprising, even if, upon first glance, they seemed straightforward.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), chairman of the Intelligence Committee, said after the hearing that the intelligence community's performance had been "lacking" despite the stakes surrounding a protest that threatens to **"create a major maelstrom in the Middle East."**¹¹ (Miller, 2011)

In summation, the regional implications category spoke to the myriad ramifications that the protests in Egypt may have across the Middle East, and greater Arab world. Whether it was highlighting the disconnect between the Iranian government's support for the protests and how it would complicate their suppression of dissent at home, thereby strengthening Iranian civil society, the resurgence of pan-Arabism, or the potential for region-wide chaos as indicated from U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, coverage expanding on the regional implications of the protests indicated that no matter the result, the Middle East would not be the same once the dust from the revolution settled.

VIII. Conclusion

The discussion within this chapter – how news media makes sense of political protests abroad – demonstrated how the geopolitical ramifications coded for within this research appeared in coverage of the Egyptian Revolution. Indeed, the quantitative findings indicated that particular attention was dedicated to the implications for U.S. interests within the American newspapers, and regional implications (and to a slightly lesser extent, the 'Arab Spring' and U.S. interests) of the protests within the British press. While the inclusion of geopolitics cannot be

¹¹ Bold added by author in order to help clarify the response category.

argued as instrumental to the legitimation of the protesters, it does open the floor for the discussion of how news media makes sense of, and explains political developments in foreign nations to their readership.

Referring back to Clausen's (2003) discussion of 'domestication', we can see how, as a professional obligation in the reporting of international news, coverage of the Egyptian Revolution provided "information and commentary about international affairs" by mediating "information to the public of the country from which they report" (p.24). To expand on that point, British newspapers domesticated the protests through providing information about a significant event by focusing on the regional implications of the protests in Egypt (and to a slightly lesser extent through the 'Arab Spring' and U.S. interests), while American newspapers were more inclined to do so through the prism of their country's national interests.

In this respect, British newspapers presented a more nuanced analysis on the possible impact that the protests would have beyond the borders of Egypt, with regional implications (25.8%), the 'Arab Spring' (24.4%), and implications for U.S. interests (23.5%) receiving close to the same number of mentions. Unsurprisingly, implications for U.S. interests were dominant within the American press, accounting for 39.4 percent of all geopolitical ramifications, which was far greater than that of 'Implications for the Middle East' at 24.1 percent.

While the previous two empirical chapters unpacked the reportorial complexity of how British and American newspapers legitimated the anti-Mubarak

opposition protesters, this chapter speaks to Cottle's (2006) assessment that examining geopolitics (amongst other repertoires of protest coverage) puts into context how "politics, cultural symbolism, and strategy can all play a part in shaping" (p.40) the way news media report on protest. Thus, the inclusion of, and expansion on contextualising the Egyptian Revolution as part of the 'Arab Spring', its potentially positive *and* negative implications for American, British, and Israeli interests, and its potential impact on the Middle East "illuminate what is at stake as well as some of the complexities shaping mediatised conflicts" (p.52).

This chapter does not propose that the prominence of geopolitical ramifications within the reporting in British and American newspapers on the Egyptian Revolution impacted the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition in any meaningful way. Nonetheless, I argue that geopolitics is a decisive factor in terms of how news media make sense of political events abroad, which is corroborated by the results and examples presented within this chapter. As noted by Myers et al. (1996), the "linkages between the press and geopolitical discourse have scarcely been examined" (p.23), and what I have demonstrated within this chapter is that the journalists covering the Egyptian Revolution explained the events to their audiences by contextualising how the protests would reverberate beyond Egypt's borders.

Therefore, by focusing on the geopolitical implications of protests within media coverage, the protest in question ceases to be a strictly local or national event, and takes on a 'transnational' dimension, which, going back to Cottle and

Lester (2011), essentially alters how protest is mediated and disseminated to news audiences the world over (p.2). This concludes the discussion of my empirical findings, which has covered topics ranging from the portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition, dominant sourcing patterns, and the mediation of geopolitics within the coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. I will next summarise the main findings of this dissertation, arguing that they offer a significant contribution to the existing academic literature examining news media coverage of political protest.

Conclusion: Summary of the research and its scholarly contribution

I. Introduction

The final chapter of this dissertation will summarise the main findings and significance of each empirical chapter, and explain how this research project represents a departure from the previous literature exploring news media coverage of political protest. Overall, beyond determining the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters within British and American print news coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, this research also sought to unpack how news media in these two dominant Western nations made sense of a distant political event occurring within a nation of vital geopolitical importance to them. With that said, I will begin by first discussing how the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition within news coverage of the revolution offers a striking divergence from the existing academic literature examining news media coverage of political protest.

II. Legitimising dissent

Chapter Six looked at the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters within British and American newspaper coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, and compared the results of this study against the previous academic scholarship exploring news media coverage of political protest. As stated within the actual chapter, the anti-Mubarak opposition was depicted in an overwhelmingly positive manner within 66 percent of British newspaper articles, and 66 percent of

articles from the American press. Thus, the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were accorded with the status of political legitimacy within news coverage of the revolution in Egypt. More specifically, the results presented within this chapter diverges from the literature mentioned within Chapter Four, which suggested an antagonistic stance on the part of news outlets and journalists towards political dissent within the coverage of protest (Halloran et al. 1970, Gitlin 1980, Hallin 1986, Shoemaker 1984, McLeod 1995, McLeod and Detenber 1999, Boyle et al. 2004, Boyle et al. 2005, Boykoff 2006, Jha 2007).

The representation of Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian Government was overwhelmingly unfavourable, as one or both elements of Egypt's then ruling political establishment were portrayed as repressive. Further to that point, Egyptian police and security services were portrayed as repressive as well when they were included within coverage. Since Mubarak, the Egyptian government, and the Egyptian police were cast in an overwhelming negative fashion, the press did not follow the normative conventions of protest coverage and deny the anti-Mubarak opposition "the status of being legitimate political players" as Shoemaker (1984) once stated about the press' coverage of protest (p.66). Rather, the coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution cast Mubarak and the Egyptian police as not only repressive, but responsible for the violence in the streets of Egypt and thereby denied them political legitimacy, which speaks to previous research from Gamson (1995) and Wolfsfeld (1997) that outlined how political dissent can be legitimated within media coverage.

Additionally, to reiterate a point made within the conclusion of Chapter Six, the positive representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition indicates that the British and American newspapers examined within this project functioned closest to the Habermasian conceptualisation of the public sphere. I would argue that this conclusion can be drawn due to the fact that the print publications examined within this research project overwhelmingly favoured the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters, and challenged political elites in the context of the negative portrayals of Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian police and security services. Thus, there was a consensus view presented within coverage of who was right, or legitimate, (the anti-Mubarak opposition), and who was wrong, or illegitimate (Mubarak, police and security forces). This result, by extension, indicates the inapplicability of Mouffe's *agonistic public sphere* to contextualise the performance of British and American newspapers in reporting the 2011 revolution in Egypt.

What I am able to conclude given these results is that this research demonstrates a clear case in which the normative paradigms by which news media have previously covered political protest (Gitlin 1980, McLeod and Detenber 1999) obviously did not apply. Instead, the results presented within Chapter Six lend credence to Salaita's (2012) work, which found that the anti-government protesters during the 2011 uprisings across the Arab world were accorded with favourable coverage within prominent American newspapers, contradicting longstanding Orientalist assumptions about the nature and political aspirations of Arabs and Muslims more generally (Said 1978, 1997) within the Western press. This

subsequently begs the question of exactly how the anti-Mubarak opposition was constructed as a legitimate political opposition movement within news media coverage, which Chapter Seven sought to answer.

III. Constructing the story

Chapter Seven revealed that the anti-Mubarak opposition were most frequently cited or quoted as the first source within the reporting from both British and American newspapers. Therefore, I argued within that chapter that the anti-Mubarak opposition acted as a “primary definer” (Hall 1999) within news coverage of the revolution, granting them a certain level of power to influence the framing the protests in a manner that promoted a particular interpretation (Entman 2007) of the Egyptian Revolution. This finding supports scholarship from Kunelius and Renvall (2010), in which the ascendancy of citizens to the status of ‘primary definers’ within news coverage was also highlighted.

As my research revealed, the anti-Mubarak opposition was determined to be the first source quoted or mentioned within 25 percent of British newspaper articles, and 20 percent of articles within the American press. I argued that the dominance of the anti-Mubarak opposition as a source within coverage of the revolution indicates that British and American newspapers fulfilled their role as the “preeminent institution of the public” (Habermas 1989, p.181) by serving as a ‘transnational public sphere’ (Fraser 2007) where Egyptian citizens could articulate their political aspirations and grievances to the global public. Furthermore, to

reiterate several points made within the conclusion of Chapter Seven, the dominance of the anti-government protesters as a news source reveals that the journalists covering the revolution did not neglect dissident voices or index their coverage to the perspective of the politically powerful, which diverges from previous research (Tuchman 1978, Bennett 1990, McCarthy et al. 1996, McLeod and Detenber 1999). On the subject of incorporating voices from new or social media in their reporting, coverage from British and American newspapers indicated that these new communication platforms did not figure prominently within the reporting from either country, perhaps due to the unreliability of the information emanating from these networks during political crises (Ansari 2012).

Furthermore, reporting from the British and American press cited political motivations as the dominant factors galvanising the uprising, which they did within 73 (British) and 89 percent (American) of their coverage. This point is crucial, as it indicates that the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were not some aimless movement, but guided by political grievances that were then articulated within the reporting. Moreover, as I previously commented within Chapter Seven, the dominance of political considerations as the central motivating factors behind the protests belie van Dijk's assessment that journalists fail to take into account 'universally-desirable' concepts such as freedom and democracy when discussed in the context of Western client-states (van Dijk 1995, p.27), which is an especially relevant point given Egypt's relationship with the United States and United Kingdom (which was detailed within Chapter Eight's discussion of geopolitics).

Chapter Seven also indicated that the presence of U.S. officials was a means by which British and American print news outlets fulfilled the professional standard of 'objectivity'. Indeed, since American officials were found to be neutral in terms of their stance towards the protests, their presence within coverage was seemingly that of a non-Egyptian balancer. The inclusion of U.S. officials lent authenticity to the coverage in that they served as a second source of opinion, which speaks to the underlying principle behind objectivity's status as a professional norm in the practice of journalism that mimics the scientific method as the "best or truest path to knowledge" (Schudson 1978, p.7).

The mostly neutral position of U.S. officials towards the anti-Mubarak opposition, and apparent discord within the Obama Administration as it was reported within coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution supports scholarship from Hallin (1986), Livingston (1997), and Robinson (2000), who underlined the influence of media coverage as a policy accelerant in the context of elite disunity. Indeed, the lack of consensus described within Chapter Seven may have contributed to the positive portrayal of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters by providing journalists with greater reportorial agency to diverge from the normative paradigms of reporting dissent. What this says is that while my results demonstrate a divergence from previous scholarship examining media coverage of political protest, they also indicate the applicability of other scholarship. Altogether, these potentially contentious results indicate the complexity of unpacking news media coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

Lastly, this chapter segues into the second overall theme covered within the empirical section of my dissertation, that being how news media makes sense of politics outside of their own national borders. Chapter Eight continued the discussion of how news media makes sense of politics abroad, examining the role of geopolitical ramifications within the reporting on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

IV. Geopolitics

Chapter Eight's focus on the geopolitical ramifications within coverage of the revolution expands upon the idea of how the news media make sense of politics outside of their own national borders. This was accomplished through a discussion of the presence, and context in which the geopolitical ramifications of the protests appeared within the reporting. As previously stated, the presence of geopolitical ramifications were not a decisive influence on the legitimization of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters within news coverage. What has been demonstrated within Chapter Eight, however, was that the presence of geopolitical ramifications within coverage indicates how journalists explain political events in distant nations to their readership.

To that end, I argued that the presence of geopolitical ramifications is a way for journalists to 'domesticate' international news for national audiences, where they "provide information and commentary about international affairs" by mediating "information to the public of the country from which they report" (Clausen 2004, p.24). Drawing from Clausen, I determined that British newspapers

explained ('domesticated') the revolution through the prism of the regional implications of the protests against Hosni Mubarak, while perhaps unsurprisingly, American coverage focused on the implications for U.S. interests. Altogether, examining geopolitics explains how "politics, cultural symbolism, and strategy can all play a part in shaping" (Cottle 2006, p.140) the way media report on political protest taking place outside of their own political, cultural, and physical contexts.

Given that geopolitical ramifications were included within 76 percent of all articles within American coverage of the revolution, and within 60 percent of all articles from British newspapers, the coverage of the protests took on a 'transnational dimension' (Cottle and Lester 2006, p.2). Thus, by focusing on the 'transnational dimensions' within the reporting, it alters how protest (in this case, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution) is mediated and disseminated to global audiences (p.2). I will next discuss how this dissertation is a valuable and timely contribution to the field of journalism studies.

V. Scholarly contribution to the field of journalism studies

Much of the previous scholarship examining how news media coverage makes sense out of protest has devoted attention to the ways in which protest is denigrated and characterised as an aberrant, un-democratic form of political participation on the behalf of citizens (Halloran et al 1970, Gitlin 1980, Hallin 1986, Shoemaker 1984, McLeod 1995, McLeod and Detenber 1999). These studies are invaluable, as they allow the researcher to understand the contours of how and why

news media have previously delegitimised political protest. Whether it was Gitlin (1980) and Hallin (1986) drawing attention towards the fact that protesters would be delegitimised if they challenged state policy (e.g. the Vietnam War), or McLeod (1995) and Halloran et al. (1970) demonstrating how media focused on the potential of violence arising during protests, the negative, dismissive portrayal of protests and protesters seemed to dominate scholarly examinations of what is arguably the most visible, visceral, and impassioned form of citizen commentary on politics.

On the contrary, what my research reveals is that the opposite is unequivocally true in the case of the reporting on the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. The majority of British and American newspaper coverage of the Egyptian Revolution made the voice and concerns of Egyptian citizens paramount within their coverage.

Thus, the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters were covered in a decisively positive fashion within newspaper coverage of the Egyptian Revolution from such dominant, influential Western nations such as the United States and United Kingdom. This is all the more striking given the geopolitical relationship between those two countries and Egypt, and that the protesters' demand for the removal of Hosni Mubarak ostensibly posed a threat to the continuation of British and American interests (be they economic, political, national security) in Egypt. The focus on the myriad grievances galvanising the uprising (most notably those that were political), and the dominance of the anti-Mubarak opposition protesters as a dominant source of information within either country's print press makes a strong

case for the newspapers examined within this research fulfilling their role as the “preeminent institution of the public” (Habermas 1989, p.181).

Therefore, this project compels us not to look at the relationship between news media and political protest as inherently antagonistic. Indeed, scholarship from DeLuca and Peeples (2002) and Cammaerts (2007) demonstrates how protesters sought to control the political content of their messages by *becoming* the news story, thereby guaranteeing them at least some amount of agency within coverage. The research presented within this dissertation, while not focusing on protest tactics, shows how news media did not take a “guard dog” stance (McLeod and Detenber 1999, p.4) towards a political opposition movement, and instead interrogated the logic, policies, and behavior of those in power (e.g. Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian government) while simultaneously seeking out and privileging the voice of Egyptian citizens protesting against the governing elite of Egypt.

In this sense, the lasting value of this research is that we are provided with a clear case in which political protest in the form of a mass, diverse opposition movement was legitimised within mainstream news coverage. The attention devoted towards unpacking the positive representation of the protesters is vitally important, but what is also especially significant and timely about this research is the discussion of the role of geopolitics within news media coverage.

With respect to the geopolitical ramifications included within the reporting on the Egyptian Revolution, Myers et al. (1996) previously noted that the “linkages between the press and geopolitical discourse have scarcely been examined” (p.23).

Within this research, considerable detail and analysis was devoted towards how and why the international implications of the revolution was a prominent aspect of the reporting, corroborating Shoemaker et al.'s (1991) research which posited that nations with significant political and economic ties to the reporting country will be featured within news coverage. Therefore, the international implications of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution were a dominant means by which the story of the protests was communicated to news audiences without being a key determinant in the legitimization of the protesters within news coverage. The final section of this dissertation will offer some recommendations for future research that were not explored within my own project.

VI. Suggestions for future studies and limitations of the research

While the revolution that unseated longtime Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in Egypt is now over three years old at the time of writing, the historical significance of that event, its status as part of what was then popularly dubbed the 'Arab Spring', and the lasting regional and extra-regional implications of that historical event will need to be critically analysed further in the years to come. With that stated, the last section of my conclusion shall recommend topics for future research not addressed within this dissertation. While the purpose of this study was not how Arab media covered the uprisings, but to see how and why news media from dominant Western countries such as the United Kingdom and United States covered political protest in distant nations, I believe it would be useful to examine

news media coverage of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution through other cross-national contexts.

To begin, I would recommend a much broader content analysis examining the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition movement within coverage from daily newspapers in the Middle East, such as *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia), the *Kuwait Times* (Kuwait), *Gulf News* (United Arab Emirates), *The Jordan Times* (Jordan), and the *Gulf Times* (Qatar). What could be determined from such a study is if newspapers from western Asian Arab nations covered the Egyptian Revolution favourably or unfavourably, and what other factors within the reporting (e.g. official sources, reasons for protesting) impacted the positive or negative portrayal.

Similarities and differences in the coverage emanating from those newspapers could then be contrasted with the results presented within this dissertation. Furthermore, this would allow future researchers to be able to examine how newspaper coverage from dominant Western nations (such as the U.K. and U.S.) compared to coverage from western Asian Arab nations. Such a study would also be ripe for further examining the prevalence, and role of geopolitical ramifications within the reporting of political dissent in other nations, given an event with the social and political significance of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution occurring in their region of the world.

Further to that, another recommendation for comparative research that might yield a rich set of data to evaluate would be to position the results of this study against a content analysis of daily newspapers from Israel, such as *The*

Jerusalem Post and *Haaretz*. Going back to the theme of geopolitics, it would be fascinating to see whether Israeli newspapers covered the Egyptian Revolution favourably, given the concern expressed by Israeli politicians within the some of the reporting I analysed in my own research about the commitment of a post-Mubarak Egypt to maintaining the Camp David Accords with Israel.

Lastly, as a final recommendation for interesting and timely comparative research, I would suggest pitting the results presented herein against a study examining the representation of the protests that contributed to the removal of Egypt's first democratically-elected president in the nation's history, Mohammed Morsi. Such a study would evaluate the representation of the 2013 protests that led to Mohammed Morsi's removal from power by the Egyptian Army within the same print publications examined in this research project.

A significant limitation of my own research is that I lack the ability to read, write, and speak in Arabic, and therefore could not perform comparative research examining the representation of the anti-Mubarak opposition within Western, English-language newspapers (or broadcast news outlets, for that matter) and Arabic-language newspapers based within the Middle East. Such research should most certainly be pursued within any future scholarly examinations of media coverage of the Arab Uprisings, whether specifically focusing on the protests in Egypt, or indeed other countries as well (e.g. Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Syria).

Finally, returning to the use of social media and other ICTs as sources within the coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, I would think it useful and pertinent to

conduct in-depth interviews with journalists from the British and American publications examined within this research project to better understand the topic. Considering the insignificance of social media's presence and use as a news source within the British and American newspapers examined in this study, in-depth interviews with journalists from these publications would allow media scholars to better understand the attitude of journalists with respect to how and why they incorporate information and voices emanating from social media into their reporting, or why they dismiss it as unreliable due to questions surrounding the accuracy of information emanating from these networks (Ansari 2012). Though the fact that I did not do this within my own research is yet another limitation of this project, I remain hopeful that future scholars will rectify the paucity of literature examining under what circumstances journalists do, or do not employ social media as a news source within their reporting, particularly within the context of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, or the Arab Uprisings more generally.

It goes without saying that news media coverage of the 2011 Arab Uprisings have offered numerous points of entry for burgeoning, and established scholars alike to examine how these events were contextualised within the reporting on these incredibly significant and historical political movements. It was my hope from the outset of this research that I have fulfilled a gap in the scholarship on this particular topic by carefully analysing how and why the protesters themselves (in this case, Egypt) were accorded with such favourable media coverage. However limited or imperfect this project may be in certain aspects, I hope that it will

nonetheless encourage future scholars in journalism studies to explore how news media makes sense of political events taking place in distant nations. After all, it is through such coverage that citizens interpret, and form opinions about the world around them.

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APPENDIX 1 – CODING SHEET

CODING SHEET for U.K./U.S. Newspapers

Date	
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PUBLICATION

The New York Times	
Washington Post	
USA Today	
The Guardian	
The Observer	
The Independent	
The Independent on Sunday	
The Daily Telegraph	
The Sunday Telegraph	
The Times	
The Sunday Times	

BYLINE

Byline	
Name not provided	

WRITTEN BY

Journalist	
Egyptian Citizen	
Non-Egyptian Citizen	
Other	

Journalist: Story filed by a journalist from one of the print publications selected for examination

Egyptian Citizen: The story was written by an Egyptian providing their opinion on the events in Egypt

Arab Citizen: The story was written by a citizen from a nation within the Middle East or North Africa providing their opinion on the events in Egypt

STORY FILED FROM WHERE?

Egypt	
If yes, what city?	
U.S.	
If yes, what city?	
Another country	
If yes, what city?	
Location not indicated/Not clear	

SECTION

Front Page		News/Home		Letters, Letter to the Editor		Opinion, Editorial, Comment, or Debate	
International		Financial/Business		Feature			
Review		Media/I.T.		Travel		Culture	
Other							

LENGTH OF STORY

Number of words	
------------------------	--

SOURCE(S) QUOTED, CITED WITHIN ARTICLE (Mark as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.. for every new paragraph quoting or citing an individual, group)

Barack Obama		Egyptian Police, Security Forces		Egyptian Academic	
David Cameron		Mohamed ElBaradei		Non-Egyptian Academic	
Hillary Clinton		Anti-Mubark Opposition - Political Org.		Egyptian Analyst	

William Hague		Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Politician	Non-Egyptian Analyst	
U.S. Officials		Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Street protesters	Egyptian Media – State-run	
U.K. Officials		Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Individual	Egyptian Media – Independent	
Foreign Head of State		Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Muslim Brotherhood	Foreign News Agency and/or Journalist	
Foreign Officials		Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Online	MidEast Opposition – Group/Street protesters	
Hosni Mubarak		Egyptian Civilian	MidEast Opposition – Individual	
Omar Suleiman		Non-Egyptian Civilian	IGO	
National Democratic Party		Egyptian Medical Personnel	NGO	
Egyptian Government		Pro-Mubarak – Street protesters	Business (Financial/Travel/Corp./etc)	
Egyptian Politician		Pro-Mubarak – Individual	Social Media/New Media/I.T./TeleComm	
Egyptian Army			None	

- **Barack Obama**: President of the United States
- **David Cameron**: Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
- **Hillary Clinton**: Then U.S. Secretary of State
- **William Hague**: Then U.K. Foreign Secretary
- **U.S. Officials**: Includes any current or former political, governmental, or intelligence officials, as well as government agencies
- **U.K. Officials**: Includes any current or former political, governmental, or intelligence officials, as well as government agencies
- **Foreign Head of State**: Any non US/UK Head of State
- **Foreign Officials**: Includes any non US/UK current or former political, governmental, or intelligence officials, as well as government agencies
- **Hosni Mubarak**: Former President of Egypt
- **Omar Suleiman**: Former Egyptian military and political figure, promoted to the Vice Presidency on the 29th of January, 2011
- **National Democratic Party**: Political party led by former President Mubarak

- **Egyptian Government**: General reference to, or statement from the Egyptian Government
- **Egyptian Politician**: Current or former Egyptian politician
- **Egyptian Army**: Spokesman or figure from the army
- **Egyptian Police, Security Forces**: Spokesman or figure from the police
- **Mohamed ElBaradei**: Egyptian political figure, former head of IAEA
- **Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Political Org.**: Formal or informal political coalition, general reference to opposition group or groups
- **Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Politician**: Former or current Egyptian politician openly siding with the anti-Mubarak protest, and/or criticising the Mubarak-led government
- **Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Street protesters**: Groups of public protesters not allied with a specific opposition group
- **Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Individual**: Individual Egyptian citizen protesting against the current political order or calling for reform
- **Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Muslim Brotherhood**: Spokesman or group member that is quoted or cited within an article
- **Anti-Mubarak Opposition – Online**: Any online group voicing or organising dissent
- **Egyptian Civilian**: Any citizen quoted or cited not explicitly for, or against the government
- **Non-Egyptian Civilian**: Non-Egyptian citizen quoted or cited not explicitly for, or against the government
- **Egyptian Medical Personnel**: Doctors, ambulance drivers, field medics, hospital staff
- **Pro-Mubarak Street Protesters**: Demonstrators supporting Mubarak, calling for an end to the opposition movement
- **Pro-Mubarak Individual**: Individual supporting Mubarak, calling for an end to the opposition movement
- **Egyptian Academic**: Academic source from within Egypt
- **Non-Egyptian Academic**: Academic source from outside of Egypt
- **Egyptian Analyst**: Egyptian political analyst commenting on the protests
- **Non-Egyptian Analyst**: Non-Egyptian political analyst commenting on the protests
- **Egyptian Media – State-run**: Egyptian news outlet funded by, or affiliated with the state (e.g. MENA)
- **Egyptian Media – Independent**: Non-state media outlet
- **Foreign News Agency and/or Journalist**: Any quote from a non-Egyptian news agency or journalist, e.g. al Jazeera, al-Arabiya, Reuters, etc
- **MidEast Opposition – Group/Street Protesters**: Protesters cited or quoted from another country in the region where protests are occurring
- **MidEast Opposition – Individual**: Protester cited or quoted from another country in the region where protests are occurring
- **IGO**: Inter-governmental organisation, e.g. the UN
- **NGO**: Non-governmental organisation, e.g. Amnesty International

- **Business (Financial/Travel/Corp./etc):** Representative from a company commenting on the effects of the protests on energy prices, tourism, etc
- **Social Media/New Media/IT/TeleComm:** Article citing or quoting commentary from a social media outlet, blog, or comment from an IT or telecommunication company representative (e.g. Google, Vodafone)

TYPE OF ANTI-MUBARAK OPPOSITION FEATURED IN NEWS STORY

Mohamed ElBaradei	
Egyptian Politician	
Political Group, Organisation	
Muslim Brotherhood	
Street protests/ protesters	
Individual, indiv. protester	
Online opposition	
Other	
None mentioned	

OVERALL TONE OF ARTICLE TOWARD ANTI-MUBARAK PROTESTS/PROTESTERS

Supportive	
Critical	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- **Supportive:** Journalists and/or their sources described the protests and protesters in laudatory terms, explanatory, in-depth coverage of the reasons behind the protests, goals of the protesters, optimistic of outcome, and highlighting violence against anti-Mubarak protesters overall
- **Critical:** Journalists and/or their sources focused on the negative implications of the protests (regional chaos, Western national security, concern over who would rule Egypt should Mubarak fall)

- **Neutral:** Journalists and/or their sources were neither convincingly supportive, or critical of the anti-Mubarak opposition movement
- **Cannot be determined:** Not enough information present

IS THE U.K. PRIME MINISTER INCLUDED WITHIN THE NEWS STORY?

Yes	
No	

WHO IS THE U.K. PRIME MINISTER BACKING IN THE NEWS STORY?

Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, Egyptian Government, current M.E. political order	
Anti-Mubarak protesters	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- **Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, current order:** Support for Mubarak or Mubarak-anointed successor, condemning or delegitimising the actions and aspirations of the protesters
- **Anti-Mubarak protesters:** Calls on Mubarak to implement political reform, respect the right of protest and civil and human rights of protesters, calls for Mubarak to step down as president
- **Neutral:** Neither convincingly supportive or critical of the protests, appeals for nonviolence from both protesters against, and supporters of Mubarak
- **Cannot be determined:** Not enough information present

ARE U.K. POLITICIANS/GOV'T/GOV'T AGENCIES/OFFICIAL(S) INCLUDED WITHIN THE NEWS STORY?

Yes	
No	

**WHO ARE U.K. POLITICIANS/GOV'T/GOV'T AGENCIES/OFFICIAL(S)
BACKING IN THE NEWS STORY?**

LIST ALL:

Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, Egyptian Government, current M.E. political order	
Anti-Mubarak protesters	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- Refer to information provided within U.K. Prime Minister category

IS THE U.S. PRESIDENT INCLUDED WITHIN THE NEWS STORY?

Yes	
No	

WHO IS THE U.S. PRESIDENT BACKING IN THE NEWS STORY?

Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, Egyptian Government, current M.E. political order	
Anti-Mubarak protesters	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- Refer to information provided within U.K. Prime Minister category

**ARE U.S. POLITICIANS/GOV'T/GOV'T AGENCIES/OFFICIAL(S)
INCLUDED WITHIN THE NEWS STORY?**

Yes	
No	

**WHO ARE U.S. POLITICIANS/GOV'T/GOV'T AGENCIES/OFFICIAL(S)
BACKING IN THE NEWS STORY?**

LIST ALL:

Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, Egyptian Government, current M.E. political order	
Anti-Mubarak protesters	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- **Refer to information provided within U.K. Prime Minister category**

ARE FOREIGN HEADS OF STATE INCLUDED WITHIN THE NEWS STORY?

Yes	
No	

WHO IS/ARE THE FOREIGN HEAD(S) OF STATE BACKING IN THE NEWS STORY?

LIST ALL:

Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, Egyptian Government, current M.E. political order	
Anti-Mubarak protesters	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- **Refer to information provided within U.K. Prime Minister category**

**ARE FOREIGN POLITICIANS/GOV'T(S)/GOV'T AGENCIES/OFFICIAL(S)
INCLUDED WITHIN THE NEWS STORY?**

Yes	
No	

**WHO IS/ARE THE FOREIGN POLITICIAN(S)/GOV'T(S)/GOV'T
AGENCIES/OFFICIAL(S) BACKING IN THE NEWS STORY?**

LIST ALL:

Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, Egyptian Government, current M.E. political order	
Anti-Mubarak protesters	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- Refer to information provided within U.K. Prime Minister category

WHO IS THE EGYPTIAN ARMY BACKING IN THE NEWS STORY?

Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, or Egyptian Government	
Anti-Mubarak protesters	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- Refer to information provided within U.K. Prime Minister category

WHO ARE THE EGYPTIAN POLICE/PLAINCLOTHES POLICE/SECURITY OFFICIALS BACKING IN THE NEWS STORY?

Mubarak, Mubarak-anointed successor, or Egyptian Government	
Anti-Mubarak protesters	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- **Refer to information provided within U.K. Prime Minister category**

REPRESENTATION OF HOSNI MUBARAK, MUBARAK-LED EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE NEWS STORY

Legitimate	
Embattled	
Repressive	
Cannot be determined	

- **Legitimate**: Journalists and/or their sources described Mubarak et al. as the legitimate leader(s) of Egypt, calls for support and cessation of protests
- **Embattled**: Journalists and/or their sources described the future of Mubarak et al. as uncertain, in jeopardy, or in similar terms
- **Repressive**: Journalists and/or their sources described Mubarak et al. as dictatorial, autocratic, authoritarian, tyrant/tyrannical, unwilling to implement reform, security forces suppressing protests
- **Cannot be determined**: Not enough information present

REASONS FOR PROTESTING STATED WITHIN STORY

Economic	
Political	
Human/Civil Rights	
Cannot be determined	

- **Economic**: Economic mismanagement, corruption, lack of upward mobility, unemployment rate, cost of commodities, poverty

- **Political:** Lack of political openness, censorship, emergency law, calls for a different political order
- **Civil/Human Rights:** Torture, violent repression, and unaccountable police/security services
- **Cannot be determined:** Not enough information present

**CHARACTERISTICS OF IDENTIFIABLE, IDENTIFIED ANTI-MUBARAK
OPPOSITION**

Youth	
Middle-aged	
Old	
Male	
Female	
Employed	
Unemployed	
Poor	
Middle-class	
Wealthy	
Student	
Activist	
Political group	
Politician	
Union	
Secular	
Nationalist	
Islamist(s), Islamist Group	
Online	
Cross-section of society	
Not clear/None mentioned	

- **Youth:** Under 39 years of age
- **Middle-aged:** 40-60 years of age
- **Old:** 61 and older
- **Male:** Male protester
- **Female:** Female protester
- **Employed:** Employed
- **Unemployed:** Unemployed
- **Poor:** Noted as poor
- **Middle-class:** Noted as being middle-income
- **Wealthy:** Wealthy, financially better off
- **Student:** Any student
- **Activist:** Advocate of a particular cause

- **Political group**: Organised political group (e.g. socialists, etc)
- **Politician**: Egyptian political figure, former of current
- **Union**: Labor-rights group
- **Secular**: Not connected with, or advocating for any religious group
- **Nationalist**: Noted as being a nationalist
- **Islamist(s), Islamist group**: Opposition group based on Islamic precepts
- **Online**: Protesters mobilising/organising via social media
- **Cross-section of society**: Broadly representative of Egypt as a whole
- **Not clear/not mentioned**: Not enough information present

**IS THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF EGYPTIAN OPPOSITION MENTIONED
WITHIN ARTICLE?**

Muslim	
Christian	
Other	
Not indicated	

**SUBJECT(S) OF VIOLENCE and/or INTIMIDATION/REPRESSION MENTIONED IN
NEWS STORY**

anti-Mubarak protesters (Arrested/detained, tear gas, etc)	
Injured anti-Mubarak protesters	
Dead anti-Mubarak protesters	
Pro-Mubarak protesters	
Injured pro-Mubarak protesters	
Dead pro-Mubarak protesters	
Detained security/police	
Injured security/police	
Dead security/police	
Injured army	
Dead army	
Not mentioned/Not clear	

**REPRESENTATION OF POLICE/PLAINCLOTHES POLICE/SECURITY OFFICIALS
WITHIN NEWS STORY**

Repressive	
Sympathetic	
Neutral	
Cannot be determined	

- **Repressive:** Journalists and/or their sources described the police et al. as arresting and/or intimidating and repressing protesters with force (batons, tear gas, rubber bullets, live ammunition)
- **Sympathetic:** Journalists and/or their sources described the police et al. as reluctant to clamp down on protesters, ideological affinity for their aims
- **Neutral:** Journalists and/or their sources described the police et al. as neither explicitly repressive or sympathetic
- **Cannot be determined:** Not enough information present

**ARE GEOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS MENTIONED WITHIN THE NEWS
STORY?**

Yes	
No	

TYPE OF GEOPOLITICAL ANGLE TO STORY

Egyptian Revolution as part of 'Arab Spring'	
Implications for U.S. interests	
Implications for U.K. interests	
Implications for Israel	
Implications for Middle East	
None mentioned	

- **Egyptian Revolution as part of 'Arab Spring':** Revolution in Egypt mentioned as stemming from Tunisia and part of concurrent protests taking place across the Middle East and North Africa
- **Implications for U.S. interests:** Positive/negative implications for American interests in the region
- **Implications for U.K. interests:** Positive/negative implications for British interests in the region

- **Implications for Israel:** Positive/negative implications for Israeli interests in the region
- **Implications for Middle East:** Positive/negative implications for the entire Middle East/North Africa region in the longer term
- **None mentioned:** No geopolitical implications mentioned

ARE PRESS/NEWS MEDIA RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT NOTED WITHIN THE NEWS STORY?

Journalists attacked/detained/arrested/barred from reporting, etc	
News agencies shut down/barred from reporting	
General reference to 'media crackdown'	
Injured Journalists	
Dead journalists	
No	

List news organisation(s) and/or journalist(s):

TECHNOLOGICAL RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT?

Mobile communication	
Internet/social media access	
Satellite TV	
None mentioned	

IS SOCIAL MEDIA, NEW MEDIA, OR I.T. MENTIONED WITHIN THE ARTICLE?

Yes	
No	

TYPE OF SOCIAL/NEW MEDIA/I.T./TeleComm MENTIONED

Blog	
Email	
Facebook	
Google ('speaktotweet')	
Mobile phone video	
SMS	
Twitter	
YouTube	
Unclear/Unknown	
Other(s)	

List other(s):

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA/NEW MEDIA/I.T./TeleCOMM?

Coordinate/Mobilise/Organise	
Disseminating information	
Solidarity/Support	
Not clear/Unspecified	

- **Coordinate/Mobilise/Organise**: Used to organise and facilitate protests (e.g. SMS, Twitter, the 'We Are All Khaled Said' Facebook page)
- **Disseminating information**: Spread information amongst other protesters and to others within their own country and beyond (e.g. Speak2Tweet, mobile phones)
- **Solidarity/Support**: Used to engender solidarity with the anti-Mubarak opposition (e.g. the 'We Are All Khaled Said' Facebook page, Speak2Tweet)
- **Not clear/unspecified**: Role of ICTs/social media unclear or not mentioned