

**Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting**

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## Abstract

This thesis investigated how the Arab and western media affected the staff and students of one Libyan university, Sebha University, through their presentation of the major Arab Spring uprisings in Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan. In particular, the research focused on the reporting by Al-Jazeera and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The study attempted to show how these two channels represented the main incidents of Arab Spring uprising and examined whether this representation was influenced by any ideology the channels attempted to propagate. It should be noted, however, that the researcher was not seeking to support any one ideological approach but was, rather, concerned with the ways in which such reporting impacted on the respondents of the study.

The methodological approach was qualitative in nature and 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the staff (15 interviews) and students (15 interviews) of Sebha University, Libya. In order to gain further evidence about students' and lecturers' experiences and their views toward the two channels, 12 articles (6 from Al-Jazeera and 6 from the BBC), relating to the critical events of the three Arab Spring uprisings, were analysed using the main assumptions of Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics.

The study found that most of lecturers and students indicated that the two channels were, indeed, different in terms of their reporting of the events of the Arab Spring uprisings and, whilst the BBC was trusted for its dispassionate observations, Al-Jazeera was considered to be ideologically driven. This reporting caused a range of problems for the lecturers and students. Most notably, the students were concerned about the perceived lack of security, the reporting of which was a particular feature of the Al-Jazeera channel. On the other hand, both the students and the lecturers observed that the BBC was neutral and professional and without political propaganda.

The main professional recommendations resulting from the study were that the university under scrutiny, and universities more widely, need to ensure that they have in place well developed systems for supporting both staff and students during times of stress, including during periods of national crisis. It is also suggested that national and international agencies and researchers must consider further the nature and impact of media reporting in an era of mass communication.

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## Dedication

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

This thesis presents an investigation of how both Arab and western media influenced staff and students of one single Libyan Higher Education Institution, Sebha University, during the insurgencies that were dubbed as ‘Arab Spring Uprisings’ (2010-2011). It will address the nature of such an influence in order to report any differences between the different elements of these events in terms of how the Arab Spring Uprisings (ASU) were depicted in the media. In addition to conducting a series of interviews with the staff and students of Sebha University to show how the media affected them, this thesis analyses a certain number of articles of the media which describe the most critical incidents of the Arab Spring Uprisings and their impacts on the students and staff of Sebha University in order to construct a conceptual and analytical framework for understanding how Arab and western media can impinge on people working within an academic environment and the related effects of such coverage. Such an analysis highlights whether the media played down the Arab Spring Uprisings in order to deliver any (overt or covert) ideologies.

The researcher is Libyan national and received an MA in Modern English from Huddersfield University, UK, in 2010. He subsequently worked since then at Sebha University. He then embarked on the PhD at Liverpool John Moores University to investigate the underlying role of mass media in shaping recent political events in his home country and more widely across North Africa. Additionally, the research aims to discover whether media has an impact on the people working in academic situations and what factors underpin the nature of such impact (if any). The researcher must confess to being fascinated by the Arab Spring since he, personally, lived its events. He has noticed how people in general are highly affected by TV channels and media news when deciding upon their management of its incidents. In this research, the aim is to examine the possibilities that such channels and media are ideological driven and a mere reflection of the events, linking it with the potential impacts on the staff and students of Sebha University who were considered as stepping stones towards convincing the locals. The latter assumption is brought into being by virtue of personal reflection that media in general orients this class of community because of its significant role in influencing and leading the people because of their professional and social aspirations and background. In order to do just this, a

set of interviews with staff and students at Sebha University were conducted and some carefully-chosen articles were analysed using the main tenets of critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Generally speaking, the Arab Spring Uprisings were heavily analyzed after their breakout in late 2010 (Goodwin, 2011; Johnstone and Mazo, 2011; Hollis, 2012). Some studies link them to certain political aspects including the end of post-colonialism (Dabashi, 2012) and political change (Dalacoura, 2012), while other studies have focused on the economic problems and aspects (Campante and Chor, 2012). Moreover, another array of investigations emphasized the differences between the components of these uprisings and between the countries in which they broke out (Anderson, 2011; Nepstad, 2013). However, the most prominent aspect triggering the researcher to work on this topic was the role of the media (TV channels and social media services such as Facebook, Tweeter, YouTube, inter alia) on the course of the Arab Spring Uprisings and how people interacted with each other, perceiving their main incidents and results (Storck, 2011; Howard and Hussain, 2013; Wolfsfeld *et al.*, 2013). The effect of the main TV news channels on people working within academic settings and their perspectives towards such effects during Arab Spring Uprisings did not receive much scrutiny by researchers. This being so, the current research attempts to bridge this gap in research via spotlighting these effects and perspectives.

## 1.2. Arab Spring Uprisings (ASU)

Triggered mainly by the absence or lack of democratic means for regime change and the pertinent societal pressures which were increasing in some countries of the Middle East and North Africa against the regime incumbents, the Arab Spring Uprising (henceforth, ASU) broke out in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen (Campante and Chor, 2012). There were many studies attempting to determine the actual reasons for ASU. In addition to the economic conditions which formed an important background to the main incidents of ASU in countries of North Africa including Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, the discordance between the claims which are made by the existing regimes to legitimise themselves and the reality of regime repression and contempt were deemed the real driver of the ASU. The regime's refusal to put up with the escalating active popular political participation in the process of governance would act, for many, as the real driver for ASU, once the appropriate catalyst could be found (Joffé, 2011).

The main results culminated in a set of major changes, which saw the existing long-term regimes ousted, and new ones established.

The Tunisian Revolution, where the ASU first occurred, successfully ousted the President, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. It consisted of a consecutive series of street demonstrations in January 2011, which were triggered by the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi on December 17, 2010. Mohamed Bouazizi burned himself due to the harsh economic circumstances in which he used to live. The demonstrations were regarded as an expression of people's frustration over economic issues including high unemployment, food inflation, and lack of political freedoms like rights to free speech (Lotan *et al.*, 2011). Despite president Ben Ali's endeavours to quell the resulting demonstrations by brute force and what were called 'last-minute reforms', the Tunisian military intervened against loyal security forces which were fighting for president Ben Ali, leading to the January 14<sup>th</sup> resignation of Ben Ali (Perthes, 2011; van Niekerk *et al.*, 2011; Lynch, 2013)

Following the success of the Tunisian uprising, the opposition groups (mainly the 'Brotherhood' movement) and activists in Egypt organized a series of demonstrations in Cairo and other big Egyptian cities on January 25, 2011. The demonstrations were chiefly aimed at showing people's frustration for the ongoing political circumstances, high rates of unemployment, corruption and the lack of political freedom in Egypt at the time, given that Mohammad Hosni Mubarak had been in authority since 1981 (Skinner, 2011). Many protestors were abused by police who attempted to hamper these demonstrations. A series of protests involving civil resistance continued over several weeks, spreading to the other major cities and regions throughout the country, resulting in much escalation in violence as protesters clashed with the (internal) police forces which were loyal to President Hosni Mubarak. On the other hand, the military forces (the army) refused to fire upon the protesters, most notably in Tahrir Square (the main square in Cairo), where protesters camped out in civil resistance. Mubarak stepped down on February 11, 2011 (Eltantawy and Wiest, 2011; Lotan *et al.*, 2011; Hollis, 2012).

In the same vein, the Libyan uprising was deemed to be a continuation of ASU, which had been motivated by the successes of both the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions and frustrated by the same factors including high rates of unemployment and lack of political freedoms (Roumani, 2014). In comparison with the later revolutions, the Libyan revolution was more violent and deadlier (Deeb, 2013; Pack, 2013). Firstly, the protestors controlled most of

Benghazi, the country's second-largest city from February 2011. Consequently, the government dispatched troops and militia to recapture it, but they were repelled. Amidst ongoing efforts by the demonstrators and rebel forces to take control of Tripoli, the opposition set up an interim government in Benghazi in order to oppose and end the Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's general rule. In spite of the fact that the initial opposition success, the governmental forces subsequently took back much of the regions taken by the protestors (Laremont, 2013; McQuinn, 2013; Saleh *et al.*, 2014).

Meanwhile, as a response to the danger posed by the governmental forces on the civilians, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 was adopted. This resolution authorized a no-fly zone over the whole Libya, and "all necessary measures" to protect civilians. Two days later, western countries including the United States of America, France, and the United Kingdom intervened in Libya with a bombing campaign against pro-Gaddafi forces. A coalition of 27 states from Europe and the Middle East soon joined the intervention. In August 2011, anti-Gaddafi fighters captured Tripoli, scattering Gaddafi's government and marking the end of his 42 years of power. Gaddafi was killed in the process (Boduszyński and Pickard, 2013; Haseeb, 2013).

In addition to the Tunisia, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions, the ASU consisted of other uprisings breaking out in Yemen (Lynch, 2013; Saleh *et al.*, 2014) and Syria (in which the internal war between the government and opposition groups is still ongoing) (Hinnebusch, 2013; Dukhan, 2014).

Summing up, the most significant impulse for the breaking out of the Arab Spring Uprising was, arguably, that most Arab countries did not experienced the real democracy which is deemed to be the prerequisite for any political and social stability in any country. In many Arab countries, people did not become involved in any democratic process, including the choice of the government and in some countries, such governments were themselves unable to pass laws or even modify them. Those Arab countries are characterized by totalitarian regimes and unlimited authorities of countries heads (Witzel, 2011; Witzel, 2013). By 2010-2011, people across Arab countries were keen for real change for democracy and for corruption combat. This change indeed demonstrated the obsolete authority of the people (Dabashi, 2012).

### 1.3. The problem of the study

Given the notion that there is no question that media plays a vital and principled role in organizing and publicizing social protests (Khondker, 2011; Fekete and Warf, 2013), this research endeavors to identify whether the two channels investigated throughout this study attempted to skew the events of ASU in order to reach certain goals matching their underlying ideologies. These ideologies, if any, can be assimilated via analysing a set of chosen articles, which depict the main incidents of ASU. Subsequently, the study will determine how discursive methodologies and structures exhibited in some articles of these two media channels reflected or related to any social and political ideologies the channels attempted to spread. Hence, the problem whether Aljazeera and/or BBC provided an example of advocacy media that supports or flouts the basic professional principles of journalism such as objectivity, neutrality and impartiality is targeted. On the other hand, this study illustrates how media can affect people (staff and students) working in academic settings through assessing their own perspectives towards how the incidents of ASU was depicted by the both channels under question. Such perspectives are motivated by the fact that the way that the channels depict the events of ASU was of paramount importance for local people, people working at universities, and students who can be prevented from attending universities if there was (real or potential) danger highlighted by the media channels. In short, the two problems of exploiting the ASU events to spread or reach certain goals and ideologies as well as the effect of this exploitation (if any) will be addressed.

#### 1.4. The purpose and the questions of the study

Any observer of the Arab Spring uprising will notice that the success of these democratic revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen was mainly associated with certain factors, including media channels which played a vital part in shaping such revolutions (Aday *et al.*, 2013; Wolfsfeld *et al.*, 2013; Malik, 2014). This culminated in the way the media involved represent the critical (most important) incidents of these revolutions, reflecting their own ideologies and prospects for future events. Every revolution was of great importance for various media channels. That is because the main principles and themes of one revolution heavily affected other subsequent revolutions. Thus, it is plausible to suggest that the Tunisian revolution (which happened first) triggered the following Egyptian one and so on in a predictable fashion, a point highlighted by various studies (Bayat, 2013; Malik, 2014).

In relation to this, the current study attempts to indicate how the Arab and western media affected staff and students of one Libyan university, Sebha University. The Arab media is represented by Aljazeera the channel which is by many regarded as the most influential Arab media channel (El-Nawawy and Iskander, 2002; Miles, 2005; Zayani, 2005). On the other hand, the western media is represented throughout this study with BBC which is one of the most professional news and media channels in the world (Barkho, 2006; Miladi, 2006; Barkho, 2008). Accordingly, this study is meant to show how these two channels depicted and represented the main incidents of ASU and whether this depiction and representations are enveloped with any ideology the channel attempts to deliver. In addition, this study will indicate the actual effects of the both channels' representations to the main incidents of the ASU on the lives of people under questions. This effect is significant to uncover in order to figure out the extent to which media can impinge on people working in academic settings in developing countries such as Libya.

In order to address these purposes, the study will answer the following questions:

1. What were the background and reasons posed by Aljazeera and the BBC channel articles for the critical incidents during the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions?
2. What ideologies of both Aljazeera and the BBC can be deduced by the way critical incidents were depicted?
3. How did the reports of both Aljazeera and the BBC channels characterize the participants and critical incidents that made up the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions?
4. To whom and how did Aljazeera English and BBC channels attribute the events in the revolutions?
5. What was the impact of the reporting of the revolutions on the staff and students of one university located in southern Libya?

### 1.5. Significance of the study

Investigation of the ways the ASU was represented in both Aljazeera and the BBC requires us to outline the main events that happened in the countries where ASU broke out. Thus, this study introduces a comprehensive account of how ASU in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya developed and concluded. This study attempts to analyse certain number of articles, which were written by Aljazeera and the BBC and which were selected chronologically to represent all the critical incidents of the revolutions.

This study indicates to what extent the notion whether media is in general driven by specific ideologies to achieve certain goals is borne out. This indication provides the current literature with deeper understanding of the real causes of establishing the channels or networks. If the findings demonstrate the existence of such ideologies, it can be postulated that such ideologies are the stepping-stones towards their establishment. Thus, the ultimate goal of the channels is to manipulate the events and depict them in a way serving their underlying ideologies and objectives.

This study illustrates the actual role of media and news network in guiding local people and how media affects these people deeply. This being so, media can be deemed as a driving force guiding people to take up positions goes in harmony with this media. Additionally, it discovers the mechanisms (if any) the news networks make use of in order to delimit the events of social protests such as ASU so as to, for example, re-shape these events or the whole revolution to match their purposive goals and ends.

This study also shows the effect of news channel on students and staff within an academic environment. As widely known, university students and staff play significant roles in community. Once these parties are satisfied by certain ideas and notions disseminated by certain channels, they can publicize these ideas. People, in turn, are prone to receive such ideas and notions with a high amount of certainty with high amount of certainty since these ideas are issued by university students and staff who distinguished status among Libyan culture and people. Subsequently, determining the impacts of reporting the critical events of ASU on this particular kind of people is of paramount importance.

## 1. 6. Research Methodology

Firstly, in order to uncover how the BBC and Aljazeera English depicted the main incidents of the ASU (Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan, herein), this study employs the major tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Secondly, in order to determine, first, the main incidents in these revolutions and, second, whether the depiction of these events affected staff and students at Sebha University, this research uses a qualitative approach based on the semi-structured interviews method.

#### 1.6.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In the recent decades, critical discourse analysis (CDA) becomes a well-established field in social sciences (Fairclough *et al.*, 2011, p. 358). It focuses on the social domains including ideology, racism, media discourse, gender (especially the linguistic representation of women in the media), institutional discourse like doctor-patient communication, political discourse, bureaucracy-related discourse and education. The purpose of CDA is to analyse 'opaque and transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language'. It investigates the relationship between language and society, and the relationship between analysis and the practices analyzed (Wodak, 1997).

##### 1.6.1.1. Evolution of CDA

In the late 1970s, Fowler, Hodge, and Kress developed Critical Linguistics, a development which was based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Fowler, 1996). In Critical Linguistics, the main emphasis aimed at "isolating ideology in discourse" and illustrating "how ideology and ideological processes are depicted as systems of linguistic characteristics and processes (Fowler, 1991). Following Halliday, Critical Linguistics envisages language in use as simultaneously performing three interrelated functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. According to Fairclough (1995) and Fowler (1991), the ideational function refers to the speakers' experience of the world and its pertinent phenomena. On the other hand, the interpersonal function encompasses the insertion of speakers' own attitudes and assessment about the phenomena under investigation in order to set up a relationship between the interlocutors of discourse: the speakers and listeners. These two functions can be detected via the textual function of language (TFL). TFL refers to the assumption that speakers are able to produce texts which are assimilated (understood) by

listeners, and thus, connect discourse to both the co-text and con-text in which the whole discourse occurs.(Sheyholislami, 2001, pp. 1-2)

Two significant views are related to Critical Linguistics (and then to CDA): the “asocial act” which hypothesizes that there are strong and pervasive connections between linguistic structure and social structure” (Fowler *et al.*, 1979, p. 185) and the assumption that the speakers make choices due to vocabulary and grammar, and that these choices are selected in a conscious or unconscious and “principled and systematic” fashion. This nature of selection gives rise to the assumption that the choices are ideologically based. What is important here to focus upon is that the “relation between form and content is not arbitrary but significant”(Fowler *et al.*, 1979, p. 188). Accordingly, it can be suggested that language is in short asocial act which is ideologically driven(Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough and Chouliaraki, 1999). Critical Linguistics had since then been developed in what recently referred to as CDA(Van Dijk, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

#### 1.6.1.2. *Directions in CDA*

Indeed, there are three over-arching directions in CDA. Each one of these directions is strongly correlated with the scholar who developed it and whose works contributed to the development of CDA as a whole. These directions are embodied in the work of Van Dijk (1993; 1995; 2001), Wodak (2011) and (Fairclough (1996) which are discussed in more detail below.

##### 1.6.1.2.1 Van Dijk: The Socio-cognitive model

In the 1980s, Van Dijk started to apply his own developed discourse analysis theory to media texts, which represent the minorities and ethnic groups in Europe. In this work, the grammatical, morphological, phonological, and semantic levels are not only what can uncover the underlying message of the speaker. Actually, the higher level properties of the text including coherence, overall themes and the whole schematic forms and rhetorical dimensions of texts, to name just a few, are rather counted as important and significant in revealing the secretes of the text. What makes Van Dijk (1995) framework distinguishable from other approaches which deal with news discourse is the thorough analysis he calls for not just for the textual and structural level of media discourse but also for explanations and analysis at both the production and comprehension level (Boyd-Barrett, 1994). These two levels of analysis are

strongly related to what he calls production processes and comprehension or reception processes. The production processes includes journalistic and institutional practices of news making and the economic and social practices which are essential to create the media discourse and which are explicitly associated with the structures of media discourse. On the other hand, the reception processes involve the comprehension, memorization and reproduction of news information. Once these two processes are identified and well delineated, the main thrust of the text is easily detected and proved.

Van Dijk's analysis of media attempts to illustrate the relationships between the levels of news text production which are: structure, production and comprehension processes and their concomitant relationships with the wider social context in which these processes and relationships are enveloped or integrated within (Sheyholislami, 2001). Additionally, Van Dijk states that in order to identify these relationships, the analysis has to take place at two levels: microstructure level and macrostructure level. At the microstructure level, the focus has to be paid to the semantic relations between propositions, syntactic, lexical and other rhetorical elements of coherence in the text. Furthermore, in this level of analysis, other rhetorical elements such quotations, direct or indirect reporting which give factuality to the news reports have to be addressed. By contrast, at the macrostructure level, the analysis has to be conducted on the thematic/topic structure of the news stories and their overall schemata, i.e., themes and topics can be realized in the headlines. When analyzing the text and identify the ideologies therein, three dimensions of analysis have to be taken into account: discourse, socio-cognition, and social analysis

#### 1.6.1.2.2 Wodak: Discourse Sociolinguistics

In this direction of CDA, the emphasis is placed on what is dubbed as discourse sociolinguistics. According to Wodak (1996):

‘Discourse Sociolinguistics...is a sociolinguistics which not only is explicitly dedicated to the study of the text in context, but also accords both factors equal importance. It is an approach capable of identifying and describing the underlying mechanisms that contribute to those disorders in discourse which are embedded in a particular context--whether they be in the structure and

function of the media, or in institutions such as a hospital or a school--and inevitably affect communication(p. 3).’

Wodak made use of this definition and conducted research in various institutional settings on a variety of social issues such as sexism and racism. This application leads Wodak to the development of an approach termed as ‘the discourse historical method’ (DHM). DHM integrates systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text" (1995, p. 209). In this direction, it is stated that the context of the discourse had a significant impact on the structure, function, and context of media. On the other hand, in comparison with Van Dijk’s approaches, discourse sociolinguistics focuses on the historical contexts of discourse in order to explain and interpret it (Sheyholislami, 2001, p. 4).

#### 1.6.1.2.3. Fairclough: Critical Language Study

In this approach to CDA, the main objection is to contribute to consciousness of exploitative social relations via focusing upon language (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough, 2001). CDA seen here as the link which brings social science and linguistics together in a unique fashion within a single theoretical and analytical framework, resulting in setting up a dialogue between these two parts (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 6). Fairclough's approach calls upon a number of critical social concepts which he strives to underpin in the discourse. These concepts include orders of discourse, hegemony, and colonization of discourses, among others (Fairclough and Chouliaraki, 1999).

In this form of CDA, three analytical dimensions have to be taken in to consideration when analysing any communicative event. The first aspect is what he labels ‘text’. In this dimension, a linguistic analysis is carried out in terms of vocabulary, grammar, semantics, the sound system, and cohesion-organization above the sentence level. The second dimension is ‘discourse practice’, a process of production and consumption. This dimension has two facets: institutional process (e.g. editorial procedures), and discourse processes (changes the text go through in production and consumption). For Fairclough, discourse practice straddles the division between society and culture on the one hand, and discourse, language and text on the other. The third dimension is what is called ‘the sociocultural practice’, which includes social and cultural structures which give rise to the communicative event. For Fairclough, analysis in this dimension pertains to three aspects of the sociocultural context of a communicative event:

economic (i.e. economy of the media), political (i.e. power and ideology of the media), and cultural (i.e. issues of values) (Fairclough, 1995, p. 57). Although these three analytical aspects resemble Van Dijk's three dimensions of ideology analysis mentioned above (discourse, socio-cognition, and social analysis respectively), Fairclough's and Van Dijk's approach are different in terms of the second dimension, which mediates between the other two (Sheyholislami, 2001). Van Dijk perceives the social cognition and mental models as mediating between discourse and the social. On the contrary, Fairclough claims that such a task is, however, assumed by discourse practices such as text production and consumption (Fairclough, 1995, p. 59). Accordingly, it is deemed that these two approaches to CDA are "similar in conception" (ibid,p. 59).

#### *1.6.1.3 Power and CDA*

In summary, in CDA, three significant themes are addressed: power, ideology and hegemony. This association is attributed to the fact that these three themes do inherently have an effect on each of the contextual levels of production, consumption and understanding of discourse (Richardson, 2007). The crucial feature of CDA is, so to speak, its concern with the social relations in general and the power relations as essential conditions in the social life in particular. Indeed, such a relationship between language and power is by no means undeniable; language expresses as well as constitutes power, and power, in turn, can be signaled by analyzing the linguistic structures involved within discourse. Hence, it can be concluded that CDA analysts tend to work on applied topics in a wide range of domains, including political discourse, ideology, racism, economic discourse, advertisement with promotional culture, gender, institutional discourse, education, literacy, and, what is important here, media language (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000).

In relation to this, Fairclough (1989) asserts that power is exercised and enacted in discourse because control over orders of discourse is regarded as a powerful mechanism for sustaining power (1989: 74). Accordingly, CDA is majorly interested in the issue of power as a crucial constituent of analysing discourse and the ways in which linguistic forms are utilized in various expressions and manipulations of power. Moreover, CDA attempts to figure out the social impacts and aspects caused (or, sometimes, enhanced) by social problems. Blommaert (2005) identifies these social effects of the work of CDA as "empowering the powerless, giving voices to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilizing people to remedy social wrongs" (2005:

25). Shielded within these main principles of CDA, the current study seeks to outline how both Aljazeera and BBC make use of power, ideology and hegemony in depicting the core incidents of the Arab Spring uprising.

### 1.6.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

In addition to CDA, Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter, SFL) (see: Halliday (1975), Halliday (1994); Thompson (1996) and Hasan and Martin (1989) will be used in the current study to illustrate how the critical incidents of the Arab Spring uprising selected is rendered as a tool to achieve certain ideological purposes especially by Al-Jazeera Channel on which all interviewees agree that it exhibits intentional manipulation of those incidents. Technically speaking, the word "systemic" is by many motivated by the assumption that language, as a whole, is a system of meanings. To put it differently, language is merely a semiotic system; not in the sense of a system of signs, but "a systemic resource for meaning- a meaning potential" (Halliday, 1985, pp. 192-193). The word "functional" refers to the notion that language is deemed as performing three functions: the ideational function, the interpersonal function, and the textual function. The first function is the ideational function, which helps the expression of content of the speaker's experience of the real world, including the inner world of his/her own consciousness. The second is the interpersonal function, which serves to establish and maintain social relations. The third is the expression of social roles, which exhibit the communication roles introduced by the language itself".

In this regard, Eggins (2004) maintains that SFL aims at describing two underlying dimensions of the language use:

- The possible choices people can make, 'the linguistic system'.
- The function of the choice people can make, 'how language is used in different social contexts to achieve various cultural goals' (2004: 20).

Hence, SFL reconceptualises language as a semiotic tool utilized in the negotiation, construction, organization, and re-construal of human experiences (Fang, 2005, p. 366). It demonstrates how linguistic choices contribute systematically to the realization of the social contexts. Accordingly, language is a fundamental resource for making meaning. It is simultaneously "a part of reality, a shaper of reality, and a metaphor for reality" (

1993, p. 8). Language is indeed an open-ended yet interlocking system of options (Martin, 1992; Halliday, 1994)

As such, language makes it possible for its users to make certain lexicogrammatical choices, which are in harmony with the personal needs and appropriate for particular social contexts. Through selection of particular lexico-grammatical items available in language, speakers and writers are able to simultaneously engage in presentation of topic, negotiation of role relationship, and structuring of text (Schleppegrell, 2004). Oral and written texts produced in different contexts exhibit various linguistic features, and they realize different social functions. Variations in language use express the diversity of structures and processes in the social system (Christie and Martin, 2005). The current research investigates the diversity of structures, utilized by both Aljazeera and BBC in representing the serious incidents, which were the mainstay of both channels to deliver their intended messages or ideologies, if any.

### 1.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are one of the most common way to elicit information in the qualitative research (Kitchin and Tate, 2013, p. 213). Semi-structured interviews are a verbal interchange where one person or more, the interviewer(s), attempts to collect specific information from another person(s) by asking questions. Although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews are conducted in a conversational manner offering participants the opportunity to focus on issues they feel are important (Clifford *et al.*, 2010, p. 103). Semi structured interview 'Enables the researcher to guide the interview and to ensure that the respondent addresses the key issues that were defined in the interview schedule, produces rich data on the topic under scrutiny' (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008, p. 134).

### 1.7. Structure of the thesis:

Chapter 2 of the thesis outlines the background and context to the research and Chapter 3 introduces a comprehensive review of the related literature on how media can be used to manipulate events and occasions in order to deliver certain ideologies within the framework of CDA and SFL. It also introduces the reader to those studies, which are conducted specifically on ASU. Chapter 4 details the methods the study depends on when eliciting information, i.e.

the semi-structured interviews and subjects. It also illustrates the methodology in selecting the articles from the both channels. Chapter 5 offers the data analysis and Chapter 6 outlines the analysis of the articles. Chapter 7 discusses the interviews and the staff and students' perspectives on both channels selected for the purposes of the current studies. It discusses these perspectives and focuses whether both media outlets manipulated the news and, if so, the ways in which this occurred in the main incidents of ASU. Chapter 8 discusses the selected articles from both channels, couched within both CDA and SFL in order to analyse whether any manipulation of the critical incidents was used. Chapter 9 concludes the study, including offering recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2

### Background and context

#### 2.1. Arab Spring uprisings:

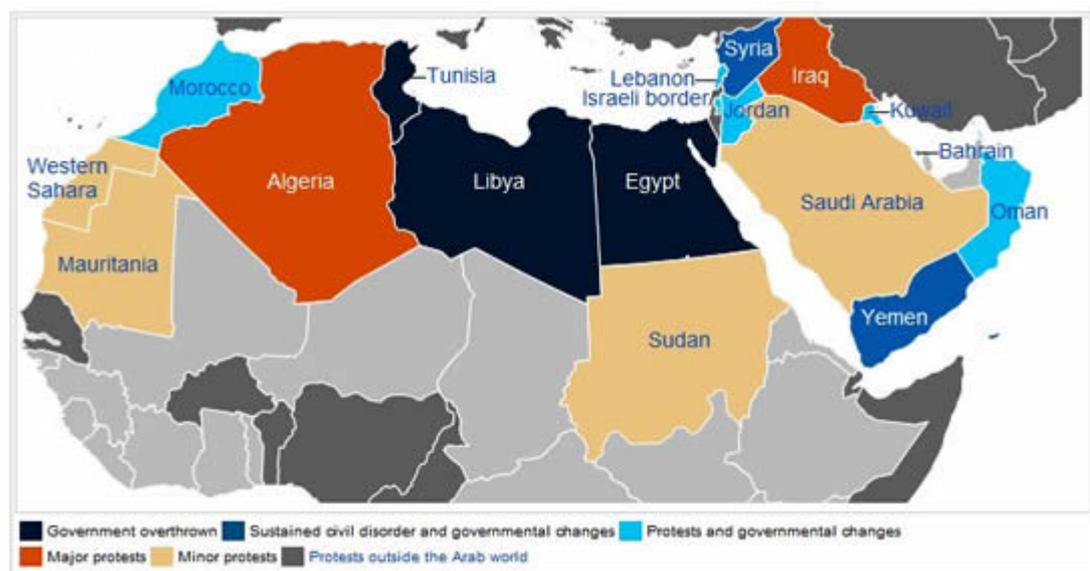
##### 2.1.1 Introduction:

The year 2010 witnessed the inception of a set of revolutionary waves later to be termed the Arab Spring in a number of countries in North Africa and the Middle-East (Khondker, 2011). These revolutionary uprisings included both non-violent and violent demonstrations, riots, and even civil wars in some of the countries of North Africa including Libya and Syria. In addition, these uprisings, which began on December 2010, then spread throughout most countries of the Arab world (Dabashi, 2012). It is worth indicating that these uprisings were the result of various causes relating to the political and economic climate extant in the countries themselves. For example, the regimes of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Mohammad Hosni Mubarak, and Moammar Al-Gadhafi, were overthrown in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, respectively (Hourani and Sam Van Vliet, 2014). Although the initial (and strong) revolutions had expired by the end of 2012, there have been ongoing large-scale conflicts in certain countries, notably Syria, which are considered as a continuation of the Arab Spring (Hinnebusch, 2012; Ryan, 2012).

The revolutionary wave started off with the remarkable death of Mohamed Bouazizi – a Tunisian street vendor - who set himself on fire on December 17, 2010, after a municipal official confiscated his goods, humiliated and supposedly harassed him. As a result, a massive wave of protests erupted all over Tunisia. Frustrated young Tunisians called for social and political reform and an end to the reign of President Zine El-Abidine Ben-Ali, who had held a 23-year long dictatorship over the country. Unable to crush the demonstrations Ben-Ali was left with no other choice but to resign on January 14, 2011 (Ryan, 2011). Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya and Syria followed suit, resulting in the fall of President Mubarak in Egypt and President Gadhafi in Libya, whereas (violent) clashes between protesters and security forces in Syria, Yemen and to a lesser extent Bahrain, are still ongoing. News of major protests were also reported from Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco and Oman, while minor protests erupted in Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi-Arabia, Sudan and the Western Sahara (Anderson, 2011; Bauer and Schiller, 2012).

In the following sections, the main Arab uprisings including the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions are discussed with an emphasis on the Libyan revolution. This emphasis is engendered because the whole participants of this thesis live in Libya and thus experienced the main events and incidents of this revolution directly. As is indicated in the first chapter, the current thesis looks at how both the Arab and western media have influenced staff and students of Sebha University, which is a Libyan university. The main reasons and consequences of each uprising were introduced, proving that the main reasons for the Arab uprisings were similar and that the drivers and triggers of these events were also similar in each nation. That is because almost all of the countries witnessing such events were subject to similar political, economic, and social issues which formed the main trigger for this ongoing uprising and yielded its pertinent consequences which, as a result, remoulded and reshaped all of the political, economic, and social aspects and conditions in those nations (Joffé, 2011; Kuhn, 2012; Durac, 2013). The following figure shows a map of the Arab world (both Asian and African) where the Arab Spring affected almost of the countries involved<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 1: The Arab World: a map, illustrating the political effects of the Arab Spring uprisings:**



**Figure 1 The Arab World Map**

<sup>1</sup> The source of the map is [http://www.english-online.at/current\\_affairs/arab-spring/rebellions-in-north-africa-and-middle-east.htm](http://www.english-online.at/current_affairs/arab-spring/rebellions-in-north-africa-and-middle-east.htm). Retrieved on 12-11-2014

## 2.2. The Tunisian uprising

In order to understand fully and truthfully how the Arab Spring uprisings broke out, it is important to indicate that such uprisings are not caused solely by recent events, but rather they are historically related to the establishment of each country involved (Bellin, 2012). In Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba<sup>2</sup> led the independence-driven movement against the French occupation and achieved independence in 1956. Consequently, Habib Bourguiba later became the first President of Tunisia, remaining in authority until 1987, the time when the then Prime Minister Zine El Abidine Ben Ali took power in a bloodless coup (Rous, 1984; Salem, 1984; Hopwood, 1992a).

Thus, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was the president of Tunisia from 1987 to 2010 when the Tunisian Revolution took place. During the years from national independence to 2011, Tunisia did not experience any real form or kind of democracy and was destined to be ruled and governed totally by an authoritarian regime. Tunisia was governed by one ruling party where the president of the state used to have almost unlimited legislative powers (Lamloum and Ravenel, 2002; Erdle, 2010). In this context, Tunisia's 'Jasmine Revolution' took place in 2010 against the rule of Ben Ali. Demonstrators protested against the lack of freedom of speech and miserable economic conditions. The beginning was on December 17, 2010 when a young man called Mohamed Bouazizi committed suicide by setting himself in fire in despair as a protest against the treatment he received at the hands of the authorities. Following this, demonstrations broke out in the cities of Tunisia until they reached the Capital (Allagui and Kuebler, 2011; Filiu, 2011; Cassel *et al.*, 2013). In spite of the brutal treatment meted out by the police and the arrest of demonstrators and activists, and then the promise of Ben Ali to create more jobs and carry out drastic reforms, Ben Ali had to flee the country and take refuge in Saudi Arabia, which was said to be the only country to accept his request. Just like the Egyptian Revolution in 1952<sup>3</sup>, the Jasmine Revolution inspired and ignited other revolutions in the Middle East region (Filiu, 2011).

Anti-government protests began in Tunisia in mid-December 2010. Public demonstrations had previously been very rare in Tunisia, where state repression and the close surveillance of dissenters have traditionally been effective at curbing the expression of anti-government views.

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<sup>2</sup> The country's first President of the Republic of Tunisia, serving from 25 July 1957 to 7 November 1987 (Hopwood, 1992b)

<sup>3</sup> The Egyptian Revolution in 1952 resulted in overthrowing and demolishing the Royal regime headed by King Farouq, and establishing the Egyptian republic (Beattie, 1994).

The demonstrations initially seemed to stem from discontent related to high unemployment, but quickly spiralled into an unprecedented popular challenge to Ben Ali's authoritarian regime. On January 13, Ben Ali gave an address on national television in which he pledged to step down when his term was up in 2014, to allow fresh parliamentary elections before then, and to end state censorship. However, these promises did not placate demonstrators, who continued to call for Ben Ali's immediate resignation and the dissolution of the Ben Ali's party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally, RCD (Arieff, 2011).

The Tunisian uprising initiated the wave of unrest in the remaining parts of the Arab world. This revolution was in the main considered as spontaneous with-less organization than was evident with other subsequent uprisings in other Arab nations in which the Arab spring occurred. In general, this revolution demonstrated how the country's labour movement could impinge on the whole regime of one country since the repeated strikes fuelled protests against Ben Ali's political regime (Anderson, 2011). The success of the Tunisian revolution and the overthrowing of Ben Ali's political regime played a significant role in the outbreak of the Egyptian revolution the success of which subsequently fuelled the unrest in Libya (Totten, 2012).

### 2.3. The Egyptian uprising

Inspired by the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, Egyptian political activists called for all Egyptians to participate in the demonstrations against the Mubarak regime that had lasted for 30 years. Arieff (2011) indicates that 'the uprising nonetheless appears to have inspired the reform and opposition movements in Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Algeria, and other countries (2011:1)'. Mubarak came to power in 1981 after the assassination of President Sadat. He remained in power from 1981 till 2011 when he was forced to step down (Cook, 2011; Sharp, 2011a; Witzel, 2012).

Generally speaking, in Egypt, political, social, and economic conditions were ripe for an uprising. The country had its own profile of appalling state brutality such as the killing of Khaled Said, a young man who, according to witnesses, was beaten to death in public by police in June 2010, his head slammed against the marble stairs and iron door of a building and his body dumped by the roadside. His family said he had been targeted because he had video evidence implicating police in a drug deal. In response, a Facebook page was set up called 'we

are all Khaled said'. This provided a rallying point for Egypt's youth (Idle and Nunns, 2011: 25-26).

Revolutionaries and political activists asked all of the Egyptian people to protest on January 25, 2011 (a national holiday to commemorate the police forces) to put an end to the lack of democracy, mistreatment by police forces, government corruption, poverty, unemployment, injustice and poor economic conditions. People were asked to take part in what activists called 'the day of rage'. It began in the form of street demonstrations in the capital city of Cairo and some other cities and grew into a national revolutionary movement in 18 days that put an end to Mubarak regime in February 11, 2011 even though government officials and the National Democratic Party (the ruling party during this time) insisted that Egypt was different from Tunisia and what happened in Tunisia could not happen in Egypt.

Two important facts need to be said about the Egyptian Revolution. First, almost all sectors of the Egyptian society were represented in this revolution. Muslims and Christians were side by side. Activists with secular, liberal, and religious backgrounds shared one common goal: the people wanted to overthrow the regime. Sharp (2011) emphasized that 'For the first time in the history of the modern Middle East, an Arab ruler has been overthrown by a popular, peaceful revolution that represented a wide swath of society, religiously and socioeconomically' (2011: 1). Secondly, the brutal response of the police forces against peaceful unarmed demonstrators made it difficult or even impossible for demonstrators to accept any compromise proposed by the President or any of the ruling party. The peaceful and civilized response of the demonstrators to the brutality of police officers was praised by world leaders and observers who supported the Egyptian cause and asserted the right of Egyptian citizens and revolutionaries to lead a new life based on equality, liberty, and justice.

#### 2.4. The Libyan uprising

Because the Libyan uprising is the most important event in this current study because all of the interviewees (both the students and lecturers) live in Libya, and the university representing the context of this study is Sebha University, a Libyan university, it is important to provide background information about Libya in terms of its geography, population, social and political environment, and the makeup of Libyan community. Such information is important in order understand the factors that triggered the Libyan revolution and to fathom how Libyan lecturers

and students were affected by news channels and broadcasts in shaping their opinions and reflections about the Libyan revolution in particular and Arab spring in general.

#### 2.4.1. The geography of Libya

Libya is the fifteenth largest country in the world with an approximate area of 1,759,540 square kilometres of landmass. Libya is located in North Africa on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, it is bordered on the south by Sudan, Niger, and Chad, on the east by Egypt, and on the west by Algeria and northwest by Tunisia. Libya's coastline is about 1,770 kilometres, all of which is on the Mediterranean Sea.

In Libya, there are narrow enclaves of fertile lowlands along the Mediterranean coast in addition to a vast expanse of arid and rocky plains and sand seas inwards to the south. In addition, there is only one true mountain, which is called 'the Tibesti', located in the southern desert of Libya. In spite of its large areas of landmass, only less than 5 % of Libya's territory is useful economically. Moreover, Libya is characterised by a lack of rivers apart from the two kilometre long and permanently flowing river called the 'Wadi Kiam'. There are two prevailing climates in Libya which relate to the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara Desert. The former is dominant in the coastal lowlands, where most of the population lives, whilst the latter affects the desert interior which is characterised by very hot summers and extreme diurnal temperature ranges. It is worth mentioning that less than 2% of the whole country receives enough rainfall for settled agriculture. For example, the Jabal areas located in the North receive an annual average of 381 to 508 millimetres of rain. However, other regions get less than 203 millimetres per annum. Thus, severe droughts are common. Due to the desert conditions, winter is described as bitterly cold, with temperatures below 0° C and frost and snowfalls sometimes occur in the higher areas (Sharaf, 1995).

Although there are not enough fertile areas for agriculture owing to the lack of rivers and low levels of rainfall, Libya is counted as a rich county in terms of natural resources because of its oil and natural gas reserves, which, as a result, dominate its economy (Almansory, 1995). Figure 2 shows a map of Libya which indicates where the most geographic features are apparent.

Figure 2: A geographic map of Libya<sup>4</sup>



Figure 2 A map of Libya

#### 2.4.2. The population of Libya

Libya is counted as an under-populated country with only about 6 million population (2014 census). The overall population density is approximately 3.5 persons in each square kilometre. Additionally, the population is unevenly distributed; virtually all people live the densely settled coastal strip of the Mediterranean Sea, mainly in Tripoli, which is the capital and largest city. The most prevalent ethnic groups within the country are either Arab or Berber in origin. However, the current Libyan population is arguably composed of several distinct ethnic groups. The majority identify themselves as Arabs who originally brought both the Arab language and culture to Libya between the seventh and eleventh centuries. However, intermarriage of Arabs with the indigenous peoples including Berbers has predominately produced a very mixed strain, resulting in the fact that few Libyans might substantiate claims to pure Arab ancestry. Accordingly, the Arabic-speaking Muslims of mixed Arab and Berber ancestry constitute approximately 90 percent of the country's current population. The remainder is made up of the indigenous minority peoples such as Berber and black Africans. On the other hand, there are

<sup>4</sup> The source is <http://africaanswerman.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Libya-physical-map2.gif>. Retrieved on 12-11-2014

small but scattered groups of Greeks, Muslim Cretans, Maltese, and Armenians who constitute long-established communities, especially in urban areas.

According to Otman and Karlberg (2007), Libya is suffering from a decrease in the overall number of families. For instance, the family percentage to the whole population was 6.65 in 1995 (721358), whilst in 2006 this figure was only 5.89 with only 963,899 families in total. Otman and Karlberg (2007) highlighted three underlying reasons for such a decrease:

- 1- The cultural acceptance and usage of the birth control have become more prevalent in Libya in the last decades.
- 2- People are becoming inclined to get married at older ages, which has played a role in delaying or postponing marriages.
- 3- Women have gained increasing opportunities for work. In comparison to previous years, Libyan women have begun to occupy various jobs in different workplaces, resulting in a delimiting of the number of new births.

### 2.1. Historical background

Libya achieved independence from Italy in 1951. Its name is conventionally thought to be derived from the name of a single Berber tribe known to the ancient Egyptians. Then, the name 'Libya' was used by the Greeks referring to most parts of North Africa. Until the twentieth century, this name was not designated for the current Libyan nation since the whole area of North Africa used to form a coherent undivided political unit which was named as The Maghrib, the western Islamic world of northwest Africa, which usually included Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya (Beblawi, 1987).

Indeed, Libya was influenced to various degrees by many consecutive, diverse nations and empires, such as the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, to name just a few. Generally speaking, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Muslim Arabs, Ottoman Turks, and Italian military forces all made their mark and left their heritage on Libya. Being an Italian colony, Libya was occupied after World War II by the allied forces (British and French) until the United Nations (UN) General Assembly passed a resolution affirming that Libya should gain its independence before January 1, 1952. Consequently, Libya declared its independence as a constitutional, hereditary monarchy under the reign of Muhammad Idris (King Idris I) on December 24, 1951 (Vandewalle, 2012).

In September 1969, a military but bloodless coup by Muammar al Gadhafi happened, resulting in declaration of a new Libyan Arab Republic. Then, Gadhafi became the de facto head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces. He maintained absolute power and authority as the head of a military dictatorship. By the beginning of 1980s, Because of al Gadhafi's confrontational policy against the West and his developing relationships with the Soviet Union, Libya suffered a series of international sanctions, resulting in political and economic isolation and decline for Libya especially in the last decade of the last century. The sanctions brought about rising import costs and inflation in Libya's domestic economy, leading to a deteriorating living standard for most of Libya's citizens. Although the last years of Gadhafi witnessed the lifting of the 11-year-long UN sanctions against Libya and peoples' living standards were slightly improved (Bellamy, 2011).

#### 2.4.3. Social and cultural aspects of life in Libya

Libya is considered to be an indispensable part of the Arab world<sup>5</sup> (Dekmejian, 1995). Similar to other Arab countries, Libya is best characterized by the extended family, tribe, clan, and village, which all play a significant role in the whole community and relationships. In addition, personal connection as well the kinship are very important in shaping one's business and economic relationships in addition to other aspects including career promotion or even appointments, which is less affected by the real practical experience and/or academic performance or achievement (Aгнаia, 1997; Ahmad, 2004) (Hudaïd 2003). In addition, there is a strong connection between what an individual does and his /her tribe or family. That is because individuals are often identified directly with their families and tribes; thus, any good or even bad deeds carried out by an individual are robustly correlated with any fame or shame which may as a result occur to the family or tribe which he/she belongs to. Therefore, an individual's behaviour in various life situations is considered an indication of expressions of his/her family, clan, and tribe patterns (Aгнаia, 1997).

The Islamic religion and teachings are considered an underling factor in much of Libyan life having a vital part in the individuals' and community's relationships among one another in Libyan social and cultural aspects and lifestyles (Fatòhalâi *et al.*, 1977). It is worth telling that

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<sup>5</sup> The Arab world consists of the 22 countries and territories of the Arab League. It stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Arabian Sea in the east, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the north to the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean in the southeast (Dekmejian 1995)

most of the ideals and values the Libyan community celebrate are derived completely or partially from Islamic teachings and principles which do inherently call for social harmony and integration. Of these ideals and values are equality among all people whatever they are, social justice, and tolerance to other religions and beliefs (Kilani, 1988; Ahmad, 2004; Pratten and Mashat, 2009).

#### 2.4.5. Economic Systems of Libya

As mentioned above, Libya depends heavily on its oil and natural gas exports in order to bolster its economy. Libya is the 11<sup>th</sup> biggest exporter of oil in the world and is also very rich in terms of the natural gas reserves. Despite these huge reserves, the Libyan government has attempted to increase the life of its oil reserves through depending on natural gas for local consumption instead of oil which is mainly transported to the western countries, including Italy, Germany, and Switzerland (World Markets Research Center, 2002). It is important to highlight that Libya's exports of oil commenced at the turn of the current century but bearing in mind that Libya was not able to export its oil products to most of the world because of the UN sanctions which were suspended in 1999 when Moammar Gadhafi complied with the conditions posed by the UN. However, the country allocated a large amount of money in order to establish industrial companies by investing in non-oil sectors, resulting in a huge development in this sector which now contributes approximately 70 % of its GDP (Aгнаia, 1997). Although there are less arable lands in Libya, agriculture is also becoming a very important sector in the Libyan economy. The main crops are olive, dates, citrus, fruits, wheat, and barley whilst the main livestock are sheep, goats, cattle, chickens, and camels (the latter being especially prevalent in the desert regions). In addition, there are some industries related to fishing which focus on harvesting sardines and tuna (Aгнаia, 1997).

In addition, Libya is also rich in iron and salt, which are its greatest natural resources (behind oil and natural gas) which thus contribute a significant portion of the Libyan economy. However, the development of such natural resources were stymied by the lack of effective and trustworthy infrastructure. The main reason for the lack of such infrastructure is the absence of sufficient finance for building a rail and road links in addition to the fact that there is limited extraction of the construction materials that would be necessary for such developments (Central Bank of Libya, 2002).

## 2.4.6. Libyan Higher education

### 2.4.6.1. A brief history

Many studies have argued for the assumption that the Libyan Higher Education system has, similar to other world countries, a vital part in Libya's whole economic, cultural, demographic, and social development (El-Hawat, 1996; Clark, 2004; Rhema and Miliszewska, 2010). In addition to helping reduce illiteracy rates, the Libyan universities produce many highly qualified experts and professionals whose main goal is to cope with all global advances that may impact on the country. Since the outset, universities have been an indispensable part in the Libyan higher education system. In 1950s, the Libyan University was established with two campuses in Benghazi and Tripoli. Several schools (i.e., faculties) were gradually incorporated within this university; of these faculties are the schools of Arts and Education, Economics, Science and Commerce, and Law (Herrera, 2007). In 1970, both the schools of Medicine and Arabic and Islamic Studies were established and annexed to the Libyan University. Other schools were afterwards incorporated within this university.

As a response to recent developments and the increase in student numbers, the Libyan University was divided into two independent universities in 1973. These universities are the University of Tripoli and the University of Benghazi. However, both of the universities were re-named: the University of El-Faateh and the University of Gar-Yunis, respectively (Sawahel, 2009). Afterwards, other universities were inaugurated in order to cope with the resurgent number of students who seek for higher education. By 1995, thirteen universities had been opened. However, the number of universities was reduced to nine as an attempt to re-organize the Libyan higher education (Rhema and Miliszewska, 2012). ***Figure (3) shows the most six popular universities in Libya:***



★ 6 Main Universities site

*Figure 3 Main Universities Site Libya*

In addition, as a response to the increasing number of students and public universities, it is permitted for the private sector to establish their own university colleges and higher education institutions. The main argument for such decisions is that the private universities are self-financed and can subsume many students, resulting in reducing the pressure on the public universities. For the period (1997-2000), five private universities were established and began accepting students within similar standards adopted by their counterparts, the public universities (El-Hawat, 2003).

It should be stressed that all universities in Libya underwent a series of changes in terms of speciality and focus. In detail, the university were first single, state-run, and multi-purpose university. Due to successive governmental refinements to the higher system in Libya, the universities became decentralised either generalist or specialist universities (Alfaidy and Ibrahim, 1997).

#### 2.4.6.2. Higher technical, educational and vocational institutions

Regarding the higher technical and vocational institutions, in 1980 such institutions were erected and opened due to the government policy adopted at the time. This policy was known

as the ‘New Educational Structure for Higher Education’ Clark (2004). More than 54 institutions were opened, and other institutions were opened later. As a result, 84 higher technical and vocational institutions were constructed by 2000. On the other hand, as a response to the governments’ policy at the time to take care of science and cope with the latest technologies invested, new scientific institutions named as ‘Scientific Research Centres’ were established all over the country. Such institutions were concerned with various scientific topics, most notably health, pharmacy, the environment, and basic (pure) sciences (Clark, 2004). In a related vein, many research and educational institutions were established. For instance, several higher institutes specialized in teachers’ training were opened to be a continuation to the already existing secondary teacher training schools whose main interest was to graduate primary school teachers. The following table shows the main majors the students can enrol in the Libyan universities (Kenan *et al.*, 2013).

**Table 1: Enrolment in University Education after getting the specialized secondary education certificate<sup>6</sup>**

<b>Division</b>	<b>University Faculties the students enrol in</b>
Basic Sciences	Sections of faculty of science: Math, Statistics, Physics, Earth Sciences, Computing, Meteorology, Faculty of Education, Higher Vocational Training Centres
Engineering Sciences	Various Sections of the Faculty of Engineering, and Faculty of Education, Higher Vocational Training Centres
Life Sciences	Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Veterinary, Medical Technology, Faculty of Education, Higher Institutes of Health, Faculty of Science Departments (Plant and Animal)
Economic Sciences	Economy, Accounting, Administrative Sciences, Faculty of Education, Higher Vocational Training Centres
Social Sciences	Literature, Law, Political Sciences, Physical Education, Arts and Media Languages Language Departments, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education

*Table 1 Enrolment in the university*

<sup>6</sup> Source: Resolution of the General People’s Committee for Education (2007)

#### 2.4.6.3. Aspects in students' enrolment in Libyan Higher education

According to Clark (2004), since 1980s there has been a rapid increase in the students who enrol in the universities and the higher centres and institutions. It is required that all of the students obtain a secondary Education Certificate. Since 1990, all of such universities and institutions require at the minimum an overall score of 65% of the Secondary Education Examinations, bearing in mind that some technical schools including medicine and engineering require higher scores. Differently, for the students (who passed the secondary school test) having an overall score less than 65%, they are allowed to enrol in higher training and vocational institutes. Due to El-Hawat (2003), there is in the main an imbalance between the number of students who are registered in the humanities, social sciences, and arts, as compared to those registered in the schools of sciences, medicine, and engineering technology.

With regard to female students' enrolment in the higher education institutions in Libya, it should be noted that female students are increasingly allowed and accepted at such institutions (Al-Nouri, 1995). As is clear from Table 2, the number of female students increased considerably (i.e., doubled) in less than 20 years.

**Table2: Percentage of Female Students in Libyan Universities 1980-1999<sup>7</sup>**

Year	No of male students	No of female students	Total	%
1980-81	15,259	4,056	19,315	21
1991-92	40,094	32,805	72,899	45
1992-93	52,568	48,525	101,093	48
1993-94	64,069	52,413	116,473	45
1995-96	66,775	60,499	127,274	51
1996-97	90,112	70,000	160,112	51
1998-99	81,807	83,640	165,447	51

*Table 2 Female students in Libyan University*

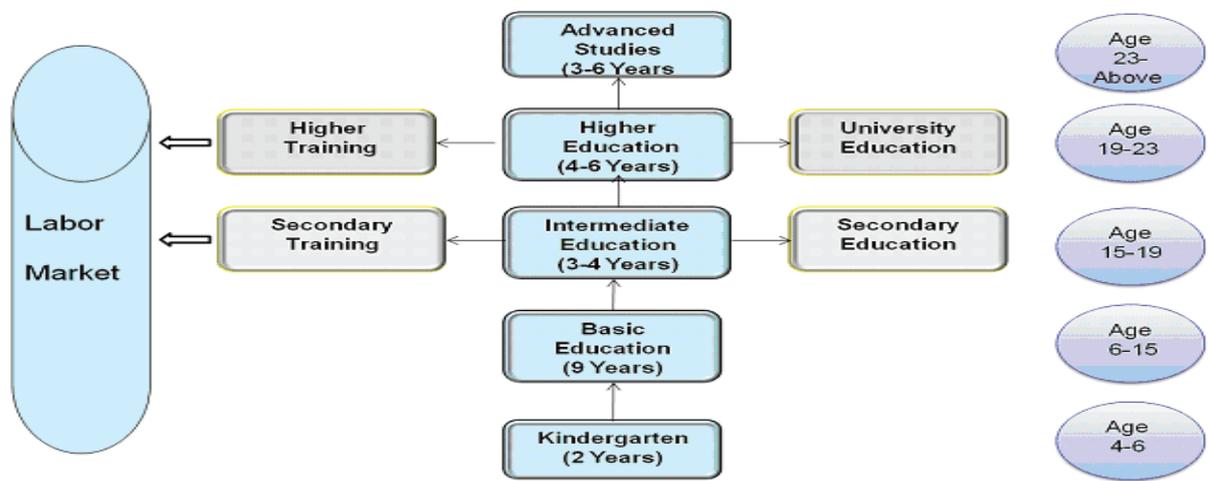
As is shown above, during the academic year 1980-81, there were only 4,056 female students, who stand for 21% of all students, whilst by the academic year 1998-1999, female students constitute about 51% of the total number of students enrolling in the higher education

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<sup>7</sup> The source: UNESCO.

institutions. According to the latest numbers published by UNISCO, this increase in female numbers is still consistent.

Libya was considered one of the pioneering Arab and African countries in sponsoring students abroad. For example, in 1978, more than 3,000 students were sponsored to study in the United States. This number reflects the efforts exerted by the local governments at the time to enhance higher education qualities and standards through sponsoring students to study in the leading world universities. However, such sponsorships were declined due to the sanctions imposed by the United Nations in 1986. Indeed, such sanctions restricted the travel to the United States and other European countries by Libyan nationals (Simons, 1993), resulting in reducing the overall number of the students attending world-leading universities, as compared to the situations before the sanctions. As of 1999, the year when the economic and political sanctions were suspended, sponsoring the students abroad has commenced, resulting in the increase of the students' number who study abroad El-Hawat (2003). According to the National Committee for Libyan Universities (2010), the overall total number of Libyan students who enrol in the Libyan and international Higher Institutes and Universities was approximately (324,506) for the academic year 2009-2010). *Figure (4) sketches the general picture of education in Libya including the higher education.*



**Figure4: Structure of the Education System in Libya<sup>8</sup>(Kenan et al., 2013)**

*Figure 4 Picture of education in Libya*

<sup>8</sup> Source: Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. World Data on Education (2007)

#### 2.4.6.4. Problems in the higher education in Libya

Several studies conducted before the Arab Spring have indicated that higher education in Libya suffered from many problems. Such problems made this system less-organized and less productive than it should have been. In this regard, Kenan *et al.* (2013) indicated that there have been few studies which were carried out on the problems facing higher education system in Libya. This study demonstrated that recent literature and research has shown that there was a significant gap in the higher education levels. The main problem was, the claim goes, related to the rapid growth of learning institutions as university colleges have spread across Libya. In addition, the study argued that another problem related to the Libyan higher education system is the ban of foreign language in Libya. On reviewing the related literature reviews, policy document content analysis, quality assurance policies analysis, the study corroborated the significant gap (highlighted by several studies) in higher education levels. It voices the problems that higher education in Libya suffers from, most notably:

- There is a problem in defining the vision observed in scenarios such as the pillars of strategic planning which defines the institution's mission and objectives and efforts in the community and excellence.
- There is a dire lack of development and training programs for faculty members leading to poor participation in such areas further deteriorating the quality of the system.
- Lack of a concept of quality assurance is nascent in the system. Its impact on the creation and activation of good practices in the educational process is very negative. This has led to poor management of the system and important aspects of the education system in principal.
- It has been observed that there is a typical centralization of decisions within universities and non-activation of the duties enshrined in the organizational structure of universities. This has dire effect on policy and administration.
- There are notable failures in accountability whereby personal interest overrides those of the institution and state coffers. This is culpable to stifling development of the institutions.

Unstable administration and constant change in the regulations and systems of the study programs in the institutions of higher learning make it difficult to develop

strategic plans for the same further deteriorating the system capacity and quality'. (p. 748)

Additionally, the study provided a set of recommendations to deal with the problems in the higher education in Libya including:

- 'Review the regulations and administrative procedures to catapult newer efficient procedures in the universities in line with the functions and activities of the offices of quality. It should also address the issue of roles in the education system where roles should be well defined to exert pressure on delivery and task accomplishment. This will improve strategy execution ensure quality in university programs.
- The need to work on the empowerment of academic leaders (faculties and departments) to perform its functions is important. This can be achieved through expanding the size of the powers granted to it especially in relation to spending on programs and academic activities with the provision of mechanisms for accountability at all levels of administration and management structure with the activation of internal rules and regulations for all colleges and departments.
- Activate quality assurance departments in universities and colleges to intensify awareness and training. This will ensure quality education and culture is entrenched in the institutional values.
- Establish a relationship between learners and their lecturers to ease the burden of teaching as in the case of the law graduate departments to meet faculty members' specialist fields with the of course content' (p 749)

The above is Problems in the higher education in Libya and a set of recommendations to deal with the problems in the higher education in Libya.

## 2.5. Libyan uprising of 2011

Immediately after the success of the Egyptian Revolution and the removal of Mubarak, the Libyan people felt that they were being equally badly treated by President Gaddafi and they called for a change and for the freedom of speech and democracy that were denied by Gaddafi who remained in power for 42 years. The Libyan youth in particular felt that they had no future

and they have never known any leader except Gaddafi (Blundy and Lycett, 1987). One common perception was that people felt that their ancestors fought against the Western colonialism (The Italian occupation) and ended up with national dictators and thus they were displeased with the way Gaddafi used national wealth and resources on his personal luxuries and trivial ambitions (Blundy and Lycett, 1987; Wright, 2012).

In the face of this, demonstrations began in Benghazi following the arrest of some human rights activists and lawyers who defended more than 1,000 prisoners allegedly massacred by security forces in Abu Salim prison in Tripoli in 1996. Peaceful demonstrations were met with military force. In their turn, the National Conference of the Libyan Opposition called for ‘a day of rage’ on February 17, 2011. Protests and demonstrations spread all across the country and Gaddafi was finally killed at the hands of the revolutionaries in October, 2011(Lacher, 2011).

An important fact about the Libyan Revolution is the intervention of the NATO forces and their support to the Libyan revolutionaries. In response to the use of the military force against the Libyan citizens and demonstrators, the League of the Arab Nations called for world community support (Edström and Gyllensporre, 2012). It is also worth noting that the Libyan President Gaddafi was killed unlike the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt where Ben Ali fled from the country and Mubarak was put on trial (Filiu, 2011; Vira and Cordesman, 2011).

## 2.6. Other Arab spring-related uprising

### 2.6.1. The Yemeni uprising

Inspired by the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, Yemeni political activists and opposition parties called for demonstrations against the lack of democracy they experienced during the reign of Ali Abdullah Saleh who remained in power for more than 30 years since being elected by the Yemeni Parliament in 1978. As was the case in Tunisia and Egypt, the Yemenis revolted against unemployment, poverty, and government corruption. In spite of all the proposals and promises made by Saleh, demonstrators forced him to resign. After a year of protests and demonstrations, Saleh stepped down and formally handed over power to the new President Abdulrahman Mansour al-Hadi on February 27, 2012(Dalacoura, 2012; Saleh *et al.*, 2014; Shehata, 2014).

### 2.6.2. The Syrian uprising

In response to the calls for democracy that swept over the Arab world by the end of 2010, President Bashar al-Assad officially declared in January 2011 that Syrian society was stable and the government immune to revolt. In an interview after the success of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt and the removal of the ruling parties in both countries, he insisted that Syria was dissimilar to Tunisia nor Egypt. However, with the fall of the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, thousands of ordinary Syrians took to the streets calling for an end to Assad's regime. On March 15, 2011, protesters in Syria began to repeat the slogans used in Egypt such as: 'The People Want to Overthrow the Regime'. The Syrian people revolted against President Bashar al-Assad who succeeded his father Hafez al-Assad who had ruled Syria since 1970. Once again, the protestors asked for freedom, justice, and political and economic reforms. However, since 2011, the lives of the revolutionaries and the Syrians have taken unexpected turns as Syria itself has undergone violent transformation (Mabrouk, 2012; Hokayem, 2013)

In his statement on the second anniversary of the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad, General Salim Idriss, the leader of the Syrian opposition's military wing commented that the situation remained very complicated and commentators describe what is happening there as a 'civil war' (Macleod and Flamand, 2011; O'Bagy, 2012).

### 2.7. Conclusion

This section has provided an overview of the Arab Spring uprisings. It has showed how these uprisings were influenced and triggered by each other. It has been shown that the dramatic changes began with the Tunisian uprising, followed by other uprisings including, notably, those in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria, respectively. Despite the fact that these uprisings happened at different times and in different countries, the main reasons and factors triggering them and making them critical incidents in the countries concerned have been shown to be similar with factors including a lack of real democracy, rampant corruption, and inequality among citizens. Table 1 below shows the main outcomes of the Arab Spring uprisings as a whole. In addition, this section has highlighted certain aspects of Libya including its geography, population, historical background, economy, and social and cultural life. It has revealed that Libya is a very rich country in terms of natural resources but most notably oil and natural gas. However, people therein have suffered from deteriorating living standards caused by Gadhafi's own antagonizing policy toward other nations.

**Table 3: The results of the Arab Spring uprisings**

No	Country	outcomes
1-	Tunisia	Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the head of the state, fled to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and a new government was formed
2-	Egypt	Mohammad Hosni Mubarak, the head of the state, stepped down and was afterwards sued and jailed. New elections occurred. However, the newly elected president, Mohammad Morsi, was removed by the military in a coup d'état following a second revolution that came after months of protests.
3-	Libya	The Government was defeated by armed revolt with UN-mandated military intervention. Moammar Al-Gadhafi was killed by rebel forces and a new government was formed
4-	Yemen	The head of the state was forced to step down and a new government was formed.
5-	Syria	A civil war between the government and the rebel who are mainly derived from the army

*Table 3the result of the Arab spring uprising*

This section has highlighted certain aspects of Libya including its geography, population, historical background, economy, and social and cultural life. It has revealed that Libya is a very rich country in terms of natural resources but most notably oil and natural gas. However, people

therein have suffered from deteriorating living standards caused by Gadhafi' own antagonizing policy toward other nations.

## Chapter 3 Literature review

### 3.1. Introduction

The ultimate goal of the current thesis is to shed light on how media depicts the main events of the Arab Spring and its concomitant effects on students and staff at one Libyan university. Therefore, it is imperative to elaborate on and contextualize the status of the higher education of Libya. Such an elaboration is significant so as to reach a comprehensive understanding of the potential effects of mass media on the Libyan higher education. In relation to this, the following discussion is divided into five sections:

- section (3.2.) provides the impacts of the armed conflicts on education;
- section (3.3) reviews the works conducted on the effects of the Arab Spring on Libya education;
- section (3.4) provides a brief literature review on the media's role in armed conflicts;
- section (3.5) provides a sketch on this role in Arab Spring;
- section (3.6) concludes the work of this chapter.

### 3.2. The impacts of the armed conflicts on education

In this section, I review the main works that report the impact of armed conflict on education both in Arab countries and worldwide. This review is important as it provides us with tangible clues about the negative impact of war and armed conflict on all people's life sides, including education. I begin my review with the works that show the impacts of the armed conflicts worldwide, afterwards I shed light on such impact on Arab countries which share with Libya the same language, culture, and religion.

Much of the recent literature argues for the assumption that armed conflicts between countries can impinge on the quality of the education in the countries which are involved in such conflicts (Davies, 2012). Additionally, several studies indicate that such impacts can be larger if armed conflicts are civil, that is, within the same country (Urdal, 2004). Based on statistics on conflicts, internal armed conflicts are by far more frequent and devastating than conflicts between countries. The reasons for civil conflicts are varied, depending on the countries where they occur. Some studies link the Cold War between the USA and former USSR with many internal

conflicts in world countries. However, such conflicts occur almost as frequently as after the Cold War finishes (Urdal, 2004).

According to UNESCO (2011), the most major impacts of the armed conflicts on people are in general represented in loss, injury, insecurity, dislocation of family, displacement, and community life, and psychological trauma. Such effects can deprive students (both at the school level and at the level of universities) of their rights in education because universities and schools might be not safe place and potential danger for their lives (Gates *et al.*, 2012).

In this regard, Lai and Thyne (2007) investigated the devastating impact of armed civil wars and the post-civil war circumstances on the educational expenditures and enrolment. In order to do just this, the authors considered two causal mechanisms. Firstly, they argued that armed civil wars are possible to cripple the educational system in a given country and led to the partial or complete loss of infrastructure and personnel. Secondly, they postulated that a less pernicious cause might be the drawing away of available funds for the increased military expenditure in order to fight the civil war. In addition, the percentage change in educational expenditures and primary, secondary, and tertiary enrolment for all states from 1980 through 1997 was analysed depending on UNISCO-derived data. The study indicated that armed civil war can be represented as a devastating danger for a whole system of education (schools and universities) because both enrolment and expenditures decline within the civil war. In addition, the study maintained that no support was detected or found for the re-allocation of education funds for the military spending during the civil war.

Lai and Thyne (2007) attested the generally-held assumption that it is of profound importance to deal with the social costs and negative impacts and aspects of a civil war (cf. Collier, 1999; Welsch, 2008; Walter, 2009). Furthermore, it argued that civil wars do not simply impose social costs due to the increased expenditure allocated to the military costs but also severely disrupt a state's internal ability to make available even the basic social services which are represented in education (Regan and Norton, 2005).

Akresh and De Walque (2008) assumed that civil wars are among the most destructive factors having devastating impacts on the various social phenomena, including effects on the wellbeing of children of the school-going age. The study focused strongly on Rwanda as a case study to corroborate this assumption. To this end, the study relied on two cross-sectional household

surveys which were collected before and after the armed conflict and included both children from the same age group who were and were not exposed to the armed conflict. The study found out that children who were exposed to civil armed conflicts experienced a sharp drop in terms of their educational achievement. For instance, the affected children were 15 percentage points less likely to complete third or fourth grade as compared to the children who did not experience such conflicts. This study came up with the finding that armed conflict affects the education badly and limits the chances for the students to complete their primary and secondary education and presumably their higher education.

Justino (2011) discusses the available empirical research on the effect of the violent conflict at the level and access to education of civilian and combatant populations who were affected by violence. Firstly, the study reviewed the empirical research available on this particular issue. The study found out that there were three related results of this empirical research. The study indicated that recent research maintained that relatively minor shocks to educational access can lead to key and long-lasting negative impacts on individual human capital formation in regard to the educational attainment, health outcomes and labour market opportunities. Additionally, this comparatively recent research found out that destruction of infrastructure, the absence of teachers and reductions in schooling capacity affect secondary schooling and higher education disproportionately. Thirdly, the study indicated (following related literature) that the exposure of households to violence results in significant gender differentials in individual educational outcomes. In addition, this study addressed the specific mechanisms which connect the violent conflict with the educational outcomes, focusing on six significant mechanisms which are: soldiering, household labour allocation decisions, fear, changes in returns to education, targeting of schools, teachers and students and displacement. The study reached the conclusion that the detrimental impacts of the armed conflict affected all level of education (i.e., secondary, higher, etc.) through all of these six mechanisms.

Shemyakina (2011) investigated the differences in regional and temporal exposure to the 1992–1998 armed conflict in Tajikistan in order to determine the impact of violent conflict on schooling and university outcomes. The study made use of the data on the past damage to a household's residences from the 1999 Tajik Living Standards Survey and the data on the events during the conflict. The main findings of the study indicate that girls who were of school age during the conflict and who lived in affected regions were less likely to continue their schooling and hence university than those girls who lived in the regions which were unaffected by conflict.

Thus, living in regions affected by civil conflict made it difficult for students especially the girls to complete their education. The study also found that exposure to violent conflict had a statistically significant negative effect on the students' enrolment in the schools and universities. What is interesting in this study was the finding that girls and boys are different in terms of likelihood of their enrolment to the schools and universities. Further, the study found that male students are less affected by the regional and household conflict than the girls. The latter finding might be ascribed to the conservative nature of the Tajikistan culture (which is in this respect similar to that of Libya) where girls tend to be kept at home when conflicts occur.

By the same token, Bell and Huebler (2011) addressed the effect of the armed conflict on the population of 25 countries, focusing mainly on the potential detrimental impacts of the exposure to conflict on the educational attainment in particular and literacy in general. The study relied on the household survey data conducted by the 'Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys' between 2000 and 2008. Such surveys include analysis at both the national (i.e., local) and sub-national level. The results indicated that it is highly likely that armed conflicts leave behind devastating effects on people either at present or in the future. Crucially for this study, of these impacts the most notably are the limitation in the number of people with formal schooling, decreased literacy rates, and fewer average years of education in all of the counties surveyed. It was also suggested that in many countries certain gaps emerged because of the conflicts. Of these gaps are those between marginalized groups, including women, and the rest of the people. The study indicated that in the communities where such gaps already exist; the armed conflicts have substantial roles in worsening such gaps. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that the lasting impact of conflict on education is very large for a large and diverse set of countries surveyed.

Similarly, Justino *et al.* (2011) investigated The Timor Leste secession conflict which lasted for 25 years in Indonesia. Their study focused on the social impacts of this conflict including its bad effects on education. Overall, the study provided a brief overview of this conflict. For example, it mentioned that the peak of the conflict was the incidence of violence in 1999, following the overall withdrawal of the Indonesian troops. As a result, huge displacement and entrenched destruction resulted with massively negative consequences for the economic and social development of the country, including the higher education. Then, the authors addressed the short-term effect of the 1999 violence on the school attendance and the grade deficit rates

in 2001. Furthermore, the study investigated the longer-term negative effect of the armed conflict on the children's primary school completion in 2007. The educational impact of the 1999 wave of violence was compared with the impact of other periods with high-intensity violence within the 25 years of Indonesian occupation. The study comes up with the finding that the short-term impacts of the armed conflict are varied. However, the study found out that in the longer term, there was a strong negative impact of the conflict on the primary school completion among the boys of the school age exposed to the peaks of violence within the 25-year long conflict.

Contrary to many studies indicating that girls were more prone to the bad effects of the armed conflict, the study by Shemaykina (cf. Shemyakina, 2011) found that the boys attending the last three grades of primary school were affected more severely than girls. In general, the study maintained that the armed conflict resulted in massive loss of human capital among the young males in Timor Leste since the early 1970s. Such massive loss resulted, in turn, from household investment trade-offs between education and economic survival.

Poirier (2012) states that most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (of which Libya is a part) have been badly affected by armed conflicts in the past decades. Using a time-series cross-sectional database, this study attempted to analyse and measure the effect of such conflicts on a sample of 43 countries in Africa from (1950 to 2010). Much emphasis was placed through this study on the impact of such armed conflicts on education both the primary and the higher. The study found that armed conflicts, most notably the civil wars, have considerably negative impacts on the educational performances of the countries investigated. Such bad effects weigh heavily on the rate of children who do not attend school and the secondary school enrolment rates. Such effects on the overall rate of children and students have devastating effects on universities and the rates therein. Additionally, the study indicated that military expenditure is significantly and inversely associated with schooling opportunities and hence on the higher education improvements and refinements. Similar to Shemyakina (2011), this study maintained that armed conflicts, including the civil disorder, have detrimental effects on girls' education.

Oyelere and Wharton (2013) analysed in detail the negative effects of 40 of low-intensity internal armed conflict in Colombia. The authors stated this conflict made Colombia home to over 3 million internally displaced persons. The study focused on the effect of violence on a children's education, given the fact that this education plays a significant role in increasing

both the human capital and productivity. In particular, the study addressed the education accumulation and enrolment gaps caused by this low-intensity conflict with special emphasis on internally displaced persons. As for the research approach, the study first showed that measuring the negative effect of conflict on the children who used the levels of conflict at the municipal level underestimates the education enrolment and accumulation gaps. Subsequently, the education accumulation and enrolment gaps for IDPs were estimated in comparison to the non-migrants and other migrants who used various econometric methods and, as a result, it was suggested that a significant education accumulation gap for the children of internally displaced persons was noticed as compared to the non-migrants. This gap widens to approximately half a year at the secondary level. The results did not find any enrolment gaps at the primary level once the appropriate controls were included. However, the study found out that there was a lower probability of enrolment at the secondary and hence university level.

In addition, much literature argued that armed civil conflicts played a significant role in the so-called 'brain drain' from the higher education institutions. In relation to this, Sadat (2004) stated that during decades of Afghanistan civil conflict, Afghanistan lost approximately 20,000 experts and academics through death and displacement. Similarly, Dizdar and Kemal (1996) reported similar patterns in Bosnia where 'brain drain' was classed the most negative impact of war on higher education. In addition, the armed civil conflicts in one country worsens the other factors responsible for the 'brain drain' including economic insecurity, physical insecurity, disruption to academic life, and wartime devaluation of academia (Okeke, 2013).

In conclusion, it can be argued that armed civil conflicts have both short-term and long-term destructive effects which might remain entrenched in the regions where the conflicts happen. Such effects have massively negative impacts on the education in hampering the students to attend their schools and universities, which in turn have negative impacts on their achievement and enrolments. By and large, recent research on the micro-level effects of violent conflict has shown that the negative impacts of conflict on labour market participation, health status of individuals, and households educational outcomes which in turn have negative impacts on the educational outcomes and students' life (Akbulut-Yuksel, 2009).

There is ample evidence that the same effects as outlined in the literature above, also occur in the Arab nations. For instance, Brück *et al.* (2014) investigated the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the likelihood to pass the final high-school exam which are necessary

for Palestinian students to enrol at the universities in the West Bank during the Second Intifada (2000-2006). The study addressed the within-school variation which is related to the number of the conflict-related Palestinian fatalities during the academic year. The study findings indicated that the conflict played a significant role in reducing the likelihood to pass the final exam and to be enrolled to the university. In addition to providing evidence of the heterogeneous effects of this conflict in terms of the ability of the student as well as the type of violent event the student is exposed to, the study examined the potential transmission mechanisms which can be followed in order to avoid such effects in the future.

### 3.3. The effect of the Arab Spring on Libyan Education

The 2011-armed conflict caused by the Arab Spring in Libya affected every aspect of the daily life, most notably education. Indeed, this conflict hampered the ongoing progress and jeopardized the gains which were built up over generations. The Arab Spring disrupted the economic growth and advances in nutrition, health, housing, education and employment (Hakimian, 2011). In relation to this, the Libyan League for the Human Rights reported that the overall amount of the material losses reached (\$575 billion). The conflict had a serious impact on the provision and service delivery of education, as the educational infrastructure was considerably damaged. Needless to say, schools, universities, and institutes were changed to be places of recruitment of soldiers (Lacher, 2011).

According to Detrie (2011), many universities across the country were closed or operating shoestring services since the start of the Libyan Arab Spring. Detrie (2011) argued that such conflict had a lasting impact on university education in Libya. The study added that this blockage in higher education was reported by Media which show that fighting has heavily damaged universities in several Libyan cities including Misrata. On the whole, the massive negative effect of this conflict on many Libyan cities resulted in damage and destruction of buildings (including schools, universities, and training centres, libraries and laboratories). In addition, the conflict caused power outages and destruction in the educational infrastructure and equipment like computer networks, internet servers, TV transmitters, computers, TV sets, and AV projectors. Furthermore, the effect has detrimental impacts on the unavailability of transportation which was mainly triggered by the lack of fuel and security. All of these impacts,

in turn, resulted in closure of educational institutions because of detention of students and instructors.

Detrie (2011) indicated that many students and instructors were displaced in search of safety. Such obligatory displacements deprived the students of their right to study at their educational institutions, and their teachers were no longer able to teach. It should be stressed that most of the international aid for these refugees is used for food, water, shelter, and health purposes while little support was allocated for education. On the other hand, Detrie (2011) added that the higher education students in many cities such as Zawia and Yefren found themselves in direct contact with the aggressive Gaddafi's regime forces. As a result, many in the population took up arms in order to defend their regions, dropping their studies to join the fighting. The resistance to Gaddafi's forces pushed several Libyan higher education students and instructors to take part in the uprisings. Thus, a process of large-scale militarization of students started. Hence, the armed conflict exposed students and instructors to a multiplicity of dangers. Such dangers included, amongst many others, psychological danger (feeling of fear, distress and trauma), and harmful effects on the educational environment for safe and creative learning for students, and physical danger (such as an increasing level of violence in schools and universities, and sexual abuse).

Another impact of the Arab Spring on Libya Education system was the increasing shortage of instructors who came from inside Libya and outside Libya. This shortage was noted mainly in the affected areas caused by death or displacement. This shortage demanded multi-institute as well as multi-grade teaching solutions. Additionally, such shortage played a significant role in increasing the workload for the remaining instructors in most of the universities and institutes affected. It is important to stress at this point is the observation that most teachers and instructress were unable to take part in any training programs because of the lack of security. As a result, both students and instructors became less motivated to undertake education and training. Indeed, many educational institutions in most parts of Libya were closed because of being unable to function (Inbar, 2012; Rhema and Miliszewska, 2012).

Further studies revealed how higher education of Libya can recover from the impact of the Arab Spring. For example, Rhema and Miliszewska (2012) investigated the recent crises in Libya focusing on the political crisis, the armed civil conflict, and the destruction of its higher education system. The study indicated that the armed conflict affected negatively the Libyan

higher education system, thus, this system needs to be urgently and completely re-built and re-developed. The study investigated how the use of Information and Communication Technology (henceforth, ICT) and e-learning can help in this process. The main argument of this study was that the information and communications technologies are significant elements of the overall reactions and suitable repose to such a crisis. What seemed problematic with reference to Libya is that Libya is in general considered as a developing country where the use of ICTs and the implementation of e-learning are in its preliminary (i.e., early) stage even before the armed conflict. However, the study indicated that how ICT and e-learning could be used to support the affected learners and instructors in Libya (as reconstructive and attractive measures). ICT makes available the chance to increase access to, and enhance at the same the general relevance and quality of Libyan higher education.

Although the Arab Spring was politically successful, it had many devastating effects on the system of Libyan higher education. This was because the Arab Spring was, in reality, an armed conflict which had negative socio-economic costs that affected the higher education institutions in Libya. The universities and colleges became places for the soldiers to gather and train. Many students were recruited as soldiers to defend their families and themselves. Accordingly, universities were closed and no access to them was possible in the affected regions. There were many Libyan scholars who fled the country for better life chances in other countries, and it was not possible to bring foreign instructors for the universities and colleges. Furthermore, most of the students and lecturers were less motivated, affecting badly the whole process of education. All of the issues will be relevant to, and reflected in, the subsequent data analysis of this study.

### 3.4. The role of Media

#### 3.4.1. Introduction

Many studies have emphasised the underlying role of media (e.g., news channels, TV, press, etc.) and tools of social communication (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Blog, etc.) on education in general and higher education in particular (Vandewater , *et al.*, 2007; Liu, *et al.*, 2009). By and large, there have been some controversies among scholars on the actual role of media on education. Some researchers highlight the educational and social benefits which can be gained if media is properly employed in education (both the school education and higher education). They insist on the overarching ability of media to engender several mechanisms and benefits which could be used to boost students' level and ability as well as widen their horizons towards different issues they need to know (cf. Reeves, 1998, Villani, 2001). On the other hand, other

studies have indicated that media must be heavily and properly censored and controlled once used as an educational tool. Such studies emphasised the possibilities that media is motivated (i.e., manipulated) and hence students became vulnerable for other's opinions which might be invalid or even improper (see Posavac, *et al.*, 2001; Buckingham, 2013). In relation to this, the next two sections highlight the pros and cons of the general role of media and its impact or role in politics and the higher education, the two issues of corner in the current thesis.

However, before embarking on this task, it should be reported the role of social media in community and education. Commenting on the role of social media, Bhuiyan (2011) stated that social media is simply content which is formed, created, and shared by (particular) individuals using the available online websites. What is significant here is the notion that social media tools permit such individuals (i.e., the members of the site) to create and display their thoughts, photos, and even videos. Bhuiyan (2011) added that social media are important and even critical tools of spreading views because they allow people to share content with anyone who can access the internet. So, such media tools can reach any person wherever he/she is. As a result, the use of social media websites permit people to communicate in real-time, and hence they are so effective and inferential in promoting democratic ideas, given the fact that social media websites allow people to express and vent their opinions about government, political leaders, and any other issues of concern. Through social media, one can disseminate his/her agenda to whoever he/she wants. Since people in education are most open for such social media, they are more highly to be affected or involved (Tess, 2013). Digaand Kelleher (2009) indicate that social media tools including Facebook and YouTube shift power from the authorities to the people themselves. Social media tools can create two-way communication between individuals and the general public.

Since the inception of modern media tools, these systems of communication have been used in conjunction with education in a bid to enhance students' level and knowledge of what is going on around them. Many ideas have been introduced, investigating the best ways to make the most of media in education (Brown, 1998). Additionally, related literature maintains that people in education are more susceptible for change and altering their opinions towards national and even international issues and questions. Thus, as hinted at above, people in education can be more targeted in mass media since they are more prone to change (cf. Dennis, 1992 and Buckingham and Bragg, 2004, among many others).

### 3.4.2. The political role of media

Several studies have highlighted the role of media and how it can be used to achieve certain goals, social, political, or even educational. In general, many studies highlighted the political role of media in community, arguing that media can be used a tool to manipulate people's opinion and perspectives. In this section, the most-related literature on the role of media in affecting and/or manipulating people politically is introduced.

Commenting on this topic, Pan, *et al.*, (1994) investigated the news media exposure and its learning Effects during the Persian Gulf War. In doing so they employed a comparison of two probability surveys: the first survey was conducted immediately after the Persian Gulf War, whilst the second survey was conducted a year and half earlier. In the main, the study showed significantly higher levels of news exposure across all media channels during this war. The study indicated that exposure to media makes one familiar with the main events of war. For instance, the study exposure to newspaper and to cable and PBS news programming were positively related to levels of knowledge about the war. However, the study found out that different people prefer different things and as a result people were different in their general knowledge. The study maintained, in relation to this, that exposure to CNN leveled off the potential differences in knowledge acquisition across several educational levels. Exposure to network TV news might be related to gaining "image-oriented" information, while exposure to newspaper and to cable and PBS news programming were related to learning more abstract and complex information about the war.

Weaver (1996) investigates which aspects the voters learn from media when they decide which candidate they choose. Weaver argues that there was much research conducted on the role of the media in manipulating people's and political perspectives in election processes. Although it was sometimes assumed that in spite of criticism of election news coverage for not being detailed or deep in argument and preoccupied totally with campaign strategy, voters can be manipulated especially by television news, newspapers, and televised debates. Among the aspects the voters learn or get manipulated were both the awareness and concern over specific questions, issues, candidates, and their characteristics. This study assumed that certain positions of both candidates and parties on certain issues are to a large extent less likely to be benefited, taught or even manipulated by media. In addition, this study stated that in contradiction to the most-held assumption, media exposure appeared to exhibit slim relationship to certain aspects including the voters' images of candidates; prior political

attitudes and educational levels which are much stronger predictors of these perceived images. This study maintained that the exposure to the media coverage of elections, most notably television coverage, is much prone to strength the interest in both politics and voting turnout despite of the fact that extensive media emphasis on the campaign strategy and manoeuvring can render some voters more cynical and less likely to vote. The main finding of this research tells that the newer forms of media at the time including radio and television talk shows, have notably weaker and less consistent connections to the voter's learning of any kind.

Commenting on the role of mass media on political participation, McLeod *et al.*, (1999) addressed the actual role of community integration and mass and interpersonal communication in forecasting two types of local political participation, institutionalized acts of participation, and less traditional acts of taking part in forums. It is posited that the newspaper readership obtained a strong impact on institutionalized participation, as compared with the interpersonal discussion, which had slower and weaker impact on institutionalized participation. Additionally, the study noted that several patterns emerged for participation in a civic forum, with interpersonal-discussion nature which had the strongest impact of the communication variables discussed therein. The study found out that television news use did not have a direct effect on either type of participation. However, such news had a slight but modest and indirect effect on the institutionalised participation. Besides, they study assumed that the data signaled direct effects of the dimensions of the community integration when taking part in one forum. It was stated that, overall, communication played a central and principled role in enabling and triggering local political participation.

Eilders (2000) examined the role of media as political actors in focusing and selective emphasis in the German quality press. In order to carry this out, the article investigated the media's active impact and role in the political process. It was suggested that by selecting and placing emphasis on specific aspects and issues in their editorials media, outlets in general communicate their specific political stand to the audience and made available a distinct ideological profile. On the other hand, the study found out that the effect of such editorials on the political system was related to the overall degree of the issue which made reference to the media system. In this regard, the study assumed that when various different newspapers attribute relevance to similar issues, the political system is likely to respond effectively. The study investigated the content of German press editorials within the period (1994 to 1998) so as to estimate the ideological distances between the papers in question and tackle at the same time the potential

circumstances under which high degrees of focusing can develop. As regards the results, the study maintained that there were considerable differences between newspapers which paid attention to specific polity and politics issues throughout the media system.

Besley and Burgess (2001) examined the role of mass media in rendering the local governments (of India) responsive to the citizens' needs and requirements. The study introduced a theoretical example of the role of media in boosting and enhancing the government's responsiveness on the basis of information from both local and national government. Afterwards, the data for the period 1958–1992 was utilized to analyse the extent to which Indian state governments responded to critical issues including food shortages via the public distribution of food. Additionally, the study correlated these issues with the work of media and with political and economic development issues. It emerged that states which are more responsive to the people's needs have a tendency to be those with high levels of newspaper circulation, electoral turnout, and literacy. The study found that wealthier states do not exhibit tendency to be more responsive than states with poor income. Thus, the study explained the role of media in showing the responsiveness of one state to people's needs. The study emphasized that the role of the mass media on public-related issues is a relatively less-investigated area. The study added that the responsiveness of government to citizens' needs can be enhanced with recourse to media. This assumption is to a large extent compatible with data on government responsiveness to shocks in India assuming that these ideas go beyond their theoretical significance. With media in place, governments can understand better how they can work as more efficient servants of the people, and how strengthening institutions can support such a prominent role of government towards people.

Mutz (2001) examined the role of mass media in facilitating communication across lines of political difference. The study used national (US) survey data in order to examine the extent to which various sources of political information expose people to dissimilar political views. The study claimed that an individual's ability and desire to exercise political activities is significant in determining whether a given source produces exposure to dissimilar views, and hence the role of media. In particular, the study found that in spite of the fact that a lack of diverse perspectives is a common complaint against American news media, individuals are exposed to far more diverse political views via news media than through interpersonal political discussions. From this observation, the role of media emerges: the media advantage is rooted in the relative

difficulty of selectively exposing oneself to those sources of information, as well as the lesser desire to do so, given the impersonal nature of mass media.

Pinkleton and Austin (2001) investigated the individual motivations, perceived media importance, and political disaffection related to media reporting. This study argued that mass media have been blamed for distancing people from the political process through augmenting voter apathy and cynicism. In order to examine this further, the study carried out a telephone survey of (592) registered voters in one American state, Washington State, so as to examine a set of relationships between perceived media importance, political involvement, and political disaffection. The study claimed that political involvement was positively correlated with the perceived importance of radio talk shows as well as newspapers, which were, in turn, negatively correlated with cynicism but positively correlated with efficacy. Additionally, the study indicated that efficacy was positively correlated with involvement. By and large, the study indicated that involvement is a very important variable in the process of political decision making via its potential relationships with orientations towards information sources. Accordingly, media can be taken as a motivation (i.e., catalyst) to involve citizens with decision making. The study concluded that researchers must attend to the motivational context which the citizens bring to the media when addressing the impact and role of the media in political decision making. In general, the set of relationships examined throughout this study argued for the notion that when involvement is low, voters might be involved in a downward spiral of disaffection in which their lack of involvement makes their confidence in election-related information sources deteriorate and increases cynicism. As a result, this leads to decreasing both the involvement of the public as well as public affairs participation. On the other hand, the study stated that increased involvement could result in more purposeful information to increase efficacy. Accordingly, such an increase can assist in triggering future political involvement and participation. As a result, this study concludes that those researchers working on the relationship between political involvement and mass media must pay much attention to the motivational context individuals bring to the media when addressing the impact of the media in the process of political decision making.

Schudson (2002) studied how the news media can be used as political institutions. In this study, the author noted that political science has tended to overlook investigating the news media as political institutions, although there is a long history of party-subsidised newspapers and a growing chorus of scholars who point to an increasing “medialization” of politics. The study

investigated this issue within three general approaches. The first approach examined where political economy perspectives pay attention to the patterns of media ownership and the behavior of news institutions in relatively liberal versus relatively repressive states. The second approach examined the social organisation of news work and related news content to the daily patterns of interaction between reporters and their sources. The third approach examined news as a form of culture that often unconsciously incorporates general belief systems, assumptions, and values into news writing. In conclusion, the study highlighted the role of new media and their role in shaping the institutions in one country. The study found that media in some cases is a mere representation of the political authorities in one region, including, the case of Libya and other Arab countries where media is totally oriented by governing authorities.

Semetko and Krasnoboka (2003) investigated the political role of the internet in societies in transition (taking Russia and Ukraine as a case study). The study looked at opportunities which are provided by the Internet for the political parties to make communication to the electorate, and the extent to which party websites are utilized against other information sources on the Web. The study indicated that major parties and newly created parties are more prominent online than other more minor but established political groups. Additionally, the study indicated that, based on standard quality indicators, parliamentary parties and new parties tended to have better quality websites. Such observations confirm the findings of the previous literature on political parties online presence in the established democracies. The study found that when comparing party websites with news websites, the sites of online-only newspapers are considered the most popular and that online versions of offline news outlets are of secondary importance, which is contrary to that which has been stated in past in the established democracies. The study concluded that party and politician websites are of least importance to users, on the basis of the number of hits on such websites.

Addressing the role of the American media in covering and shaping the death penalty, Bandes (2003) investigated whether media could convey more progressive or at least more complex messages about this particular issue. In general, the study indicated that the media is one factor in the complex interplay of ideological, political and social forces which give capital punishment importance and alarming resonance. The study stated although media is just one factor, it is a key element since it often presents distorted images of crime and justice. Such images have, in turn, serious consequences including a pernicious influence on the system of capital punishment, in the aggregate and in its application to public. The study argued that such

consequences were grave for those on trial for their lives but that these images also affect police, prosecutors, defence attorneys, jurors, judges, victims' families, and the public. The study concluded that the continuation of the American system of capital punishment is related to media-perpetuated fears and passions, which begs many serious questions about who must bear the responsibility for media reform in relation to a system which decides life and death in a media-saturated context.

Gentzkow and Shapiro (2004) indicates that the USA has an image problem within the Islamic and Arab World. The study mentioned that only 1% of the people in Arab countries, including Jordan or the Palestinian Authority, expressed favorable positive opinions of the United States in spite of the strong American role in that region. The study drew upon data from nine major Muslim countries in order to investigate how such beliefs depend on exposure to news media and levels of education. The main finding of the study indicated that the general overall intensity of media use and level of education have at best a weak correlation with beliefs. This study also found that particular information sources have strong and divergent effects. For example, the study indicated that in comparison with those people with little media exposure or schooling, individuals watching Arab news channels or educated in schools with little Western influence are less likely to agree that the September 11th attacks were carried out by Arab terrorists. On the other hand, the study maintained that those people exposed to media or education, based on Western sources, are more likely to agree that the September 11th attacks were carried out by Arab terrorists. In general, such findings identify the strong media effects on people wherever they are.

Scheufele, *et al.*, (2003) investigated the pathways to the political participation; most notably religion, communication contexts, and mass media. The study stated that there has been much emphasis on the role of religion as an important catalyst for the political participation and well-known civic engagement. Many assumptions share, in this regard, the common notion that religion promotes the important components of political participation such as motivation, recruitment, and ability to participate. In order to prove this specific point, the study used survey data from the 2000 National Election Study in USA? The processes which link the structural and cognitive dimensions of religion was examined with political discussion networks, mass media use, and various indicators of democratic citizenship, such as political participation. As for the findings, the study demonstrated that those current claims which have been associated with religion might be oversold. The study found that the cognitive dimension

of religion results in several negative impacts on the issues of the democratic citizenship. In addition, it was suggested that the structural effects of religion are to some extent limited, as compared to other secular networks which make available an ideal setting for citizens to obtain and exchange information, increase feelings of efficacy, and involve people in many forms of participation..

Huesmann and Taylor (2006) investigated the underlying role of media reporting of violence on violent behavior. They indicate that media representation of violence poses a threat to public health because it results in an increase in real-world violence and aggression. The study emphasised the claim that related research shows that fictional television and film violence are much connected to both a short-term and a long-term increase in aggression and violence in young viewers. Specifically, the study found that media, including TV and news violence, contributes to increased violence in the general society such as imitative suicides and acts of aggression. The study emphasised the relation between media violence and real-world violence and aggression which is moderated by the nature of the media content and characteristics of and social influences on the individual exposed to that content. This study argues that media must be censored and oriented towards the target audience, meaning that young people must be banned from certain media outlets. Of course we must note that such an approach is controversial..

Kenski and Stroud (2006) addressed the connections between the internet use and the political efficacy, knowledge, and participation. In particular, the study investigated the potential relationships between the Internet access and the online exposure to information about the presidential campaign and political efficacy, knowledge, and participation. To do just this, the study utilized data obtained from the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey. On the whole, the study found that Internet access and online exposure to information about the presidential campaign are significantly correlated with these key political variables. Additionally, the study argued that many associations between internet access and exposure with political efficacy, knowledge, and participation can be found even when taking socio-demographic variables, political interest, party identification, partisan strength, and other media exposures variables into consideration. The study added that despite the assumption that these associations are statistically significant, they are very limited. The study established that the concerns of cyber-pessimists who feared that the internet would have a negative effect on knowledge, and democratic participation are overblown. However, the positive and significant

associations/correlations between the Internet variables and the dependent variables were limited, indicating that the internet is not going to be an absolute solution for the problems facing democracy.

Gerber, *et al.*, (2009) investigated the underlying role of media in elections in manipulating voters' opinions. To this end, one field experiment was used to measure the potential role of the media, most notably the newspapers, in voting behavior and political opinions. The main rationale of the study was that there is an assumption that there was compelling evidence for the notion that media sources have identifiable political slants. However, the study stated that there have been relatively few research papers addressing the effects of media on political views and behaviors of media bias or access. On the whole, the paper reports the main findings and results of a natural field experiment in order to measure the role of exposure to newspapers on political behavior and opinion. This study chose the Washington DC area which is served by two main newspapers, namely: the Washington Times and the Washington Post. The methodology used in the study was that some individuals were randomly assigned either to receive a free subscription to the Washington Post, to receive a free subscription to the Washington Times, or to a control group. Afterwards, a public opinion survey was carried out after the 2005 Virginia gubernatorial election. The study found out that the individuals who were assigned to the Post treatment group were 8% points more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate for governor than the individuals who were assigned to the control group. Nonetheless, the study found only slim evidence of shifts in public opinion on certain issues.

In a related vein, Stroud (2008) examined the use of media and political predispositions. The study claims that, people have, by pure chance, the likelihood of being exposed to information which is compatible with their beliefs. Commenting on the actual role of media, this study posited that researchers have different views of media; some worry that people increasingly are seeking out likeminded views whilst other researchers propose that newer media provide a greater chance for exposure to diverse views. Overall, this study showed that certain topics, including politics, are more likely to inspire selective exposure. In addition, the study investigated whether various media types (newspapers, political talk radio, cable news, and Internet) are more likely to inspire selective exposure. Using data from the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey, the study found that much evidence supports the idea that people's political beliefs are related to their media exposure—a pattern that persists across media types.

Shanahan, *et al.*, (2008) addressed the role of media in policy change theory. The study stated that the policy change literature is somehow contradictory about the actual role the media plays in policy change: a conduit for policy participants, with media accounts transmitting multiple policy assumptions of the involvement in the policy debates or a contributor in the policy process, with media accounts which made available consistent policy assumptions with congruent narrative framing strategies to form a policy story. Against this background, this study aimed at empirically examining whether the role of the media is that of a conduit or contributor within the policy change process. Accordingly, the study examined whether there are discernible differences in policy beliefs and narrative which make up the strategies utilized between local and national print media coverage of two contentious policy issues in the Greater Yellowstone Area within the period (1986 and 2006) that of issues including snowmobile access and wolf re-introduction. It was suggested that in the Greater Yellowstone Area policy arena, the local media accounts were assumed to be aligned with the Old West Advocacy Coalition, while the national media accounts were believed to be vital part of the New West Advocacy Coalition. Using a methodology informed by narrative policy analysis, the study argued that media accounts are on the whole policy stories, assuming that the media's role is arguably more of a contributor than a conduit in the policy change process.

Baum and Groeling (2008) addressed the role of new media in the polarization of American political discourse. The study stated that the researchers tested the newsworthiness of items for a long time period through placing emphasis on the news choices of media organizations. Additionally, the study indicated that in recent years such traditional arbiters of the news have increasingly been joined by "new media" competitors, such as cable news, talk radio, and even amateur bloggers. Furthermore, the study maintained that the standards by which this new class of decision makers evaluates news are only partially explained by previous studies focusing on the professional journalists and organizations. Against this background, this study attempted to correct this generalization by content analysing five online news sources, such as wire services, cable news, and political blog sites. This analysis was meant to compare their news judgments in the months before, and immediately following, the 2006 midterm election. To this end, the study collected all the stories from Reuters' and AP's "top political news" sections. Afterwards, the study addressed whether a given story was also selected to show up on each wire's top news page and compared the wires' editorial choices to those of more partisan blogs as well as the cable outlets. The study found that there is much evidence that greater partisan filtering for the

latter three Web sources, and relatively greater dependence on the traditional newsworthiness standards for the news wires.

Leeson (2008) investigated the relationship between media freedom from government control and citizens' political knowledge, political participation, and voter turnout. In order to analyze these connections, the study examined the media freedom and citizens' political knowledge in 13 central and eastern European countries with data from Freedom House's Freedom of the Press report and the European Commission's Candidate Countries Eurobarometer survey. Afterwards, the media freedom and citizens' political participation were considered in 60 countries using data from the World Values Survey. Additionally, the media freedom and voter turnout were investigated in these same 60 or so countries with data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. The study found out that where government possesses a larger share of media outlets and infrastructure, regulates the media industry more, and does more to control the content of news, citizens are more politically ignorant and apathetic. It was suggested that when the media is less organized, there is greater private ownership in the media industry and citizens are more active and knowledgeable with political aspects. Furthermore, the study showed that low media freedom is considerably correlated with poor political knowledge, low political participation, and low voter turnout. The reverse correlation is held with regard to the countries with higher media freedom.

Gurevitch, *et al.*, (2009) investigated the old and new media relationships with political communication. Overall, the study reflects upon the ways television changed the political landscape. In addition, it worked out how far new media, including the internet, displaced television or reconfigured the political communications ecology. The analysis investigated the chances and the challenges encountering the media producers, politicians, and citizens. The paper found that the television-politics relationship that appeared in the 1960s is still prevalent to some extent in the digital age. However, such a relationship faces new pressures debilitating the primacy of the broadcast-centered model of political communication. In addition to this, the study identified five new features of political communication which present difficult challenges for media policy makers. The study suggested that such challenges are examined through an imaginative and democratic method to looking after and nurturing the emancipatory potential of the new media environment.

Building on the sociological discussions of participation and social capital, and communication scholarship on the role of media in political socialization, Wilkins (2010) investigated the role of media in their political activities. The study examined the current political system in the United States which, the study claims, is plagued by dramatically declining political participation, civic engagement, and political trust. The main claim of the study was that communication technologies and messages may not be directly promoting or constraining participation, but instead facilitating such engagement for groups with access to social, political, and economic resources. This study examined the connections between political participation and social capital, manifest through civic engagement and political trust. Additionally, the study addressed such relationships in terms of television viewing and news genres. The study found out that media and news agency are involved in making the people politically active or not and, hence, there should be further studies on the actual role of media on driving people politically.

Niederkrötenhaler, *et al.*, (2010) examined the influential role of media in completed and prevented suicide. This study both investigated what is known as the Werther effect and Papageno effect. In detail, in order to test the hypotheses that certain media content is strongly associated with an increase in suicide, suggesting a so-called Werther effect, and that other content is associated with a decrease in suicide, conceptualized as a Papageno effect. The methods used were content analysis and latent class analysis (LCA) of 497 suicide-related print media reports which are published in Austria (1 January, 2005 and 30 June, 2005). The study found that repetitive reporting of the same suicide and the reporting of suicide myths were positively associated with suicide rates. However, the study indicated that coverage of individual suicidal ideation which is not accompanied by suicidal behaviour was negatively associated with suicide rates. The LCA yielded four classes of media reports, of which the mastery of crisis class was negatively associated with suicide, whereas the expert opinion class and the epidemiological facts class were positively associated with suicide. The study concluded that the impact of suicide reporting may not be restricted to harmful effects; rather, coverage of positive coping in adverse circumstances, as covered in media items about suicidal ideation, may have protective effects. By and large, like other related studies, this study gives rise to the notion that media can affect people's life since it can increase or decrease suicidal behaviour among people according to how media is manipulated.

Nwankwo (2011) examines the role of the media in promoting human rights among individuals. The study addressed some related questions, including why the media decide to include human rights coverage as part of their programmes as well as the portrayal of human rights elements in such programmes. As for the data collection, five journalists were interviewed, three of them were BBC journalists involved in the production of some documentaries and the other two were Swedish journalists included to derive a wider perspective on what the role of the media should be. As for the main findings, the study maintained that the interviews and the documentary reveal that the media do have a strong role to play in human rights promotion. The study highlighted the notion that all of the interviewees maintained that this role is significant and must be taken into account since the mass media audience is often averse to human rights programmes as they consider them rather tedious or boring. For instance, the study made it clear that media reporting of suicide has repeatedly been shown to trigger suicidal behaviour. Thus, media, the study concluded, is a viable way to promote human rights if media is formed within a proper perspective and layout.

Howard and Parks (2012) addressed the social media role in the political change in terms of capacity, constraint, and consequence. In general, the study argued that communication researchers are uniquely placed in order to figure out the potential relationships between the social media and political change. The study offered a working definition of social media on the basis of the diverse and considered uses of the term by the concerned scholars. In general, the study argued that the social media is consisted of the information infrastructure and tools which are used to both produce and distribute content which has an individual value but reflects shared values, the content which derives the digital form of personal messages, news, ideas, that becomes cultural products, and, finally, the people, organizations, and companies which both produce and consume both the content and the accompanying tools.

The role of the media is observed in other fields, including finance and economy. Tetlock (2007) investigated how media can affect the stock market. This study systematically explored the interactions between media content and stock market activity. The main hypothesis in this study is that high values of media pessimism is an indicator for pressure on market prices; unusually high or low values of pessimism lead to temporarily high market trading volume.

### 3.4.3. Conclusion

It is clear that media has played a very significant role in shaping people's political views and standpoints. This shaping is evident when mass media is used as a tool to orient people's attitudes and perspectives towards specific issues including local elections and hotly debated aspects such as capital punishment (as referred to above). Thus, media has been considered an underlying factor in people's life and beliefs. Thus, no one should neglect or discard the role media played in people life and in triggering them into certain actions. Generally speaking, this role has been much paired with the Arab Spring where media had a vital part in shaping certain incidents, as will be clearly shown in the following section.

### 3.5. Media role in Arab Spring

In this section, I explore the main works that addressed the role of the media in Arab Spring events. Ghannam (2011) investigated how the social media led to the Arab Spring. The study highlighted that the social media is arguably changing the nature of news and community engagement, which continues to evolve with increased convergence of social media and satellite broadcasts, as seen in Tunisia, Egypt, and other countries of the region. Commenting on the role of such media on Arab people, the researcher indicated that social networking has changed expectations of freedom of expression and association to the extent that individual and collective capacities to communicate, mobilize, and gain technical knowledge are expected to lead to even greater voice, political influence, and participation. Examining the main conditions leading to Arab Spring, the study claimed that such changes could be said to have accelerated in early 2011.

Storck (2011) investigated the Arab Spring revolutions of early 2011; focusing on how the Internet and its tools of social media have been utilized as instrumental in facilitating the uprisings. In particular, the study looked closely at the extent to which Egyptian activists used social media networks (including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and weblogs) as social tools for organizing and spreading awareness of political mobilisation, in the uprisings which happened in Egypt in January and February 2011. In order to do this, the study made use of the well-established theories of communication which were developed long before the advent of social media, to position its use within a wider context of communication, and to explicate how the inherent characteristics of social networking that made it appealing to the activists in Egypt. The study found that enormous potential media could facilitate and expedite political mobilisation.

Abdallah (2011) argued for the notion that media is an indispensable part of the whole process of democratic transition in Egypt. The study claimed that the role of the media before and during the revolution was shaped by the reality of Egyptian society. The study discovered that media highlighted the opposition movements' activities and helped to expose the regime's wrongdoings, corruption and injustice. In addition, the study stated that parts of the media expanded their coverage to portray a comprehensive image of the depressing reality of the country. In addition to deepening the Egyptians' awareness of their rights, media led more people to pay attention to the opposition movements' calls and created a new generation of human rights activists. Additionally, the study indicated that media contributed to strengthening the newly born youth opposition movements. More importantly, the study claimed that the way the state used its media at that time (justifying the government's misdeeds) played a significant role in establishing media to build a very close relationship with its audience. This study elaborates more on the actual role of media during Egyptian Arab Spring. Crucial to the study is the observation that anti-state media focuses much on people in education which are supposedly the leaders of change; in maximizing the benefit of the minuscule freedom of expression it was allowed by the regime to create the impression that it was democratic. The study concluded that both traditional and new media contributed in one way or another to the political change in Egypt. They played a significant role in the process of democratic transition after the revolution.

Similarly, Bhuiyan (2011) examined the role of social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and weblogs) in political and social revolution in Egypt. This work shows how the social media enhanced and increased people's desire for democracy and socio-economic advancement stalled by the long term authoritarian government. The study indicated that the social media is used as a platform for discussion of ideas, experiences, and knowledge exchange. Social media tools used as powerful channels that allowed people in Egypt to neglect the government censorship, break the barrier of fear, and spread the words of political reform. The study also showed how social media tools mobilized millions of citizens to participate in political action and emerged as authoring agents and organizational power structures.

Research by Aouragh and Alexander (2011) investigated the Arab Spring with emphasis on the Egyptian experience in terms of both the sense and nonsense of the internet revolution. It addressed the debate about the underlying role of the Internet in triggering and mobilizing for

political and social change. The study depended on interviews and observations conducted during the Egyptian revolution. The study made a distinction between the use of the internet as a tool by those looking for and bringing about change from below and the Internet's role as a space where collective dissent could be articulated. Overall, the study assumed that it is vital to go beyond three sets of polemics. Firstly, the study established the idea that transcending the debate between utopian and dystopian perspectives on the role of the Internet in political change. Secondly, it proposed a shift away from perspectives isolating the Internet from other media through testing the powerful synergy between social media and satellite broadcasters during the January 25 Revolt. Thirdly, the study assumed that understanding the dialectical relationship between online and offline political action is of paramount importance to figure out the actual role of internet on the ongoing events in some country.

Khondker (2011) examined the role of the new media in the 'Arab Spring' in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This paper indicates that despite the fact that the new media is regarded as one of the important factors in triggering and expanding the social revolution among other underlying factors including the social and political factors in the region, media played a critical and principled role especially in the light of the sheer absence of an open and democratic media and a civil society, however. The study argues for the notion that the significance of the globalization of the new types of media has been emphasized as it makes available an interesting case of the horizontal connectivity in the social mobilization in addition to inducing a rather new trend in the intersection of new media and conventional media like television, radio, and mobile phone. The study adds that one of the most apparent contradictions of the present phase of globalization is arguably that the state, i.e., local governments, in many contexts makes it easy for the promotion of new media according to several factors most notably economic compulsion, inadvertently facing the social and political consequences of the new media. This being so, the study maintains that there is no question that the social media tools including Facebook and Twitter played a prominent role in the political movements in Tunisia and Egypt. However, the study indicates that such a role of social media in such uprisings should not be overstated. It elaborates that the role of conventional media, especially television (e.g. Al Jazeera), was crucial, a point which is not attested in the educational environments. However, the most important underlying factor for the study was indeed the inability of the state systems and apparatus to contain the revolutionary upsurge as well as the presence of revolutionary conditions. The study concluded that if this analysis is on the right

track, then social media was a vital tool—a necessary condition—especially in the face of a muzzled conventional local media, but a tool nevertheless.

Similarly, Castells (2011) commented on the important and serious role of Al Jazeera in Arab Spring events. He stated that Al Jazeera has collected the information which was spread on the internet by the people who used to use them as sources and organized groups on Facebook, then retransmitting free news on mobile phones. Accordingly, Al-Jazeera helped in creating a new system of mass communication which was built like a mix between an interactive television, internet, radio and mobile communication systems. Thus, the communication of the future is already utilized and even manipulated by the revolutions of the present. This study indicates that it was patently clear that communication technologies did not give birth to the insurgency. The rebellion was born from the poverty and social exclusion that afflict much of the population in the fake democracy at the time.

The work of Russell (2011) investigated the role of extra-national information flows and social media in the 2011 Egyptian Arab Spring. It examined two emerging and related characteristics of digital networked-age journalism made emphasis on during the Egyptian revolution. The study argued that the ability to gain and then retain the centralized control of communication eroded both. That is because the contemporary networked communication increased grassroots pervasiveness and retains a malleable or hackable quality, where the users could rework the technology to their own good with relative ease. Secondly, the study showed how the influence of the networked decentralized reporting of the revolution on mainstream news outlets changed the nature of the news products as well as the professional norms and practices of journalists. The study concluded that the purpose or main task of the traditional news outlets shifted. When covering the story of the revolution, traditional networks turned not to their reporters to describe the events on the ground, but to what networked participants in the drama were reporting and stating about what was happening at the time.

By the same token, Harlow and Johnson (2011) investigated the Arab Spring concerning its role in overthrowing the protest paradigm and how Twitter, the *New York Times*, and global voices covered the Egyptian revolution. The study maintained that with social-media driven protests constituting Arab Spring, this content analysis of Egyptian protest coverage in *The New York Times*, the Twitter feed of *Times* reporter Nick Kristof, and the citizen media site Global Voices, analysed whether the delegitimizing “protest paradigm” which is found in

mainstream media is replicated in social media and blogs in addition to the impact their protest coverage has on their credibility. The study produced the finding that *The Times* adhered to the paradigm through placing emphasis on the spectacle, quoting official sources, and de-valuing protesters as reporters had an impartial role. In contrast, the study argued that Global Voices and Kristof's Twitter feed had unique methods to legitimizing protesters and serving as commentators/analysts, even actors, in the unfolding events. The study found that Global Voices provided more opportunities for reader interactivity, as well.

Stepanova (2011) worked out the role of information and communication technologies in the Arab Spring. The study indicated that the tide of mass protests sweeping through the whole Middle East in early 2011 emphasized the unique role of modern information-communication technologies along with the digital social media tools and networks. In general, the effect of these technologies was universally felt, influencing both the developed and developing nations, if not in the same way. The study argued that while the Arab Spring may refer to a role of new mass forms of socio-political protest triggered and facilitated by social media networks, with regard to their organizational and communication aspects, Arab Spring should make available some major reservations about the applicability of any "direct lessons" to other regional and socio-political contexts. The research added that if there is a positive pattern to notice in the strong role of Internet-based tools as well as the social media networks on the latest developments in the Middle East, it might have less to do with fostering Western-style democracy than in stimulating relatively less violent forms of mass protest. To the contrary to Tunisia and Egypt, low or minimal social media activism (especially in Libya and Yemen) have the tendency to roughly correspond with violent escalation, even as a host of other factors, not least of which is the degree of government repression, may ultimately contribute to violence. In this context, the use of modern information-communication technologies may be counted as the new "technical" basis for making the phenomenon of mass and non-violent protest campaigns revived.

Research by Owais (2011) questioned the Arab media's role during the Arab Spring in both Egypt and Tunisia. The main motivation of this study is that both the words: "Change" and "Purification" were two frequent words among Egyptian and Tunisian journalists. The study indicated that these two words mean that the revolution '*has not ended... it has just begun*'. Similar to the Egyptian and the Tunisian people who were eagerly waiting to beat their fear of the police state, the journalists in these two countries expected another decisive moment in the

history of their profession. For them, this moment was when they became free the media from ex-regime allies and supporters. For instance, Tunisian media demonstrations were successful in altering editorial teams on the national television and newspapers while the then-ongoing Egyptian demonstrations were asking for the election of a new board for their association. The study investigated such efforts and concluded that there was a tendency among people themselves to change all old media and people related to the previous regimes.

Investigating the ways in which the demonstrators dealt with the Tunisian regime's suppression in the virtual world, Champagne (2012) indicated that the police of Ben Ali did not appear to be completely cognizant of the significance of social media. He adds that the regime itself was not well-equipped to cope with social media professionally or technically. The study argues that the version of the internet surveillance software which was delivered to the Tunisian secret service by a European company was not yet completely functional. Despite this fact, the study argued that the local police authorities acted against the social media users through different ways. Champagne (2012) indicated that it was possible for the local police authorities to do so since the Facebook accounts which disseminate information on the uprising were usually set to public access in order to reach the largest possible number of users, in the city of SidiBouzyd and other Tunisian cities. By and large, commenting on the assumption that local authorities were aware of the danger, the study stated that the internet activist and local radio producer interviewed by the third author said that already during the first three days of the Tunisian revolt a total of 200 persons, among them 60 young adults, were detained and arrested on charges of uploading videos, pictures and news of the local uprising to their Facebook accounts. Accordingly, Facebook and internet users started using pseudonyms instead of real names so as to save themselves from governmental prosecution. Additionally, Facebook accounts were shut down by the local authorities, and new ones were opened under another name. The study maintained that of most significant and effective measure taken by the authorities as a tool to suppress and obstruct the information flow between local internet activists was to slow down the speed of data which is transferred by manipulating and pressurizing the local provider. This being so, it took ages to upload video materials to Facebook accounts. However, a solution sought by the internet activists was to send the videos and pictures abroad via email in low resolution, often to friends in France, and to ask them to upload it for public use. This study indeed indicates how local authorities during the Arab Uprising suppressed the increasing use of social media and make those people who used such websites against it liable for criminal prosecution.

Frangonikolopoulos and Chapsos (2012) investigated the role and the impact of the social media in the Arab Spring. In particular, this paper addressed how the efforts of ordinary people in the Arab countries to neglect and bypass compliance and toleration from then-governing regimes, also allowed them, once the opportunity arose, to invest in and use social media to change politics in their home countries beginning with such ordinary people. The study stated that although the social media were not alone “responsible” for the uprisings, they played a significant role in establishing what the people call for. The study entailed that Arab Spring uprisings were made by the people of the Arab countries, but the social media has a deep role and impact as a powerful accelerant facilitating the events in ways that were significant. With such facts in place, this study focused on Egypt, examining the socioeconomic dynamics and human insecurity of the region as well as the role of the social media prior and during Arab Spring in empowering “social non-movements” and “leaderless networks”, and igniting public mobilization, enabling civic engagement and journalism, as well as collaboration between activists at regional and global level. The study found out that social media was one of the main catalysts for people to work altogether to overthrow the existing regimes at the time.

The study by Benkirane (2012) investigated the role of the social networks and new media in the Arab Spring. This study argued that the rise of Arab bloggers and cyber activists is not regarded as a product of an immediate (i.e., spontaneous) generation. Indeed, they argue that the Arab Spring is the social outcome of several decades of continuous struggles for both civil and political rights that became matured within the virtual space-time which is produced by an Arab media system where press, radio, satellite television, web and mobile telephony form various stages and layers of complexity. In this connection, the social networks and new media had a catalytic role within the Tunisian and Egyptian uprising. Social networks triggered and accelerated the local social reactions, synchronized different levels and intensities of revolutions and allowed the coverage of incidents via real-time footage which is directed to the global public opinion. The study maintained that the Arab Spring may herald the first social revolution in the current century. The research found that Arab Spring epitomizes the revolt of a new individual with a new collective voice against various forms of disinformation, control, and manipulation. The social uprisings were transversal and can be disseminated worldwide wherever “freedom, justice, dignity” are limited or scorned. Additionally, the research examined the underlying role of technology which, it is argued, remained intrinsically ambivalent and biased. That is because such a role depends on political, economic, social and

cultural rituals and customs. In relation to this, the study stated that the emerging “Intelligence” Technology could stand for liberation and at the same time utilized as spying technology. The social networks may, the study argued, contribute to making citizens active. However, the same technology might be utilized against them for control and repression.

Kavanaugh (2012) examined statistical data on social media usage during the Arab Spring. Besides, this study compared the findings with some data of one survey among Egyptian students, collected in June 2011. In addition, this study argues that social media had a strong impact beyond its general adoption rates according to the age distribution of the user population, most notably focused on the protesting youth. The study found that while they are quantitatively marginal, Twitter users were most likely opinion leaders and so Twitter usage probably had a disproportionately larger social impact. This study noted that there was a shortage of material that adequately delineates how this media traffic actually translates into activity (political activism in practice).

Comunello and Anzera (2012) aimed at building a conceptual framework so as to understanding the actual role of the social media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) in the ‘Arab Spring’. To this end, this research took into account two different disciplinary perspectives, namely: International Relations and Internet Studies. The research examined the related literature on Middle Eastern political systems as well as that is related to the social network sites. Additionally, the study relied on the literature addressing the relationship between the (social) media engagement and civic engagement. Building on this foundation, the study noted the major attempts to assess the ‘impact’ of social media on the ‘Arab Spring’ from certain perspectives. It found that commentators had the tendency to use a dichotomous vision of the topic, either through emphasizing the ‘revolutionary’ role of the social media or through totally minimizing its role. The study defined them as digital evangelists and techno-realists, respectively and claimed that in order to prove their point of view, both sides placed emphasis on the same issues. In addition, analysing the main issues critically, the study discussed how they have been understood by the digital evangelists and techno-realists. In conclusion, using such a multidisciplinary framework the study proposed a more different picture of the relationship between the social media and the Arab Spring.

Howard, *et al.*, (2011) addressed the actual role of social media during the Arab Spring. The study started out indicating that the social media played a central role in shaping political

debates in the Arab Spring. It added that a certain spike in online revolutionary conversations in most cases preceded the major events on the ground. In this respect, the social media assisted in spreading the democratic ideas across the international borders. Next, the study explored the role of Mohammed Bouazizi and waves of protests in triggering the massive call for democracy in the Arab world. As a result, the local governments in both Tunisia and Egypt soon fell, civil war happened in Libya, and protestors took to the streets in some other countries including Algeria, Morocco, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere. On examining all aspects and issues related to the breakout of Arab Spring, the study argued that Arab Spring had several major causes. It stated of the top of these causes were the social media and its power to put a human face on political oppression. In an attempt to explain this contention, the study argued that Bouazizi's self-immolation was one of several stories told and retold on all social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in ways that inspired the dissidents to regulate the protests, criticise their regimes, and spread thoughts and ideas about democracy therein. The study continued by stating that until point, most of what had been known about the impact of social media in the Arab Spring has been in fact anecdotal. Placing emphasis on the Tunisian and Egyptian revolts, this research created a unique database of information which was collected from Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Additionally, the research created maps of important Egyptian political websites, addressing the political conversations in the Tunisian blogosphere, working out more than 3 million Tweets based on keywords used, and figuring out which countries thousands of individuals tweeted from during the revolutions. All of these aspects confirmed the social media's critical role in the Arab Spring breakout and course.

The work of Aday, *et al.* (2012) investigated the role of new media in the conflict after the Arab spring. The research began with stating the major events of the Arab Spring. It told that a huge wave of demonstrations sweeping the Arab world in 2011 brought down the long-ruling leaders in both Tunisia and Egypt and helped spark bloody struggles in other countries including Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. The study argued that the Arab Spring fundamentally recast the nature of politics in the whole region. On the other hand, the study compared the role of social new media during and after the revolts. It pointed out new media did not play a significant role in either in-country collective action or regional diffusion during this period. In an attempt to account for this observation which is contrary to much cited literature, assuming that new social media did not provide strong support for claims of major new media impact on Arab Spring political protests. It is argues that the new media outlets were more likely to disseminate related information outside the region than inside it. This

spreading of information could be significant when leading to a boomerang effect which brought international pressure to bear on autocratic regimes, or when helping reduce a regime's tendency to crack down violently on demonstrations and protests. In addition, the study maintained that it was hard to separate new media from old media. Further, it argued that in the Arab Spring, both types of media reinforced each other. In this connection, the research stated that the new media should be counted as part of a wider information arena in which new and old media form complex interrelationships. In order to attest such contentions, the study surveyed four Arab Spring protests, namely: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Bahrain. It found that big differences could be seen between the four revolts in the amount of information consumed via social media. For instance, the study stated that the events in Egypt and in Libya garnered many more clicks on a much larger number of URLs than those in Tunisia and Bahrain. Additionally, this investigation proposed that the protests in Egypt and Libya had attracted much more attention than those in other countries, focusing that attention on a more delimited set of content. The findings also indicate that very sharp peaks of attention pegged to dramatic events, including the departure of Ben Ali in Tunisia, the Pearl Roundabout raid in Bahrain.

In a related vein, Tufekci and Wilson (2012) examined how social media affected the decision to participate in political protest during Egyptian Arab Spring, with more emphasis on Tahrir Square demonstrations. Based on a survey of participants in Egypt's Tahrir Square protests, this study demonstrated that social media in general, and Facebook in particular, made available new sources of information the regime at the time could not easily have control on and were crucial in shaping how citizens made individual decisions about taking part in protests, the logistics of protest, and the likelihood of success. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that people learned about the protests in the main through interpersonal communication using Facebook, phone contact, or face-to-face conversation. The study also maintained that social media utilized the facts that a respondent attended protests on the first day. The study added that Twitter, along with blogs, was used by protestors in order to communicate about the demonstrations as they unfolded. Through a series of logistic regressions, the study showed that participation in protests, both before and on the first day of the Tahrir Square demonstrations, was related to particular patterns of media use. For instance, this study stated that gathering protests prior to the January revolt was related to using print media, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter as general sources of information and, more specifically, with using print media and text messaging for information about protests. Participation in the first day of the Tahrir Square demonstrations, nevertheless, was robustly linked to a broader and more

varied pattern of media use. Those in attendance on January 25 stated that using print media was for general information, but not for communicating about the protests. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that using satellite television as a general information source is related to a lower likelihood of attending and gathering on the first day of the protests, since other means of communication, such as social media, provided superior access to communication about the protests. Instead, those who used blogs and Twitter for both general information and for communicating about the protests were more potential to attend on the first day, as were those who made use of the telephone, E-mail, and Facebook to communicate about the protests. In general, the results of this study underscore the central role that social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, played in the protests ending up to Egyptian President Mubarak's resignation in February 2011.

Wulf *,et al.*, (2013) present a study which was conducted in SidiBouzid, the Tunisian town where Arab Spring started. In doing do they examine the role of Web 2.0 and social media applications in the people's uprising. This study identified four relevant phenomena:

- 1) The publication of classified materials via WikiLeaks challenged the regime's legitimacy.
- 2) Web 2.0 connected local activists with Arab satellite TV.
- 3) Social media linked the young activists with actors in other cities in Tunisia.
- 4) Social media allowed organizing resistance inside SidiBouzid.

As for the methods, the study questions the deterministic view of the role of the new media and the representativeness of investigative techniques that uniquely use the new media in order to evaluate their impact. Additionally, the study presented an initial attempt to provide an 'on the ground' approach which was not investigated by other studies. The findings of this study were compared with other studies which analysed data downloaded out of social media applications and suggested that 'on the ground' studies could offer additional insight and played an essential role in better understanding political uses of social media. As for the findings, this study indicated that a nuanced view of real political and economic forces and online affordances would be effective to understand the design and appropriation of social media in fostering social participation.

Aday *et al.*, (2013) addressed the Media consumption patterns exhibited in around the Arab Spring. In broad terms, the major rationale for this study is that the uses of new media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) in the context of the Arab Spring have attracted much attention in many fields of knowledge. The research indicated that most of the available empirical research has investigated how new media have made the participants and spectators able to produce and then circulate protest-related content to millions of people. What makes this study special is that it addresses the major patterns of consumption of Arab Spring–related content, utilizing a special data set established by combining archived Twitter content with metadata derived drawn from the URL shortening service. Making reference to this set of data, this investigation encountered two critical research questions. The first question is whether links disseminated to twitter were followed by people inside the affected country, within the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region or by those outside the region and country. As for the second question, the study wondered about whom attracted more attention online: protesters and other non-elite citizens or traditional news organizations. The study found that the vast majority of attention to Arab Spring content was originally derived from outside of the MENA region. Additionally, the study maintained that that mass media, rather than citizen media, overwhelmingly held the world’s attention within the times of the protests. Twitter was broadly useful as an information channel for non-MENA onlookers but with less usefulness for the direct protesters (i.e., those on the ground).

Research by Lindsey (2013) investigated how the Arab Spring utilized social media as an effective means to disseminate information and promote insurgent agendas. This revelation deserves consideration in all future discussions of revolutions and the concepts of ideology, narrative, momentum and unifying motivations. The main impetus of this research is that the Arab Spring uprisings were arguably the first collective movements of their kind in the Middle East after the internet and social media revolutions of the late 20th/ early 21st centuries, and tactics, techniques and procedures used by resistance populations within the Arab Spring may affect future movements. The study demonstrated that the factors of the social media which affected public opinion and international support, the rapid dissemination of news, the widespread messaging, and the ability of the people to impart information globally are somehow new phenomena during revolutions. The study claimed that social media and internet are becoming the major tools in wars, revolutions, and any political work.

Halverson, *et al.*, (2013) tackled the emergence of nationalist martyr narratives and their posting and dissemination through new media as forces for political change as well as social mobilization. Positing these of nationalist martyr narratives in the context of both religion and history of North Africa, the study traced martyr narratives in Tunisia and Egypt back to pre-Islamic periods and compared them to the contemporary stories of Mohamed Bouazizi and Khaled Saeed. In doing so, the study showed the actual impact of new media on the region, evident in “virtual reliquaries,” in addition to the role that martyr narratives had as catalysts in social mobilization. The findings of the study is that the trajectory of the martyr narrative from the traditional religious context to the state-driven concept of civil religion permits the political dimension of narratives lodging within the religious context to surface in the contemporary discursive moment.

Wolfsfeld *et al.* (2013) addressed the relationship between the social media and the Arab Spring, arguing that media is mainly oriented towards politics and triggered by political interest of the governments or parties. It examined the actual role that social media plays in collective action within a more general theoretical structure, utilizing the major events of the Arab Spring as a case study. Overall, this article shows two broad theoretical principles. The first is that one could not grasp the role of social media in collective action without taking into consideration first the political atmosphere in which social media operate. The paper argued that the second principle indicates that a marked increase in the use of the new media is in most cases probable to follow a significant amount of protest activity than to occur before it. The study made reference to political, media, and protest data from 20 Arab countries as well as the Palestinian Authority. The study suggested that both principles are valid as far as Arab Spring is concerned.

Robertson, A. (2013) argued that once the political unrest spread from Tunisia to neighbouring countries early in 2011, the established global broadcasters were swift to make available commentary on the part which was played by social media in mobilizing dissent, exploiting the same technology in their own reporting of the protests as they did so. In relation to this, the study investigated the relation of “old” to “new” media, exploring them in a comparison of televised coverage of the Arab Spring in Al-Jazeera English, Russia Today, CNN International, and British Broadcasting Corporation World (BBCW) News. To this end, the study built on the notion of a ‘mediatized’ crisis, seeking to map the shared communicative space opened up by global broadcasters, and how established media actors are adapting to new media ecologies. The findings determined that social media do not play the major role in global television

discourse expected by many. It added that the prominence and deployment of social media vary from one channel to the other.

The work of Bruns, *et al.* (2013) indicated that despite the fact that popular media narratives about the actual role of the social media in triggering and driving the major incidents of the Arab Spring are probable to exaggerate and overstate the actual role of Facebook and Twitter on these uprisings, the study claimed that such protests and unrest in countries of the Arab Spring, including Tunisia, and Syria generated a major deal of social media activity. For instance, the study stated that on Twitter alone, there are several millions of tweets containing the hashtags Libya or Egypt, which were created during 2011. The study added that such hashtags directly affected citizens of these countries and by onlookers from further afield. However, the study maintained that the aspect which remained unclear regarding the impact of social media is the extent to which there was any direct interaction between these two groups, given the possible language barriers between them. In order to answer this question, the investigation compared patterns of Twitter usage during the popular revolution in Egypt and the civil war in Libya, building on hashtag data sets which were gathered between January and November, 2011. To this end, the study used custom-made tools for processing “big data,”, finding out the volume of tweets sent by English-, Arabic-, and mixed-language Twitter users over time. Additionally, the study examined the networks of interaction between these groups as they developed and changed over the course of these revolts. Furthermore, the research identified the general patterns of information flow between the English- and Arabic-speaking sides of the Twittersphere. The study concluded that the users played a significant role in bridging both language spheres.

### 3.6. Conclusion

According to the literature surveyed above relating to the role of the media in political events, it is clear that media has been used as an effective tool to manipulate people’s opinions and perspectives towards particular issues which are grounded by the governments. It is notable, however, that although some researchers claim that the media can have a strong effect on political opinions and outcomes there are other research who suggest that such effects are limited. Nonetheless, the research would argue that the media is obviously used as a tool to direct people towards certain attitudes and opinions which correlate with the government’s wishes and expectations. This implies that media can be politicized with concomitant effect that some researchers claim that the media has a strong influence on violence. Indeed, mounting

evidence from all parts of the world demonstrates the strong attachment on local people of the mass media which is, in turn, used to spread the state's own ideas and propaganda, sometimes in an implicit way. This being the case, we can account now for why governments pay attention to media and often attempt to have control of it. Thus, there is evidence that the media is an influential tool that can even 'direct' people to act in certain ways. On the other hand, further evidence maintains that the media and social media's effect is not so powerful and can be overcome by the actions of individuals or groups of individuals who hold strong views which may lead them to challenge the local authorities or even overthrow them, as happened in the Arab Spring. All in all, it is evident that the research is still attempting to address the changing circumstances caused by the introduction of new media outlets and alternative channels of communication such as the internet, social media platforms and mobile 'phone usage, all of which makes it very difficult to reach definitive conclusions.

## Chapter 4

### Research methods and methodology

#### 4.1. Introduction

According to Willis( 2008), Gorard (2010), Podolefsky et al (2013) and Yin (2013), the design of a study is strongly related to the main aim and objectives of the study under scrutiny. Additionally, they indicate that the methodology of the study must meet the demands of the study design so as to comply with the main aims of the research. Accordingly, a study with learning-based purposes is, to some extent, different from a study with a teaching-based purposes when it comes to the methodology and the research design. Following this, the current chapter is designed to investigate the methods adopted so as to reach the main aim of the current research, which was to investigate the background to Al-Jazeera and the BBC that focused on critical incidents during the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions and to address the impact of the reporting of the revolutions on the staff and students of one university located in southern Libya. In order to reach a higher level of presentation and accuracy of the exposition, the main research paradigms are examined including the positivistic paradigm, the phenomenological paradigm, subjective and objective research approaches and perspectives, and deductive and inductive theory. Furthermore, the current chapter elaborates on the data collection methods used in the current research, which were collecting and examining relevant articles and conducting semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the current chapter discusses the ethical considerations for the study and how they are accommodated within the main framework of the current research.

#### 4.2. Research design and research methodology

It should be stressed from the outset that the researcher is aware of the underlying relationships or affinities between certain concepts that are significant for the purposes of the current research. These concepts are the research design, research method, and the research methodology. It is of profound importance to spell out the main definitions of such concepts so as to reach a deeper understanding of their interactions with one another and how this interaction can affect the general framework of the study that we work on (cf. Marczyk et al, 2005). In addition, several studies have attested to the assumption that an appropriate research design depends heavily on an appropriate research methodology as well as research methods;

thus any research must keep an eye on how these three concept interface with one another in order to yield a reliable study whose findings can be generalized, where appropriate (Van den Akker et al, 2006, Noor, 2008, Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009, and Creswell, 2013).

Research design is the science (and art) of setting up and planning certain concepts or schemata which are called 'procedures' in order to carry out some research, aiming in principle to achieve the best findings, conclusions and results they study aims for (see, Yin, 2013). Thus, research design is not a haphazard step nor is it unimportant for the study in question. Rather, it is a very important step and stage that must be handled carefully given its underlying aim to render the study more reliable and valid. For instance, Hussey and Hussey (1997) and Collis and Hussey (2009), among others, considered research design as a unique stage of educational research with an overarching role for the research since it aims to provide a principled guide for the researcher to follow in order to yield a reliable and valid finding. Hence, one of the main characteristics of a successful research design is that it should be detailed enough to provide a full-fledged plan for the research. Following Yin (2003), research design must be conceived as 'a blueprint' whose main goal is to assist the researchers to explore and pin down any problem they face during the course of their study. In a related vein, other studies relate research design to the main core of any research, which is the central question used in the research. Furthermore, theorists also insist on the notion that research design is very useful, when followed carefully, in answering the questions of the study (Kumar and Phrommathed 2005, Baxter and Jack2008, and Mitchell and Jolley, 2012, and Mackey and Gass2013). They argue that questions do not have the same nature; thus, it is useful to follow a research plan considering the nature of the questions at issue. Such a research plan can be built with reference to research design.

As far as this study is concerned, research design is a very important step that guides the researcher while collecting, interpreting, and analysing the data (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976). The related literature argues that in order to have reliable results at the end of the research, a researcher must be equipped with appropriate research design at the very beginning of the research stages. In so doing, the research design determines the research methodology adopted throughout the research and data collection methods, and the data interpretation and analysis (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson2006, Creswell and Clark, 2007, and Woodward, 2013). Following this line of thought, we assume that research design is an important step in constructing the research from its initial stages. Additionally, Hussey and Hussey (1997) have

argued that research design is also involved in other processes of research. For instance, they revealed that research design is an important factor in identifying the research problems and developing the theoretical construct and framework that the study follows. Furthermore, other studies indicate the research design is itself a major step in collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data, but also in determining the aim and the methodology and identifying the outcomes which the research is expected to yield and even in identifying the limitations of the research (Roberts et al, 2006, and Johnson et al 2007, and Ployhart and Vandenberg, 2010).

A second important concept, which must be distinguished from research design, is the research methodology. For Kumar and Phrommathed (2005), research methodology is considered a significant tool for reliable and valid research that follows certain rules and procedures. Such procedures include the ways in which questionnaires are built, selecting the appropriate statistical tool, and ways of conducting the interviews that are carried out. In view of this, methodology is important not only since it is an essential part in conducting the research but also because it is a set of rules that help the researcher to choose how the tool he or she has used is constructed. In this connection, Hussey and Hussey (1997) regarded methodology as an overall approach adopted to deal with the research process. This process extends from the first stages of the research (e.g., data collection) to the end stages (e.g., analysis of the data). Methodology is thus determined with reference to the time, place, objective, type, and cause of the data collection and the machineries by which the data collected are analyzed. As such, research methodology is an integral component of any study whose main circumstances (i.e., place, time, cause, objective, etc.) decide how the methodology must be built and followed (Patton 2005).

The confusion which sometimes occurs when differentiating between methodology (as a concept) and the methods (as a concept) should be stressed at this point. Indeed, many studies have shown that this confusion is engendered due to the different definitions for these terms either in educational disciplines or in other humanities and social sciences (cf. Mack et al, 2005 and Mackenzie and Knipe 2006). This confusion has reached a level where both concepts have been used interchangeably or as synonyms with the same meaning and scope (see for instance, Wilson, 1999 and Saunders et al, 2009). However, it should be noted that a difference or a line between these concepts must be drawn and recognized since both concepts are different in terms of their nature and objectives. In this regard, Wilson (2002) argued that the main difference between these two concepts lies in the notion of dependence. That is, the methods,

as a concept, relies on the methodology in that the latter provides the philosophical groundwork for methods, not vice versa. Wilson (2002) means that both methodology and methods are two distinct concepts; however methods of one research depends on the methodology of that research in making available why such methods are appropriate and why some are not useful for the purposes of the research at hand. In a related vein, Saunders et al (2009) indicated that the methodology is concerned with the theory of how research must be conducted; hence, methodology is the philosophical basis for the methods adopted in the research. Saunders et al (2009) defined these methods as the techniques and the rules used to collect data and carry out the analysis within the general framework of the methodology. As a consequence, the methodology must be established in a stage prior to that of the methods since the latter depend on the former in terms of the nature and the form. The same assumption about the nature of both the methods and methodology and how they should be built in relation to each other has been iterated in many research papers in different educational frameworks (cf. Patton 1990, Feagin et al, 1991; Merriam 1998; Kothari 2004; Joy 2007; and Matthews and Ross, 2014). In short and according to the above discussion, we can generalize that research design is the first step of conducting research since it includes both the methodology and the methods. However, the methodology must be established prior to the methods because the latter depend on the former in terms of the nature and form (cf. Mohamed, 2012).

Since the current chapter deals with the methodology and the methods of the current research and how they should be established, it is beneficial to sketch out the research philosophy and the related paradigms from which the methodology in general is derived. This sketch is provided in the next subsection.

### 4.3. Research philosophy

#### 4.3.1. Overview

Identifying the research philosophy is of profound value for any research for many reasons. Firstly, research philosophy provides the researchers with the needed help to recognise which research design is suitable for the purposes of the study at issue (see, Easterby-Smith *et al*, 2002). As has been just elaborated in the last chapter, research design is a very important step in every stage of the research; thus, it is of no less importance determining the most suitable philosophy of the research design. Accordingly, a suitable research philosophy is essential in

sustaining the process of research design clarification. To put it differently, research philosophy provides the researcher with the ability to keep clarifying the research design he/she uses during the course of conducting the research (cf. Love 2000, Easterby-Smith et al 2002, Pring 2004 and Noddings, 2005). Additionally, research philosophy provides the researcher with the chance to identify and establish the appropriate research designs, which might be inaccessible in terms of the researcher's own experience. In other words, research philosophy is important in giving the researcher the needed source to generate his/her own research design suitable for the study at hand, given that he/she might lack such a source due to his/her limited exposure to the research in the past (Easterby-Smith et al ,2002 and Crossan ,2003).

In relation to this, there are two philosophical perspectives which oppose one another in deciding on a suitable research design and the general philosophy the work at issue must follow, namely positivism and phenomenology (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002 and Collis and Hussey,2009). It should be noted that these two terms are alternatively referred to as quantitative and qualitative approaches, respectively. Thus, the common division between quantitative and qualitative approaches is mainly based on the philosophical considerations of research in general (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Indeed, the related literature abounds with the studies discussing the nature of these both approaches (Jick 1979, Morse 1991, Newman and Benz 1998, Bryman ,2006, and Davies and Hughes,2014). In general, positivism is linked with quantitative approaches and with deductive reasoning, whilst qualitative approaches are lonked with inductive reasoning.

Before elaborating on the exact nature of the positivism and phenomenology, some information about the meaning of the word 'paradigm' is important. That is because both positivism and phenomenology are counted as research paradigms (cf. De Vaus 2013,Marshalland Rossman,2014, and Babbie ,2015). A paradigm is generally defined as the progress of (some) scientific practice (cf. Collis and Hussey2009 and Giere, 2010). This progress is based on people's philosophies and assumptions about the world and the knowledge on which the research must be conducted. Following Remenyi et al (1998), a paradigm is defined as the conventional (what the people agree on) window of the subject under scrutiny. As such, a paradigm makes available a framework (theories, methods, etc.) in dealing with the data and how the research must be pursued. However, paradigms are different in terms of the data they are intended to cover and the methodology used, hence the division between the positivism and phenomenology discussed in the next subsection. In this regard, it should be highlighted that

this division is useful in nature because studies, as hinted at above, are different in terms of their nature and the objective they are out to explore. Accordingly, it is beneficial to generate some way differentiating between studies when it comes to the paradigms they follow (Shulman 1986, Guba and Lincoln 1994, and Kowalczyk-Walędziak, 2015).

#### 4.3.2. Positivist paradigm vs. phenomenological paradigm

Several definitions have been furnished in relation to the positivist paradigm. One commonly quoted definition is that of Denscombe (2007) who defined the positivist paradigm as an approach which attempts to apply the natural science model of research to investigation of the social world (Denscombe 2007, 299). Thus, this approach is conceived of as a marriage between the social world and phenomena and the natural scientific model of investigation. Following this view, the social world has regularities and consequences whose existence can be determined according to the scientific method of investigation (see, for example, Schrag 1992, Taylor and Medina, 2013, and Kaplan, 2015). In addition, it has been suggested that the main idea of the positivism is that the social world makes available certain extremes whose characteristics can be scaled and determined. This determination is carried out by a set of methods and procedures whose main property is objectivity (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). As a result, no difference between social sciences and natural sciences either in terms of the main aim as well as the method used to analyse and interpret the data (Scott, 1997). In this regard, positivism is seen as a paradigm whose main aim is to bridge the gap between social sciences and natural sciences which had been thought to be different either in scope or the methodology (cf. Guba and Lincoln 1994, and Perlesz and Lindsay, 2003).

Due to its main aims and motivation, positivism and its tenets and principles have been called into question. Several research papers have indicated that this line of reasoning must not be passed unchallenged due to its over-generalization on the relationship between natural sciences and social sciences (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, and Silverman, 2013). The major criticism has been oriented towards the notion of objectivity whose existence is supposed to be due to the methodology used in this paradigm. The bulk of the idea is that objectivity cannot be obtained within the realm of social sciences, given the nature, properties, and scope of such subjects (Collis and Hussey, 2003). The researchers must be affected by their tendencies or other factors which lessen the objectivity. These researchers have advocated the

other paradigm, i.e. the qualitative paradigm, whose properties and characteristics fit the methodology of the social sciences.

The phenomenological paradigm or the qualitative paradigm is distinguished by the assumption that the objectivity is not a property of social science investigation. The researchers in this paradigm think that the social sciences are characterised by subjectivity in nature. Thus, researchers must be engaged with the research, working out the main phenomena at issue. Thus, the phenomenological paradigm is subjective, whereas positivism is objective (Guba and Lincoln 1994, Coffey and Atkinson 1996, and Collis and Hussey 2003). In this regard, Remenyi et al (1998) postulate that the phenomenological paradigm pays much attention to the meaning rather than facts in an attempt to pin down the phenomenon at issue. Additionally, this type of inquiry is characterized by its way of considering the totality of the situation under investigation and in using the induction as a way of analysis and bringing about the needed evidence either to attest the hypothesis or even to reject it. For this reason, some authors have argued that the phenomenological paradigm is better for the social sciences whose nature necessitate the researcher to be somehow involved in the investigation not to be totally separated from the process of investigation as is the case in positivism (cf. Bryman 1984, Bogdan, R., and Biklen 1997, Remenyi et al 1998, Wolcott 2002, and Corbin and Strauss 2014).

However, what might cast doubt on the phenomenological paradigm is the assumption that it is less reliable since the researchers' personal opinions or/and tendencies might be involved in the process of drawing the results and main conclusion of the given research. Additionally, the related literature indicates the disadvantages of the phenomenological paradigm are the difficulty of the analysis of the data whose collection is time consuming and the notion that the researchers involved in such a kind of inquiry are dubious of the clear patterns that they suggest might not emerge (Wilson, 1999 and Saunders et al, 1997).

Having discussed the phenomenological paradigm and the positivist paradigm and their advantages and disadvantages, the next section discusses the general theory of deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning and the main properties of the each approach.

#### 4.4. The general theory of deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning

In this section, I discuss the general theory of deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning and how such two types of reasoning are different. First and foremost, it should be iterated that, as is the case in the differences and properties of the phenomenological paradigm and the positivism paradigm, there is no consensus among researchers working in this field. However, education is concerned about the potential relationship between theory on one hand and the social sciences on the other hand. In this kind of reasoning, setting a theory and postulating the hypothesis come prior to data collection and the findings, but after the observation (Johnson-Laird, 1994). To put it differently, once the researcher observes some phenomenon, he or she sets out a theory and advances a hypothesis in an attempt to account for his or her observation in the first place. Afterwards, the researcher becomes involved in the process of data collection and analysing and interpreting the data he/she collected. Once the findings come out, the researcher is able either to attest his or her advanced hypothesis or reject them. In light of this confirmation or rejection of the advanced hypothesis, the research can revise the theory he/she postulates to account for his or her initial observation (Overton 1987, Evans 2003, and Goel, 2007).

In this regard, it should be noted that deductive reasoning is strongly associated with qualitative research whose nature can be investigated using the steps adopted in this kind of reasoning. Furthermore, some studies indicate that not all researchers follow strictly the steps adopted in deductive reasoning; however, the general line is maintained and followed (Newstead et al, 2004).

On the other hand, induction (or inductive reasoning) is at variance with deduction in the way in which the research is carried out (Arthur, 1994). As clearly evident in the discussion above in deduction reasoning, the theory comes prior to the data collection or findings. However, the picture is mirrored when it comes to the inductive reasoning where data collection and the findings come prior to the theory (Pellegrino and Glaser, 1979, Choi et al 1997, and Heit, 2000). The researcher in the inductive approach collects the required data, analyses and interpret them according to the methodology that he/she uses, and afterwards he/she draws the findings based on the his/her analysis of the data. In the further step, the researcher sets forth his/her theory depending on the findings of his/ her research. This type of reasoning (i.e., induction) is strongly related to the quantitative research whose first step is generally speaking data

collection and observation. In view of this, inductive reasoning moves from the specific to the general; whilst the deductive approach from the general to the specific (Collis and Hussey, 2009).<sup>9</sup>

#### 4.5. Quantitative research vs qualitative research

As noted earlier, it is essential for the purposes of the current study to make the distinction between the differences involved in quantitative research and qualitative research. Indeed, the main differences between them are related to the way these two types of research consider specific research aspects, including the distinction between explanation and understanding as the objective of investigation, the distinction between knowledge discovered and knowledge constructed, the personal and impersonal role of the research, and the data size (see, e.g., Punch, 2013).

Firstly, quantitative research is interested in exploring the complex interrelationships between different variables, whilst qualitative research is interested with the explanation which is taken the main purposes of the research. Secondly, quantitative research considers the knowledge as discovered in terms of meanings and interpretations taken, while qualitative research considers the knowledge as constructed rather than discovered. Finally, the influence of the researcher on the research outcome is limited in quantitative research, while it is more robust in qualitative research. (Mohamed, 2012). A further difference between the qualitative research approach and the quantitative research approach is that the former proves suitable when the data items are small; whereas the latter is the suitable option in cases of many types of data (Creswell, 2009).

Against this background, it can be generalised that there are two types of research approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative. Each type has its own properties, advantages and disadvantages. Following the main aims of the current research, the qualitative approach was used in data collection. This selection is mainly motivated by the fact that the qualitative research is interested in exploring the complex interrelationships between several variables and

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<sup>9</sup> It should be highlighted that induction might involve some deduction and vice versa, the state of affairs raised by several authors and researchers. This 'interface' between both types of reasoning entails their intervention with one another, given the process of fining information requires different paths of research and inquiry (Simon 1996 and Gollin 1998).

discovering meanings and interpretations (Rowley, 2012). The current research is intended to explore the interrelationships between Western and Arabic media representation of Arab Spring revolutions and staff and students' attitudes towards such representation. Thus, the qualitative research approach is as an appropriate tool to achieve this goal since the problem under scrutiny relates to the social world of the media and education. The full explanation of this claim is introduced in the next subsection where the main lines of qualitative research are highlighted, including the method of interviews which was the main data collection herein.

#### 4.6. The qualitative research

According to Creswell (2009), the qualitative research approach is interested in investigating the events and data through observation and analysis of events, attitudes, photographs, and verbal and non-verbal communication. Thus, qualitative research is different from quantitative research in that it does not convert the observations of the data collection into numbers. Additionally, within the qualitative research approach, the researcher is of paramount importance because he/she performs as an actor whose standpoint toward the phenomena in question is considered the main basis on which the findings of the study are drawn (ibid). Therefore, the qualitative research is inductive in nature, depending on people's own words in understanding events or actions, implying that the theory and the hypothesis are advanced once the data collection analysis and interpretation are determined (Higson and Blake, 1993). Therefore, theory is developed gradually (step by step) according to the findings obtained. In a related vein, it has been argued that the qualitative research approach reflects the subjective aspects of people's doings through focusing in the meaning rather than the measurement of the social phenomena (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

For Sarantakos (1998), the basic principles of the qualitative research approach are varied, including, among others, consideration of reality as it is established and expounded in interaction, flexibility, interaction between the research and respondents. In the qualitative research approach, there are two main ways of collecting data: observations and interviews; the choice of which depending on the nature of the data.

#### 4.7. Data collection and the sample of the study

Before explaining how the data of the current study were collected, a note about the primary data and secondary data is in order. Primary data is the information which is collected by the investigator on the variables of the interest for the specific aim of the research at hand. These primary data include case studies, questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Secondary data, on the other hand, include the information which already exists. These include books, theses, records, academics, and the like (Gall et al, 1996).

Complying with the main purposes of the current research, a set of pre-arranged semi-structured interviews with both staff and students at Sebha University, Libya were conducted. It has been widely attested in the literature that conducting interviews is a good approach when it comes to exploring the attitudes of certain subjects towards certain phenomena (Kajornboon, 2005). According to Runch (2005), the interview is one of the most powerful data collection methods in the qualitative research approach since by which large amounts of data can be collected quickly. Although many definitions were given to the term ‘interview’ as a tool in the qualitative research approach, James and Frey’s (1995) definition of interview is so common. They defined the interview as a purposeful conversation in which one person asks questions (the interviewer) and another answers them (respondent or the interviewee). Interviews are seen as both positivist and phenomenological methodologies tools (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Additionally, interviews can be constructed in a face-to face fashion, over the telephone. Further, they can be carried out with one individual or many at the same time. What is important here is to capitalize on several papers (e.g., Fontana and Frey, 2005, Polit and Beck 2006) that differentiate between structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Saunders et al 2007 and Whiting 2008).

The main difference between these three types of interviews lies in whether the questions to be asked to the respondent pre-determined or not and the ways in which the interaction is managed (Moore 2000). In structured interviews, there is a list of predetermined questions to be asked to each respondent in the same manner.<sup>10</sup> Semi-structured interviews have prepared questions in advance but with open nature so the interview can ask other (new) questions according to the respondent’s reply (ibid). According to Easterby-Smith et al (1991), of the main purpose of such interviews is to develop an understanding of the respondents’ world so the researcher

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<sup>10</sup> According to Easterby-Smith *et al* (1991), structured interviews aim at gaining the quantitative results from a carefully targeted sample.

might influence it independently or collaboratively. Such a type of interviews is used when the interviewee might be reluctant to be truthful and the subject matter is highly confidential (ibid) or when the type of the data to be collected needs a sort of flexibility (step-by-step logic of a situation). The third type of interview is unstructured which is characterized by being informal with open question with no pre-determined questions (See, Oppenheim 1997 for further information about this type of interviews and the aims of their use).

Several authors have argued that semi-structured interviews are a very useful method used to collect data. Following Sorrell and Redmond (1995) and Melia (2000), Whiting (2008) stated that semi-structured interviews give the interviewer to elicit some extra information, depending on the interviewee's replies, important for the purposes of the given research. As such, the interviewer might allocate some space to the interviewee or even give him or her some control on the stream of information. Whiting (2008) argued that it has been advanced that the interviewer usually maintains control over the interview in structured interviews, asking questions, but contributing little else. Several other researchers have stated that trying to control the interview process does not give the needed credit and respect to the role of participants, since they are treated as if they are there just waiting to produce data. Semi-structured interviews are useful tools to overcome these obstacles and barriers placed on the participants. However, sometimes some control over the participants is needed; thus semi-structured interviews as a tool are better than structured and unstructured ones (cf. Miller and Crabtree, 1999 and Polit and Beck, 2006).

As far as the current study is concerned, 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The main aim of the interviews was to explore the attitudes of both staff and under-graduate students at Sebha University-a public university in the city of Sebha, south of Libya towards the Western and Arabic media representation of Arab Spring revolutions. Given that Sebha University offers only bachelor degrees in 15 different faculties, staff from different departments and only undergraduate students were asked to participate in these semi-structured interviews. Of the 15 staff members who were respondents there were 5 female staff and 10 male staff. This disproportionate ratio between males and females was produced since this reflected to the ration of male and female staff in the university since approximately 70 percent of staff at Sabha University are male. By contrast, for the students who acted as respondents, there were 10 female students and 5 male students which similarly reflects the fact that female students outnumber male students by two to one in the university as a whole. Thus, the number

of the males and females within the sample reflected the ratio of the two genders for the staff and students in the population of the university. The sample is represented in the following Table:

**Table 4: semi-interviews sample in PhD**

Category	Male	Female	sum
Staff	10	5	15
Students	5	10	15
Sum	15	15	30

**Table 1 Semi-interviews sample**

Both students and staff were purposively selected from different departments in the faculty of Education in order to provide a purposive sample that represented a ‘cross section’ of experience. The sample constructed included both men and women who held a variety of posts in the university at different levels in the organization (i.e. some lecturers, some heads of department etc.). In addition, a specific number of staff and students were chosen from different departments in order to render the results of the study comprehensive and tangible. All students and staff purposively selected in this way were asked for, and gave, their approval to be interviewed.

The interviews with lecturers and students included the main questions below and the full interview schedule is offered in appendix number 1. These interviews were meant to determine the most critical incidents, from the selected channels to focus on, and help further refine which articles to analyze and also to find out how the reporting affected them and their studies.

- 1- What are the most critical incidents in Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions, which influenced you the most?
- 2- Do you think that both channels depict these critical events in the same way? Why and why not?
- 3- To what extent did both channels pose (or suggest) the same reasons for these critical incidents?
- 4- What is the impact of reporting these critical events on you?

All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and subsequently transcribed. The coding was conducted according to pre defined and emergent key themes which were then compared with one another on one hand and with those found in the literature on the topic on the other hand so as to develop original conclusions and build theory.

In order to analyze the interviews, I followed the following steps. First, I read the interview many times, so that I could determine the recurrent themes that emerged in the interviewees' responses. I sorted out all of the similar perspectives and classified them according to their themes and relevance to the aims of the thesis. It became apparent that the students and the staff held certain converging views towards the potential role of Al-Jazeera as well as the BBC, as I will show later in the following chapters. Additionally, I paid attention to the participants' detailed views on the subject matter. As noted earlier, the type of the interviews adopted in the current research were semi-structured in nature where participants are allowed to diverge from the topic to address any point they see as pertinent. This approach helped to widen my understanding of the subject matter and provided some important issues and that fed into my argument, which I will develop in the next two chapters.

When I finished sorting out the relevant data, I started the process of coding the relevant responses according to the key themes of the current work. I separated the respondents' views towards BBC from those towards Al-Jazeera. Additionally, I grouped the respondents' views towards the critical events that occurred in the main Arabic Spring revolutions. Consequently, I concluded the process with a well-coded data that I used to build and feed my analysis. This may appear to imply that I did not consider the respondents' views where they were not related to the main themes of the current work but this is not the case. Some respondents did diverge from the topic outlined in the question and expressed their own opinions on the political situation and, further, they postulated reasons about why Al-Jazeera may have sought to manipulate events. Where they seemed relevant I sought to take account of these comments but I did not seek to include those views that were clearly and based on personal prejudice or subjective observation.

In a related vein, in order to render the findings of the studies more reliable and valid, linguistic analysis of a sample of the reporting of the Arab Spring within the CDA as developed by Fairclough (1989) and Van Dijk (1993) and the **systemic functional theories** of Halliday (1985), which attribute the functions of linguistic structures to the social structure, were employed. The researcher downloaded and analysed the chosen materials from the official websites of both Al-Jazeera English and the BBC. Two approaches were adopted. First, the study analysed the stories headlines used by the channels during the course of the revolutions. Second, it analysed stories the channels deliver to describe the main events of the revolutions such as rulers' stepping down through carrying out a multi-modal analysis of the entire stories. It is worth pointing that the analysis targeted the whole articles including any images accompanying and that is because such images may provide with important clues on how both channels depict the events.

- a. The study followed the CDA of the on-line news output produced by the Al-Jazeera English in comparison with the online news output of BBC.
- b. It drew upon theories of systemic functional linguistics and the CDA to analyse the representation of the Arab spring revolutions on the websites of the two networks.
- c. CDA is used to elucidate the ideological representation of the revolutions in the selected networks.
- d. Systemic functional linguistics was used to analyse the experiential meaning of the news, their thematic structures, their lexical structures, as well as the grammatical metaphors used in the news.
- e. The study comprised a macrostructure analysis of the news in order to reveal the main topics that recur throughout the news coverage of the two channels.

This linguistic analysis aimed to figure out how both channels use specific vocabulary and structures to describe the events in a way which is in line with the general policy and trends of that channel. To put it differently, the study attempted to show how the description of the revolutions' events help us to determine and specify ideologies both channels adopt and promote. That was done by using the main stages of the CDA as put forward by Fairclough (1995) which highlights the text as a social practice standing for the writers' ideology. Furthermore, analysing such texts written in different times of revolution which underwent different situations of power relation between different parties involved is very helpful to understand the nature of social power and dominance throughout the course of the revolutions given that power and dominance are usually organized and institutionalized (Van Dijk, 1993).

In addition, this word determine if the power relations in these texts are direct or indirect and why.

## 4.8. CDA and SFL

### 4.8.1. Introduction

On the basis of Fairclough (1995), CDA must reflect on the social and cultural occasions and events in addition to the discursive practices which cause such events and occasions. In addition, CDA must spell out any dialectical bearing between such events and practices. Thus, discourse is taken as an ultimate product of both social and discursive practices when produce certain social relations the CDA pertains to such as power and ideology. In this regard, Huckin (2002) maintains that CDA is in the main meant to indicate and investigate the social and discursive practices subsumed within a given text and to capitalize the pertaining issues which are not present in the text. Thus, questions such as why these issues in particular are reduced or selected in this text on this time in this place, etc. are raised in order to figure out any aspects of power, hegemony, ideology related.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that CDA is put forward in order to determine the way via which organizations, news, broadcasting, media, can shape our life and reflections and expression on the issues on questions. Due to Van Dijk (1993), CDA attempts to investigate the linguistic-discursive practices which are deeply related connected to the socio-political structures of hegemony, power and domination. This investigation is shielded with placing the emphasis on the role the discourse plays when reproducing and/or challenging the dominance. For Pasha (2011), CDA is to some extent unique to other approaches investigating discourse. CDA is not restricted to investigating the immediate formal properties of a given text but also it places the text in its wider social, historical, economic, cognitive and political context. In this sense, CDA works globally, examining how a given text is related to other texts and how it is formed by the social practices by which the text can be better understood. The main goal of taking all of such elements into account is to offer an in-depth understanding of the given discourse which cannot be split from its ambient environment. Additionally, this diverse combination gives rise to the notion that understanding the ideologies and the elements of power within a given text is arguably inaccessible without direct recourse to the social and cultural context of that text (*cf.* Van Dijk, 1993 and Huckin, 2002).

Consequently, CDA can be categorised by the following themes where it works (Wodak and Fairclough, 2004). CDA is meant to address the social problems and power relations which are in turn discursive. Discourse is formed and forms both society and culture; thus, discourse is ideologically driven and historically grounded. In addition, the link demarcated between society and text is mediated. Hence, discourse is in general a form of social action with an ethical stance which can be interpretative and explanatory.

In order to render CDA more systematic and lessen any problems or obstacles which might appear because of the hugely-diverse nature of CDA, Fairclough (1992) develops an analytical framework to carry out CDA. In this framework, he depends on the notions of intertextuality (the relationship between various texts, past and present, pertaining to the same topic), interdiscursivity (the combination of discourses in a text) and hegemony (the dominance of certain ideologies: political, social, etc.). As a result, every event can be seen as a combination of a text, discursive practice (including the production and interpretation of texts) and social practice (Pasha, 2011). Accordingly, it turns out that CDA is carried out in a three consecutive stages. The first stage is termed as ‘description’ where a fully detailed linguistic analysis is conducted. The second stage is called ‘interpretation’, where the potential relation between the linguistic findings and the social context is looked for. The third stage is dubbed as ‘explanation’ where the linguistic and the social aspects obtained from the last first two stages are connected to the cultural level (Fairclough, 1995). When doing just like this, the covert ideology<sup>11</sup> overlaying the given text can be pinned down.

Thus, CDA has been a fecund technique to investigate media and the concomitant effects of media on the people (Garrett and Bell, 1998). The framework of CDA offers an actual opportunity to utilize a linguistic and social method to study media texts in a unique fashion. In his seminal study of news stories, Van Dijk (1988) highlights the significance of the explicit structural analysis of news reports. In this study, two levels of analysis have been differentiated: the micro level and the macro level. The former examines certain linguistic aspects including the sounds used, words selected, sentence patterns followed and their intended meanings, whilst the latter characterizes the general forms of a given discourse at issue. In addition, the

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<sup>11</sup> Ideology is defined as the interface between social structure and social cognition (Van DijkVan DijkVan Dijk, 1998)

main finding of this study entails that certain linguistic aspects such as syntactic and semantic descriptions can be used as cues to reveal the underlying ideologies the media attempts to highlight. In the same token, it transpires that macrostructures alongside the related cognitive processes are essential crucial for the production and comprehension of media reports.

#### 4.8.2. Media role within CDA

Kim (1992) attempted to look at how news is constructed and grounded by both culture and society. The main claim made is that news and media in general is different from one culture and community to others. In this regard, the study states that one country constructs news texts unique to other communities due to the assumption that the general linguistic structures of news are highly influenced by the cultural and hence ideological contexts of this country. News and their constructions are proved unstable. In order to attest this claim, the study makes use of news texts concerned with the famous incident of downing the Korean airlines flight (No 007) which occurred in 1983. As for the countries from which the news related to this occasion is taken, the study depends on the news from the United States (represented by the New York Times), Korea (represented by the Korea Herald) and Cuba (represented by Granma). Van Dijk's news analysis was adopted throughout this study in addition to use a mixed method of quantitative content analysis and the qualitative structural analysis. The main findings indicate that the political position of each country was evidently depicted in news discourse; the news was taken as a mirror of the political ideology adopted in a given country. For instance, both the US and Korean media report the event as catastrophe where the passengers were victims. On the other hand, the Cuban press depicts the incident in a way, which back the soviet version tailored to account for the occasion. As a result, the Cuban media was not interested in what happened to the passengers but rather in the political background of the Korean airlines incident and the ostensible reasons, which made the Soviet Union to down the plane. What is significant to mention at this point is that the main findings of this study supports the theoretical notions of CDA that media and press have vital part in depicting the ideological function via the process of selection, presentation, and construction of specific news texts.

In a related vein, Dunmire (1995) addressed the rhetorical and linguistic tools which were utilized in carrying out a projected event in the New York Times and Washington Post. To this end, the research went over and analysed the first three week reporting of the Persian Gulf conflict which happened in 1990. The analytical method of critical linguistics and the discourse

analytic approach of European social psychology (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) were used to investigate the data obtained. The study indicated that media has a demanding role in motivating U.S. military involvement in the gulf conflict. The whole media then capitalized that assumption that Iraq was going to invade Saudi Arabia. Such an assumption was transformed from being the object of speculative assertion into an assumed event. What was important to highlight is that the Iraq/Kuwait conflict (the main event) appears not to be the major focus of the news accounts. However, the Iraq/Kuwait conflict was used by the press as a presentation to the events yet to occur. The main media at the time was oriented to implicate that Saudi Arabia is the next target for Iraqi Army and there should have been an international intervention to prevent such an option.

Additionally, Min (1998) investigated how meaning can be socially formed in linguistic structures, addressing the news reports about South Korea. Four English-written newspapers were used as samples of the study. One of these newspapers was published in South Korea, one in England, and two in the United States. As for the methodology, this study made use of various approaches related to investigate the language in the social use: Haliday's textual approach, Thompson's sociological approach, Fairclough's critical linguistic approach, and Van Dijk's cognitive approach, altogether. The research comes up with the conclusion that the language which is used in discourse played a significant and profound role in both constituting and reproducing the social relations and identities of a given community or culture. Moreover, this study points out that any social analysis which investigates any language must not overlook the underlying role of language in representing and sustaining the social forms and structures as well as the unequal power relations subsumed within such forms and structures.

In the same token, Hassan (2003) aimed at investigating how language encodes and decodes the ideological-driven themes and assumptions alongside the power relations. In order to do just this, the study analysed some linguistic constructions which were highly deemed to be connected with the ideological-driven themes and assumptions and the power relations on both the syntactic, lexical and pragmatic levels. As for the method, the study used the newspaper discourse perspective in order to explain how language is utilized and intentionally employed to set up the most prevalent ideologies and sustain the overarching power relations. Some representative samples of newspaper texts derived from Washington Post and the New York Times which spotlighted the 11th of September attacks on New York and Washington were chosen as the study data in addition to certain supplementary texts which cover the October

1999 Egypt Air crash. The focus was drifted towards the editorials, news stories, and headlines, keeping in mind that such materials are strongly correlated with the newspaper's standpoints and views on the news. The main conclusion demonstrates that newspaper discourse is not merely a linguistic depiction of certain events or occasions but rather a deep representation of people and their ideologies towards the actions, events and states which are depicted in line with such ideologies. The linguistic texts within a particular discourse are meant basically to propagandize certain ideologies grounded by power relations, hegemony, clash and consensus themes, and dehumanizing the other.

Wenden (2005) investigates the role of language in the social life and how discourse (herein, media) is employed to underline the political struggle which is by nature a struggle for the power of representation. The current study made use of the obtained results of a discourse analysis of 12 newspaper articles which were cited on Aljazeera's English website, marking the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the al-Aqsa Intifada. In order to pinpoint any ideologically-driven themes and to establish a comprehensive account of Al Jazeera's stand, the study made available a whole profile of Aljazeera's perspective on this second Intifada, highlighting the themes used to account for, represent, and rationalize the Intifada. Once these themes were provided, the covert ideologies were revealed, most notably by the characterization of the actors, their concomitant actions and the occasions which created or exacerbate this conflict. The main tenets of the CDA were in part used, concluding that the utility of including a linguistic perspective in planning interventions for achieving a culture of social and ecological peace.

Shabana (2006) investigated the headlines of al-Ahram newspaper in two war periods, pre-1967 and pre-1973 as an attempt to illustrate the various aspects and manifestations of the political discourse of the two periods. In addition, this study examined whether the political discourse of each leadership was suitable (i.e., in the interests of the country). The selected headlines were analyzed using the CDA, Speech Act Theory, and Gricean Pragmatics. Besides, deixis, intertextuality and framing were utilized in order to figure out any aspects related to the discourse then. The study found out that the headlines were ideologically-driven, aiming to highlight all of the points which are of concern to the country and its national security. What is important to raise at this point is the observation that using CDA in needs a critical comprehensive reading of the two historical periods on question.

Using the CDA, Al-Ali (2006) addressed the genre of written wedding invitations. This study focused on the component patterns related to such invitations in addition to the significant role of the socio-cultural values and norms in shaping such invitation in particular and this genre in general. The social concerns are of profound importance in determining written wedding invitations which are taken as a kind of expression utilized by people when announcing their marriage; they are potentially self-media of oneself. Moreover, the study found out that this genre is determined by culture, religion and masculine authority which are prevalent in Jordan and other Arab countries like Libya. The study claimed that these components have both direct and indirect implications on the ultimate shape of such texts, coloring the lexical choices, and naming practices. What is important in this study is it validates the CDA social concerns including gender and equality in shaping the text.

Izadi (2007) uses the concept of Orientalism in conjunction with Van Dijk's underlying concept of 'the ideological square' in order to address and analyse three American newspapers' editorials coverage of Iran's nuclear programme which are counted as elite. The newspapers chosen were the editorials which were used in New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the Washington Post between 1984 and 2004. Ideological manifestations and power relations were the main focus of the study. On the whole, it turned out according to the study general conclusions that such editorials were much affected by the general orientalist depictions of Muslim countries. Put it straightforwardly, the political issues of such newspaper capitalized the ideological theme that Islam is for them a direct source of threat to the USA on one hand and to the world on the other. Thus, the main assumption generated from these elite newspapers' editorials on Iran's nuclear programme is that because of the Islamic nature of Iran's government, it should be a threat if Iran is trusted to secure sensitive nuclear technology, enabling it to build nuclear weapons which will ultimately be sued against the west countries including the USA.

Similarly, Barkho (2008a) analysed the main textual aspects of the online output which is produced by Al Jazeera, as compared to those produced by the BBC and CNN. The main concepts of the CDA were utilized addressing the news and it was constructed and handled. In addition, the study focused on the lexis employed in such reports using the functional linguistics. As for the findings, the study stated that vocabulary in such reports were deliberately used as a means to deliver certain messages which in total convey the ideological power of media. Of the issues tackled by this study and elaborated much in the channels

selected were categorization of Palestinians and Israelis and Iraqi case. The study emphasized the depiction of the so-called ‘protagonists’ in the light of the ideological representations detected. The study ascertained that media is highly oriented by the culture and religions of people who composed it. In this regard, the study concluded that although the three channels exercise discursive powers similarly, their representations of events, discourse, accompanying characters are different, nonetheless.

Sheyholislami (2008) studied the ways by which the Kurds use satellite television as well as the internet to reproduce and spread the discursive and semiotic constructions of their identities. 168 hours of Kurdistan television broadcasting in the period from August 6 to 12, 2005 alongside the online activities sources including the web directories, websites, chat-rooms, weblogs, forums and social networking tools were used as data for the study. The main tenets of CDA especially Fairclough’s perspective ‘Critical Language Study’ were employed as the method to figure out how Kurds made use of such interactive and broadcasting sources. As a result, the data were analysed at three levels: the discourse level, the textual analysis, and the socio-cultural analysis, respectively. The researcher first determines the types of television programmes in addition to the internet constituents which are utilized for the practices of identity construction. Second, multimodal and micro analyses of verbal language, images and music were conducted in order to pinpoint the textual relations. Thirdly, the findings obtained were analysed in conjunction with the historical and political contexts upon the discursive constructions of identity. The study came up with the conclusion that investigation of Kurdish media discourses in the processes of identity formation depicted to a large extent the Kurdish identity and the regional, cultural and political aspects which back the Kurdish cause. Thus, it argued that using satellite TV and the internet enhanced the underlying Kurdish identity and consolidated the mutual themes and ideologies celebrated by the Kurdish people.

Atawneh (2009) investigates how the language used by the Israelis and the Palestinians does in fact mirror both sides’ strengths and weaknesses. The headlines which were reported in the local and world media within the critical events and occasions during the second Palestinian Intifada (2001–2004) were used as study data. The CDA was used to work out in details the kinds of speech acts which were reported in the media and which showed aggressive or defensive attitudes. The vocabulary encoding the threats and appeals and illocutionary verbs were focused on. The study revealed that the war context and animosity gave rise to the felicity conditions as regards the investigated speech acts. The main conclusion indicated that Israelis

and Palestinians were different in terms of power relations. The major results show that the Israelis were the more powerful side in this conflict, resulting in their frequent use of the Threats than what the Palestinians did in reality. By contrast, Palestinians were proved to be the weaker side of the conflict, the notion which was supported by their frequent use of Appeals which were less used by the Israelis.

Furthermore, Kandil (2009) investigated the language of media used to represent the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A mixed method of CDA (i.e., ideological square framework) and Corpus Linguistics was used to analyse the discursive representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in American, Arab, and British media, represented by CNN, Al-Jazeera Arabic, and BBC, respectively. CDA, which is primarily interested in studying how power and ideology are enacted and resisted in the use of language in social and political contexts, has been frequently criticized mainly for the arbitrary selection of a small number of texts or text fragments to be analyzed. Three corpora were compiled from the news websites of Al-Jazeera, CNN, and the BBC, focusing on topics including terrorism and settlements. The study concluded that some strategies employed by each news website were used in order to control for the positive or negative representations of the different parties which were embroiled in the conflict.

Using the CDA and the related concepts and aspects as well as Mills (1995)'s concept of "signals of affiliation", Hakam (2009) investigated the English-language Arab newspapers, aiming at determining how such newspapers resist the discourse dealing with Prophet Muhammad cartoons controversy. In addition, the study was meant to show how these newspapers reproduce such discourse which in total stems mainly from a dominant euro-cantered culture. A corpus of 422 hard news texts was built. The study came up with a conclusion that the editors of the newspapers surveyed signal their (social and religious) affiliation, making significant manipulation to the text which was originally established by the international news agencies. This affiliation was detected via a set of lexical and syntactical choices which were intentionally tailored to satisfy their orientation and affiliation.

El-Badry (2010) analyzed the news generated by the CNN website in the Arabic website vis-a-vis the English corresponding news. A mixed method of CDA (i.e., multimodal discourse analysis), functional linguistics, communication studies, and translation studies were all used. As for the study findings, it turned out that the CNN takes advantage of various discourses to address various audiences. For example, the study found out that the stories in Arabic and

English versions are different in length, thematic structure, and foregrounding/ backgrounding. Besides, the discourses are varied in terms of the lexical choices, syntactic and functional structures. Ideological positions variation was detected highly in relation with the stories related to the war in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Barkho (2011) analysed the underlying role of the internal guidelines in structuring and patterning the news discourse. Adopting the CDA, the study investigated the Middle East narratives of the BBC and Al-Jazeera English (AJE) and the accompanying instructions and guidelines which were derived from the interviews, observations and access to large portions of the contents of BBC and the AJE's internal guidelines. In addition, the paper examined the ethnographic assumptions relating to these two channels in order to figure out how both channels use the organizational power they possess in order to disseminating and inculcating their ideology in reference to the Middle East conflict. The study concluded that both channels are quite different in depicting the ideas and viewpoints socially and discursively. Further, the study found out that the depiction of each channels to the events surveyed paired with their internal guidelines which are used as a discursive and social means.

Fahmy and Al Emad (2011) investigated whether these claims raised by the CNN that Al-Jazeera Arabic used language fraught with terror, whilst its English-language counterpart, Al-Jazeera English was cleansed by changes pertinent to omissions of such language. In order to do just this, the study examined the related online coverage of the US/Al Qaeda conflict in the Arabic-language Al-Jazeera website in comparison with the English-language Al-Jazeera website. As for the methodology, the study used the CDA (especially power relations), arguing for some differences related to the use of sources and tone of coverage, the placement of news stories between the English- and Arabic-language Al-Jazeera websites. However, the findings demonstrate that there were no different perspectives of the war between Arabic- and English-language website in, say, reporting the US/Al Qaeda conflict Al-Jazeera websites.

#### 4.8.3. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and media

##### 4.8.3.1. Introduction

SFL asserts that that the functions of linguistic structures are dependent on social structure. For instance, transformational descriptions of syntax and speech act theory are significant in

analysing any text in order to figure out why, how, etc. this text is composed. For Halliday (1979), the social groupings and relationships do in fact affect and impact on the linguistic behaviour of speakers and writers. Such relationships can be taken as diagnostics to underpin the socially determined patterns of language which in principle influence the non-linguistic behaviour including, i.e., cognitive activity (1979:185). Moreover, within the SFL, ideology is linguistically mediated, given that linguistic meaning is for SFL inseparable from ideology which in turn relies on the social structure (Egins, 2004; Fowler, 2013). As a result, the linguistic analysis is by and large a decisive tool to fathom the ideological processes grounded by relationships of power and control (Halliday, 1979:195).

#### 4.8.3.2. Media within SFL

In this regard, Trew (1979) investigated the newspapers of the Times and the Guardian reports relating to the police shootings of blacks in Zimbabwe in 1975. Using the SFL, this study capitalized the linguistic processes the newspapers selected used in order to interpret and naturalize the police shooting of unarmed black demonstrators. He found out that several linguistic transformations including nominalization and passivation were carefully used in order to dispense with the linking of the agents with the occasion of killing. As a result, the main emphasis was oriented towards the general effect of such occasions. Moreover, the study found out that the abstract nouns like 'rioting' were utilized in order to render the text more abstract for the reader to think of. In the same token, the study concluded that the attribution of causality was deliberately removed, making the affected participants agents of their own actions. For example, the newspapers used expressions like 'the deaths of victims of the police shootings' in order to render the actions self-engendered.

Using the SFL, Fowler (1985) addressed the press's mediation of unequal power relationship through figuring out how the public concern topics were depicted using the linguistic constructions used by news media accounts. The critical accounts of the newspaper 'Sunday Times' for the validity of the claims engendered by the officials for certain public concerns like the medical services. The main focus of the study was placed on transitivity structures and lexicalization, arguing for the assumption that the linguistic structures utilized can reproduce the society's power. For examples, the study found out that the medical authorities including the surgeons and politicians were characterized as inherently powerful, and they assigned passivity, powerlessness, and anonymity to the patients. Additionally, the study claimed that

based on transitivity the roles associated with the participants in transitive sentences were not similar; doctors and hospital officials (as subjects) were taken as agents, whereas patients (as direct objects) were highly deemed as receivers for doctors and hospital officials' acts. The study concluded that using transitivity in such a way signals for the ideology of power, rendering the language as a tool to constitute social practice.

Fowler (1991b) investigates the role of linguistic structure in the ideas construction in the press and media in general. The main assumption made in this study was that news is in principle socially constructed. Besides, it was emphasised that the process of dissemination news contains two interrelated aspects: selection and transformation. It was stated that the first aspect or process was conducted due to fairly complex and artificial criteria. Once the selection process is set forward, the process of transformation is followed when the given piece of news is encoded for publication. What is important to mention at this point is the notion that these two processes are totally guided and governed by the ideas and beliefs to disseminate. An eclectic linguistic model in line with the SFL was used to address news discourse. This model placed emphasis on transitivity, lexical structure, interpersonal elements, and speech act theory. The Guardian's, Sunday Times', and the Sun's coverage of some selected incidents including bombing Libya by the United States (1986) were analysed. The study concluded that the linguistic analysis is of profound importance to determine and understand how actions in press are represented.

Shielded with the CDA and SFL, Brookes (1995) examines the ideological construction of the British press on Africa. Two British newspapers with conflicting ideological positions were juxtaposed. In particular, the study aimed at expounding the features of news discourse which help in produced particular meanings related to the neo-colonial racist representation of Africa and Africans. Lexicalization, metaphor, and transitivity system were among the basic and major tools to analyse the texts used. In addition, production and interpretation of texts processes in addition to investigation of the social context were analysed. The study concluded that a stereotypical and dominant discourse is heavily used in reporting on Africa news. This discourse mirrors the African groups as deviant from the norm and inferior to other people. All texts surveyed sustained western hegemony, superiority and dominance over Africans.

Olson (2005) analysed the presidential radio speech by President Clinton, delivered in August 1998 which was on the whole a reaction to the terroristic attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya

and Tanzania. Using SFL, the study attempted to figure out the role of lexical processes such as the nominalized processes and the clause complexes in discourse building and comprehension. The study concluded Americans and enemies were hardly treated as grammatical equals or even peers. This finding was clearly evident in the differences of lexical choices, the number of explicit participants, the number of rank-shifted processes, and the semantic domain utilized.

In a related vein, Clark (2007) investigates the language of evaluation of the embedded reporters, attempting to figure out how the embedded reporters were taken as privileged witnesses, esteemed opinion givers, and interpreters of events and. A corpus of, 25000 words of reports from BBC journalists during the conflict in Iraq was built and used. Adopting the SFL (i.e., the interpersonal mode), the study concluded that the BBC embedded reports were highly objective, avoiding bias and report conflicting perspectives. The study also found out that such BBC reports were found anti-war in comparison with all other major news services.

Ross (2008) analyzed the visual patterns and strategies of two sets of documents on the weapons of the Iraq conflict. These documents were published online by the CNN (1998) and BBC (2003) as a way to justify the war against Iraq at the time. An analytical framework which combines the functional approach to image analysis, multimodality, and the social semiotics was used as a method to analyse the data subsumed in the documents. The main results suggest that the predominant patterns which were detected in the texts were used to produce favourable portrayals of coalition weapons but unfavourable portrayals of the Iraqi weapons. The study indicated that both channels BBC and CNN used to use various strategies, aiming to distance the viewers from suffering and violence which will definitely have accompanied the war against Iraq. In addition, the study stated that such varieties were also meant to align the viewers with the coalition's position which was depicted and described in an aesthetic fashion.

#### 4.8.3.3. The use of CDA and SFL

It has been noted throughout this thesis that both CDA and SFL played a central role in the methodology of the study. In view of this, it is appropriate to point out that CDA is a model that investigates social and cultural occasions and events and the accompanying discursive practices which cause such events and occasions to happen. It is, therefore, a method that can be used to investigate the language within the context where it occurs. Additionally, CDA

makes available an analytical tool to reveal the ideology behind the text produced. This follows from the assumption that a language exists to serve some purpose and CDA comes as to a tool to investigate any ideologies that shroud the existing text. In this regard, the approach to CDA developed by Van Dijk (1993) attempts to investigate the linguistic-discursive practices which are deeply related and connected to the socio-political structures of hegemony, power and domination.

Given that this study investigates the effect of the Al-Jazeera and BBC's reporting to the events of the Arab Spring upheavals on staff and students, it is important for the current research to arm itself with a tool to discover whether this reporting is enshrined with any ideological import that the two channels attempt to deliver to the people who view, listen to or read the material that is reported (see, Huckin, 2002). CDA is a suitable technique to do this given its ability to unravel how the reporting of the critical events of the Arab spring uprisings was made and thus to what extent it affects students and staff at Sabha University. What guarantees the validity of CDA to carry out this task is its analytical framework (Fairclough 1992). In this framework, investigating language hinges on the notions of intertextuality, interdiscursivity and hegemony. As such, CDA is meant to address the discursive social problems and power relations which are shaped by society, culture, and ideology; the factors that are the main concern of the current research (cf. Garrett and Bell, 1998). My focus on ideological aspects of the reporting is the main trigger for first the differences between the two channels and, second, the effect of reporting events on staff and students.

On the other hand, results from the use of a analytic model that builds on power relations and ideological import would be robust if corroborated by a model that investigates for any such differences with reference to the words and expressions which are used and this process was undertaken by the use of SFL. This latter approach asserts that that the functions of linguistic structures are dependent on social structure. For instance, transformational descriptions of syntax and speech-act theory are significant in analysing any text in order to figure out why, how, etc. a text was composed. Within SFL, ideology is linguistically mediated, given that linguistic meaning is for SFL inseparable from ideology, which in turn relies on the social structure (Eggins, 2004; Fowler, 2013). As a result, the linguistic analysis is, by and large, a decisive tool to fathom the ideological processes grounded by the relationships of power and control (Halliday, 1979:195). In view of this, any result attested by both CDA and SFL would be valid and reliable enough for generalisations to be drawn.

As an example of the above I will show later that the article on Bouazizi's suicide as reported by the BBC focused, quite specifically on Mr Bouazizi's suicide and its repercussions on the public as well on the government. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera brought irrelevant subtopics in its reporting to this incident including, but not limited to, the information blackout and some disputed details which all aimed to make people inside and outside Tunisia have negative perspectives towards the existing regime in Tunisia at the time. In doing so, Al-Jazeera capitalized on the information blackout at the time in order to indicate that the aggression practiced against the people was supported by the government of the country. Al Jazeera appeared to play on this situation in that it attempted to spread the revolutions to other Arabic countries in order to emphasise the atrocities perpetrated by the local government, whereas the BBC's reporting was neutral without bringing other irrelevant details. As I will show later, the students and lecturers mentioned that Al-Jazeera attempted to trigger people to revolt against the existing regimes at the time. Following the main CDA assumption as implemented by Fairclough (1995, 2001) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), it can be stated that Bouazizi's suicide is a communicative event. For Fairclough, analysis in this dimension pertains to three aspects of the sociocultural context of a communicative event with political message delivered by ideology of the media of Al-Jazeera. This finding is supported by the application of SFL application on the same articles. The most obvious observation related to both articles in terms of SFL is the excessive use of the present perfect in Al-Jazeera's reporting, as compared to the BBC's article. The use of the present perfect can be seen as an attempt to inform people indirectly that the event is important, given its effects on the present, and at the same time unfinished, so people can be updated with any developments, which is taken as an endeavour to attract people's attention to this particular event. Present perfect is not excessively used in the BBC's report, which as I mentioned, was a mere reflection of the reality of the situation. The same results were obtained in reference to other newspaper articles, as I will investigate later.

The above is one example of the application of both CDA and SFL within this thesis which has been used to exemplify the process of the application of these approaches.

#### 4.8.3.4. Conclusion

Following the main tenets of the CDA and SFL, it can be argued for the notion that media is basically driven by certain ideologies in order to achieve specific goals and ends. Media is used to stimulate the public towards particular themes and ideas which are in turn can be detected via analysing the linguistic text utilised to disseminate such ideas and themes in terms of structure, lexical items selected, power relation, etc. Media is never an actual reflection on the news or events happening, but rather it is a mere reflection of the ideologies the channels attempted to spread. The same news can be differently depicted and described. In order to examine (and presumably attest) this potential difference, the articles used by both Al-Jazeera English and the BBC to describe the critical events of the major Arab Spring revolutions, i.e., Tunisia, Egyptian, and Libyan were juxtaposed and analysed in an attempt to reveal any implied ideologies each channel might try to disseminate.

#### 4.9. Validity and trustworthiness:

It should be noted that although the findings of the current work are not generalizable to all Libyan or Arabic universities, they may have significant implications for policy makers in the higher education and for other researchers in the field. As is clear from the current thesis, the main target was the staff and students at Sebha University. The current research has not adopted a scientific/ quantitative approach and does not represent data from all Libyan universities; hence it is less generalizable to all other universities or higher education institutions. However, it should be noted that there will be inevitable and important resonances between the findings represented here and the situation that obtains in other universities in Libya and more widely. Hence, the current work is significant for policy makers in Libya in particular and in the Arabic and other countries (with similar conditions) in general (cf. Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996 and Bolliger and Wasilik, 2009). In addition, since the current work deals with the effect of mass media on staff and students, it follows that the current work is important for the understanding of the extent to which media can affect the views and work practices of people in higher education (see Selwyn, 2012 and Davis *et al* 2012).

#### 4.10. Subjectivity vs. objectivity

It is clear that the methods of enquiry that are employed in educational research are different depending on the main objectives of the ongoing research. This is indicative of the deep complexity of the field as well as its uses and implications in other research disciplines that

sometimes benefit from the methodology of educational research. It is also important to note that research techniques and methods which have their roots in the natural sciences, history, sociology, psychology, and philosophy have been utilized and employed in educational research, which indicates how varied in research in education can be. Such methods range from what we can call 'experimentation' to case studies to educational analysis of the meaning which is inherent in language. This wide range of educational methods reflects the diversity of the multiple epistemologies about the main premises of the valid knowledge which relate to education and to other disciplines.

From this reasoning, the term 'paradigm' emerges in education as referring 'to a view of the world or a way of knowing that is shared by a community of scholars or practitioners' (Kuhn, 1962). A research paradigm comprises of a broad theory and refers to a shared belief in the value of certain research methods including experimentation and case studies (Ernest, 1994). What is important here is that research in education depends on theoretical assumptions about ontology (which is defined as a theory of existence), epistemology (which is defined as a theory of knowledge and learning), and methodology (which is defined as a theory of which methods to use). These three theories constitute the major ingredients of a research paradigm (Ernest, 1994).

Furthermore, with the advancement of technology and research methods, three main paradigms emerge, governing educational research, namely the scientific, the interpretive, and the critical theoretical research paradigms. These paradigms give rise to the differences between the positivist and the constructivist views on the one hand, and their accompanied research methodology on the other hand. The latter consists of: 'quantitative' methodology (which essentially deals with numbers and the prototype methods are called experiments and surveys since it aims at 'explaining') and 'qualitative' methodology (which deals the participants and events under investigation are usually described verbally, rather than being enumerated because it aims at 'understanding') (Alwaldi 2012: 41). This difference ultimately guides the choices about research perspectives and is the driving force of the debate about subjectivity and objectivity in the educational research.

Jansen and Peshkin (1992: 682) define subjectivity as a unique, useful, personal quality of a researcher", or "a tribute that marks interaction between researchers and their research participants", whereas objectivity is the opposite. The key question now is often how this dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity affects educational research. Lincoln and Guba

(1985) dismisses the notion of objectivity, arguing that research cannot be value-free because it includes the values of the inquirer, the choice of inquiry paradigm, the choice of substantive theory to guide an inquiry, and values inherent in the context of inquiry. They see the inquirer-respondent relationship as “one of mutual and simultaneous influence” (p. 76). Likewise, Mellon (1990: 26) states the following:

Total objectivity is impossible for researchers who are, after all, human beings. The difference between the two research traditions is not that one has and one lacks objectivity. The difference is that naturalistic researchers systematically acknowledge and document their biases rather than striving to rise above them.

I follow here Lincoln and Guba (1985), Mellon (1990), and Alwalidi (2012), among others, that there is no neutral education and there is no neutral research. Indeed, the researcher argues that researchers in quantitative and qualitative research need to re-conceptualise validity in terms of 'reflexive practice'.

#### 4.11. Ethics

All students and staff who were randomly selected were requested to gain their approval for the interview. Additionally, respondents received an invitation to participate in the research which included full details of the project of the current research. In addition, they were told that they could withdraw from the interview from any point. Full ethical approval was gained from LJMU prior to the commencement of the empirical element of the study. It should be stressed that LJMU policy on ethics was strictly followed. Thus, all aspects of data gathering were subject to permission being gained from respondents and it was made clear from the outset that all respondents would be anonymized. In addition, a commitment was made that all data would be kept secure and only used for the purposes of the study.

#### 4.12. Summary

This chapter has detailed the methodology adopted in this study and has emphasized the ways in which both methodology and methods were carefully constructed to address the questions of the study. It introduced, first, research design and methodology and compared approaches

to the differing paradigms that can be employed in the Social Sciences by sketching out some significant ideas and notions of research philosophy in general and how data are analysed, most notably in the positivist paradigm versus the phenomenological paradigm. Furthermore, this chapter discussed the general theory of deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning and its bearing on quantitative research versus qualitative research. The chapter also highlighted how data were collected and by which ways they were analysed and confirmed that ethical procedures were employed throughout the research study. In the next chapter, analysis of the data is provided.

## Chapter 5

### Data Analysis

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on both the lecturers' and the students' replies to the interviews I carried out with them regarding their views and perspectives towards how Al-Jazeera and the BBC depict the Arabic Spring. Section 5.2 sheds light on the lecturers' replies, whereas section 5.3 on the students' replies. Section includes the discussion. Section 5.4 concludes the chapter.

#### 5.2. Lecturers' replies

It is clear that there was a kind of consensus among the lecturers regarding their views on the issues under discussion.

##### 5.2.1. The changes in the teaching and learning process after the revolutions.

To begin with, lecturers indicated that Arab Spring revolutions had a negative impact on the teaching and learning processes at Sebha University. For one lecturer, this impact was exacerbated as far Libya is concerned, given that what happened there is different from some other countries, including Tunisia and Egypt. In the latter two countries, situations were not very dangerous:

“Change was relative during the Tunisian Revolution. The change was on a political basis because the majority was supporting the revolutions. The support increased during the Egyptian Revolution and increased more when they (Egyptians) succeeded. However, during the Libyan Revolution the situation was badly deteriorating” (L1).

Students used to be totally preoccupied with the Arab Spring events. Students' attention towards their study and university obligations was decreasing, given that the events of the Arab Spring touched on their own daily life.

“Obviously, there was a difference between the work environment and the study environment. Differences took place between the stage we were in and the stage we moved to. Students became preoccupied with what was happening on the ground; a big difference between students and the teaching staff. Some students left the University for their Homes, others went

in different directions in the country amongst which were the battle grounds, and there were those in between, who were waiting to see what would happen. This impacted their daily lives, their behaviors and their dealings with each other to the extent that there were some heated arguments between them and they became divided between supporters and opposed to the revolution. This also impacted negatively on their studies and their relationships with each other. Complicated things happened because people were through a surprising and astounding period because incidents took place so fast, and unexpected things happened” (L2).

Additionally, lecturers indicated that although Arab Spring events were dangerous in some areas, students used to follow their development very closely. They stressed that this keen interest was mainly motivated and supported by the lack of freedom such students experienced. The Arab Spring, though dangerous, came as a way to extricate and free the students from what was perceived to be the tyranny the overthrown government used to practice:

“In fact there is a difference or change in terms of freedom, for example, in Libya, we were not in freedom and had all our actions controlled and we were handcuffed by security services and as if we were under the camera but now we feel the freedom and I think this happened in all revolutions of the Arab spring because all the countries that carried out by the revolutions suffer from shortness of freedom.” (L7).

However, the Arab Spring had negative effects on the overall educational processes at the university. One of these negative impacts was that there was no longer the security needed for sound and suitable educational processes.

“There are many differences but honestly, I am not bothered about material things; the most important thing for me is security and safety. Unfortunately, these revolutions which are called the Arab Spring in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, we were expecting them to create a change for the better but we lost the most precious thing which is security and stability and people turned into ferocious wolves” (L 10).

“Unfortunately the situation is very bad because of political instability, criminal gangs and tribal conflicts” (L14).

Another respondent stated that:

“Yes, ...In fact the changes were not only in Libya, they were also in Tunisia and Egypt because I have friends who are members of the teaching staff in Zaytouna university in Tunisia and other universities and friends in the university of Ain Shams in Egypt with whom I had been in continual contact ... there were no different to the changes here in the university of Sebha and other universities like: the university of Garyounis in Benghazi and Al fatih in Tripoli because I was in a continuous contact with those universities. Everybody agrees that before the revolutions, the work and study environment was stable and everyone was doing their job properly... but after the revolutions the education sector went into chaos, especially the universities were badly affected because of the lack of security” (L11).

Another change that could be discerned in the data was that some staff faculty fled the country in fear for their lives, causing a shortage in the number of academic and other staff.

“...Yes, I noticed some changes, these are: we lost some members of the teaching staff due to the crisis and some of them went back to their countries and the studies were suspended” (L 13).

The lecturers’ replies indicate that it can be assumed that the Arab Spring had negative impacts on people’s life in general and students’ lives in particular although it many respondents considered that it helped people and students alike to fight what they felt were the tyrannical regimes prevailing at the time.

### 5.2.2. Critical events of Arab Spring

When analysing responses about the most critical events that shaped the main course of Arab Spring, the lecturers were different from those of other respondents in reposting them. They introduced various perspectives towards the most critical events of the three revolutions concerned. It should be noted that the lecturers’ replies to the interviews are similar to those conducted in the pilot study.

As far as the Tunisian revolution is concerned, the lecturers can be divided into two different groups. These two groupings indicated that there were two critical incidents which shaped the entire revolution. The first group maintained that Bouazizi’s self-suicide was the most critical incident during the Tunisian revolution. This occasion happened when Bouazizi burned himself because of the bad treatment of the local police officers when they attempted to prevent him

vending in public streets. By contrast, the second group stated that the occasion when Ben Ali, the Tunisian president then, fled the country to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was the most critical event since it concluded the revolution successfully. Indeed, these two occasions demarcated the beginning and the end of Tunisian revolutions, respectively.

Regarding the Egyptian revolution, the lecturers held three different discernible perspectives towards the main incidents. In this regard, these lecturers can be generally divided into four groups. The first group indicated that Mubarak's stepping down was the most critical incident in the revolution, whereas Mubarak's speech for the second group, the camel incident for the third grouping, and Mubarak's first speech for the fourth group.

Concerning the Libyan revolution, the respondents mentioned many incidents that they regarded as being critical. One group of respondents maintained that the arrest of the demonstrators in front of the National Court in Benghazi at the start of the revolution was the most critical event in this revolution since it was regarded the demarcating line of the start of the revolutions. A second group of respondents indicated that the falling of Tripoli was the most critical event because the revolution has taken another complete path since then. This path was to build a new Libya and thus it entails the end of the revolution. A third section of the respondents, on the other hand, indicated that all Benghazi the intervention of the United Nations in general and the French planes in particular after the resolution of security council was the most critical event because it played a significant role in making the whole revolution successful.

“I believe that the important incidents are as follows: first, the Tunisian Revolution, the fleeing of the Tunisian President because nobody was expecting that he would leave as quickly as he did because the Tunisian revolution was simpler and less bloody than the others, especially when Ben Ali appeared on television and said to the people I understand your plight. We thought that he was going to introduce some change into the politics of Tunisia but instead we were surprised by his leaving the country in this way. Regarding the Egyptian revolution, it was marked by Mubarak stepping down in the face of the pressure from and the demonstrations of the Egyptian people. The important thing in the Libyan Revolution was the falling of Tripoli because media were saying that the capturing of Tripoli will be hard, will take a long time and will cause too much bloodshed but the opposite happened and things were settled quickly and a spontaneous way. The revolution which affects me deeply is the Libyan revolution because I am a Libyan citizen and feels the same way others feel” (L 2).

Another one stated that:

“The most important events which drew people’s attention concerning the revolution in Tunisia were: the incident of Boughzizi who burnt himself, the flight of President Ben Ali and the sympathy of the army with the people. Regarding the Egyptian Revolution, it was Mubarak’s speech in which he showed his clinging to power and the Camel incident. For the Libyan Revolution, it was the speech of Gaddafi which disappointed people, the liberating of the capital Tripoli from his hold and his death. The revolution which had a profound impact on me was the Tunisian revolution because it was the first revolution” (L 9).

The same point was raised by other lecturers:

“there were many events and the most important ones in Libya are: the first speech on Mummer Al -Gaddafi, his loss of the capital Tripoli and his unexpected death, in Tunisia the incident of Al Bouazizi and the fleeing of Ben Ali, and in Egypt the death of the young Khalid Said, the camel incident and the Mubarak’s speech in which he refused to relinquish power and after that his giving up of power. The revolution which had an indelible effect, even though I wanted change but not in that way because the revolutions changed nothing but caused the destruction of those countries as is the case with Libya today, I believe that the Tunisian revolution was the first spark for those revolutions” ( L 11 ).

“Al-Bouazizi incident and the fleeing of Ben Ali in Tunisia, the camel incident and Mubarak’s speech in Egypt, and Gaddafi’s speech, his death and the liberation of Tripoli in Libya. But the revolution which had the deepest effect is the Tunisian revolution because it was the starting point of the other revolutions, the least bloody and as they say the Jasmine revolution” (L13).

The same idea was iterated by the following lecturer:

“ there are many events and what is called ‘the Arab spring’ is a continuum of incidents and tragedies, and some of it was not given any attention by the media such as power cuts which led to bread, fuel and water shortages, hospital treatments etc. The events which the media focused on, especially Al-Jazeera channel was Al Bouazizi incident, Ben Ali’s flight, the camel incident, Mubarak’s speech, Gaddafi’s speech, the liberation of Tripoli

from Gaddafi's control and his death. The revolution which had a profound impact on me is the Tunisian revolution because in my opinion it was less bloody than the others" (L 15).

Table 5 below summarises this variance:

**Table 5: the most critical agreed-upon incidents in the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions**

No	Revolution	Incidents
1-	Tunisian	Bouazizi's self-suicide
		Ben Ali's fleeing the country
2-	Egyptian	Mubarak's stepping down
		Camel's occasion
3-	Libyan	fall of Tripoli

*Table 2 Critical events*

Generally, speaking, this variance among lecturers' replies can be attributed to the assumption that these three revolutions have witnessed several critical incidents all of which were of paramount importance for the course of the events within the revolution. Relevant to our discussion here is the issue that these events were sought so as we can determine the articles on which we built our proposal on in the next chapter. The articles chosen to be the ones analysed via CDA and SFL report such events, which were taken by many as the main medium where channels can disseminate their ideology and politicised aims.

### 5.2.3. The presentation of events in media.

Some lecturers argued first that the event were not reported professionally. For these lecturers, the channels including Al-Jazeera were not concerned with what was happening on the ground but rather interested in reporting the events helping their agenda:

"The presentation of the events was not done at the required standards because some channels like Al-Jazeera neglected the people's sufferings and focused on the events which served its interest and helped it to stoke the revolutions' fire; that was not good. In addition to that, Al-Jazeera channel used social media such as: Facebook, Youtube and Twitter in order to stoke the revolution's fires and made them reach as many people as possible. May be some news outlets were close to neutrality such as the BBC, Russia Today and CNN "(L 15).

Al-Jazeera was seen as a device to change people and regimes:

“In spite of everything I am for change, provided it should be for the better, but the media; this killing weapon, I mean the ignoble media exploited the events for their own interest. For example, Al-Jazeera channel with all its departments was prepared for changing people’s thoughts” (L 10).

Another one said:

‘The truth according to what we hear from our relatives are not covered by these channels and, for example, the destruction of the University of Alzawia which located 40 kilometers west of the capital Tripoli have not been covered by the media” ( L 7 ).

D. “I do think these events were accurately represented by the media as a whole” (L8).

Other lecturers stated that the opposite that the events were stated rightfully expect for some channels including Al-Jazeera. They raised their concerns about how Al-Jazeera depicted some events:

“I personally support the revolutions. To be honest, the presentation of the revolutions in some news media was good but in others it was not as expected from a free media such as Al- Jazeera English and Arabic channels. I am for Al-Jazeera and I listened it for the news because I supported the revolutions and the change but I discovered that it exaggerated in reporting the events and undoubtedly the exaggeration served the revolutions’ interest; at the same time exaggeration is a kind of lying and this is not congruent with journalism ethics and that who lied for you today will lie against you tomorrow” (L12).

Overall, lecturers did not believe that the events of Arab Spring were properly and adequately reported. Consequently, this lack of proper reporting was a source of fear and worry to the people including the lecturers.

“There were many worries as you know we live in this country and we have businesses, families, relatives and we have old women and men. We were worried about what will happen in the near future; were we going to suffer starvation, and diseases or were the hospitals, the houses and petrol stations going to be bombed. We thought about all these things, so we were frightened of the unknown reality, especially that the revolutions were weak compared to the regimes like Mubarak’s which was strong and had a strong army

and also the Libyan regime was strong and owned weapons and ammunitions; we were worried that we will have blood baths” (L 2).

Another one stated:

“I had some concerns about reports. Because in the beginning of the revolution. There were a lot of drawbacks about the way news were reported and taken to the media. The Gadafi’s government prevented strongly all channel to go and wander around where events took place” (L8).

Consider the following reaction:

“Yes, I have some worries; that is when there is some exaggeration in reporting the news and supporting one side over the other. This means that the media goes far off its professionalism which is fairness and neutrality but we unfortunately saw and experienced was bias” (L10).

Again, this negative depiction is conceived of a consequence of the underlying agenda some channels used to have during their reporting of the events of such uprisings.

“I had some worries because the zeal and carelessness of Al-Jazeera would have led us into a destructive war and it reporting method showed that it was supporting the revolutionaries whatever the cost. Hence, it was not fair” (L13 ).

Some lecturers dubbed this bad depiction as a clear case of some channels being in charge of reporting the events. Again, Al-Jazeera’s name is reiterated.

“Because the biased media exaggerate things till they achieve their goals. Honestly, I want to say that it hard to find a media instrument which is absolutely free especially the new ones like Al-Jazeera” (L11).

In the next section, the researcher notes the role of the most important and prominent channels covering the events of Arab Spring, namely Al-Jazeera and the BBC.

#### 5.2.4. The role of Aljazeera and the BBC

Most of lecturers reached a consensus that Al-Jazeera reported the events of the Arab Spring uprisings in a biased way. This bias derived clearly from the exaggeration these channels used to adopt when commenting and reporting some events.

“The BBC’s reporting manner did not create any fear but Al-Jazeera’s way and style nurtured the fear, I mean Al-Jazeera English and Arabic, because their reporting was biased and exaggerated in the description of the events. This had created a problem for us in terms of understanding the true nature of events especially the people who trusted Al-Jazeera because it is an Arab channel. In fact, Al-Jazeera took advantage of that trust and carried out its evil operation “(L15).

Some lecturers accused Al-Jazeera of being lacking in fairness and professionalism. Within the eyes of these lecturers, Al-Jazeera was completely at variance with the BBC which was considered to be fair in its reporting.

“Undoubtedly, Al-Jazeera did not have an atom of fairness and from the start its news was unrealistic and was not relied upon in reporting the truth, and its reports carried 1% truthfulness and 99% falsehood. All its news was fabricated and false except for Friday prayers, which was real and transmitted directly...The BBC is completely different and we consider it to be a better broadcaster than others at that time because it relied upon truthful sources, was not biased towards any party and reported the news as it was” (L 2).

In a related vein, some lecturers assumed that Al-Jazeera played down some events in order to spread its own political agenda. Al-Jazeera distorted the facts of the events, reporting them ns a completely different way from the way in which such events happened.

“Bouazizi’s incident, the flight of Ben Ali the camel incident, the Libyan revolutionaries ‘entrance to Tripoli and Mummer’s first speech at the beginning of the events, unfortunately it was not fair because Al-Jazeera took advantage of the situation, distorted the facts and played on people’s sentiments... Regarding the BBC, the same important events which took place in these revolutions; it was fair in reporting them” (L 9).

Some lecturers assumed that Al-Jazeera English was different from the Arabic version in reporting and commenting on the events of the Arab Spring. However, despite the fact that there were some differences between the versions, the objective appeared to be the same:

“...the most important events that one can remember reported by Al-Jazeera English, and I think there is no difference between Al-Jazeera channels because they all have the same objective; the only difference is that one is in English and the other is in Arabic. In fact, Al-Jazeera was not and will never be fair and the answer is because it is a mean news channel controlled by Qatari government. The events are the fleeing of Ben Ali, the burning of Bouazizi, Al Kaddafi’s speech and death, the liberation of Tripoli from Gaddafi’s strong hold, Mubarak’s speech and the disaster of the camel in Egypt ... I think that the same events I mentioned before but the BBC was fair in reporting the news” ( L10 ).

Another one stated:

“Neither Al-Jazeera Arabic nor Al-Jazeera English were, in my opinion, fair in reporting the decisive events which are: Al- Bouazizi burning himself, the fleeing of Ben Ali, the liberation of Tripoli from Gaddafi’s grip, his speech and his death, the camel incident and Mubarak’s speech in which he clung to power . . .The same events mentioned above, and the BBC was more precise in its reporting because it is an independent channel and possesses a great popularity” ( L 13 ).

The same picture is repeated by another lecturer:

C. “The events repeatedly reported by Al-Jazeera are: Al Bouazizi ‘s incident, Ben Ali’s flight, Gaddafi’s speech, the spread of the new revolution in Tripoli, and in Egypt the camel incident, Mubarak’s speech and Khalid Saaid’s killing. But it was not fair in its reporting; it was conscripted by Qatar to make the revolutions successful in any way possible, even though exaggeration and playing on words...The same events were reported by the BBC but the BBC was fairer than Al-Jazeera and was distinguished by neutrality” ( L15 ).

Some lecturers held more radical views on the putative role of Al-Jazeera in the events of Arab Spring. Consider the following full sketch one of the lecturers’ answers.

“I think that I have answered the questions about the most important events which took place in the revolutions and these are: the incident of Al Bouazizi, the fleeing of Ben Ali, the camel incident, Mubarak’s speech, Al-Gaddafi’s speech, his loss of Tripoli and his death at the end. But let me tell you that the reader of your research should understand that when we talk about Al-Jazeera we talk about Qatar because Al-Jazeera is only a camp sequent to Qatar and its employees and journalists are soldiers set against the Arab countries to change the ruling regimes and create governments to the liking of Qatar and some Gulf countries. They are doing that through media; this proficient weapon in brain washing even through lies and Al-Jazeera; that is Qatar, created anarchy and problems through exaggeration and falsifying the truth. I believe that Al-Jazeera ( Qatar and other countries) is implicated in setting off the revolutions because when they succeeded it became more involved because it knew that if these revolutions are truly successful they will move on to most of the Arab countries including Qatar and the Gulf countries. That would have been a disaster for the rulers of the gulf who have a stronghold on their countries for so many years and for this reason Al-Jazeera was established. Al-Jazeera was not fair in reporting those events but it was a contributor to and associate in these revolutions through exaggeration and falsehood...The same events I mentioned above but the BBC reported those events with more integrity” ( L 11 ).

On the other hand, other lecturers indicated that the lack of professionalism of reporting events was not only restricted to Al-Jazeera and that even the BBC might have hidden the coverage of some other important events, including NATO’s interference with Libya:

“The irony is that the media that was preaching democracy and so called Arab Spring are supported by gulfstates that can be anything but democratic countries. Both channels did not show the real impact of the NATO airstrikes on the civilians and the lives lost as a result of them like the massacre of Majeron 08/08/2011 where 85 civilians were killed including 33 children, 32 women and 20 men” ( L 14 ).

Only one of the lecturers thought that Al-Jazeera reported the events without any prejudice or bias. Unlike other respondents, he felt that the channel used to depict and report the events as they were without any modifications or change:

“All incidents reported by Aljazeera were representing the main reality of what had happened in the Libya during Gadafi’s regime. All reports of those events were fair and accurate precisely conveyed...Regarding to the BBC the same answer” (L 8).

#### 5.2.5. Lecturers’ view of Aljazeera and BBC’s reporting of the events.

Most of the lecturers indicted that there were many differences between both channels under discussion in terms of reporting the events of Arab Spring uprising:

A. “I think that the transmission of either of the channels was not in the same way ; there was transparency in the reporting and filming of the incidents by BBC was more apparent and closer to reality” ( L 3 ).

Another lecturer indicated that:

“The description of the events was not carried out in the same way because the BBC reported the news without any bias but Al-Jazeera was exaggerating and reported the news with an apparent bias and sometimes lied because it is a politicised channel and works for Qatar and aims at changing some ruling regimes; it concentrated on information because it is a double edge sword” (L9).

On the other hand, just a few lecturers indicated that both channels are the same in reporting such events with some differences between them:

“Despite the fact that the Al-Jazeera has a direction and own agenda, and for me as recipient news I consider Al-Jazeera covering all events of the Arab Spring. Al-Jazeera has kind of bias against the former regimes and eternal for all new revolutions, and I've been with the Al-Jazeera because I was against those corrupted regimes while the BBC was less bias in comparison to Al-Jazeera and most of the BBC news was Quoting” (L7).

The main argument is that BBC used to report the events as they happened without adding any exaggeration or bias:

A “No it was not the same way and it was a variation of inflating the news, Al-Jazeera was differ from the BBC because the BBC most of the news closer to right” (L 6).

B “The description of the events by those channels was not the same because Al-Jazeera aimed at inciting people to rise against their regimes, this means that it is a biased and unfair channel but the BBC was more precise and fairer” (L10 ).

C. “It was not in the same way because when the BBC describes or reports something; it describes it as it is and does not magnify it. It might prefer that things were this way or that way but it reports them the way they happen but Al-Jazeera exaggerates and lies. For example, when it reports an incident of one hundred words, ninety of those words can be divided between exaggeration and lies and only ten which are true” (L 11).

The BBC is repeatedly described as neutral and professional, whereas Al-Jazeera was considered to have its own agenda in inciting people against the existing regimes at the time through reporting the events in a different way compared to the reality:

A. “No, it was not in the same way because the BBC was neutral and professional in reporting the events while Al Jazeera was biased and siding in a zealous manner” (L 12).

B. “It was not in the same way but it was 100% different; Al-Jazeera magnified things and created stories but the BBC was insistent on reporting the news fairly and impartially” (L 13).

Almost most of interviews were full of such comparison. Other lecturers said:

A. “ In short, it was different; the BBC was committed to the profession’s ethics, which are neutrality and fairness but Al-Jazeera has broken all the rules and was engaged into a covert operation whose success depended on exaggeration and the magnifying of events” ( L 15 ).

B. “Regarding Al-Jazeera it was obvious that it was biased towards the people and wanted to changes the rulers and was supporting the Moslem brothers in an indirect way in Egypt and I do not know the reason behind that bias. But, I believe that the country financing Al-Jazeera was trying to create governments which were following their agenda like wagons in a train; this was not because they liked the

Moslem Brothers but they wanted to exploit them and use them any way they like. However, I think that the BBC was not biased towards any particular party *and* even if it did so it was done in subtle way.” (L 10).

It is quite clear that the lecturers hold almost universally similar views towards the professionalism of the BBC. They indicated that the BBC used to report the events in a professional and honest way. On the other hand, there were some controversies on the way Al-Jazeera used to report the events. The majority of the lecturers indicated that Al-Jazeera was not professional and attempted to exaggerate the consequences of the events, serving its own agenda, as they put it. Some assumed that Al-Jazeera is like the BBC in reporting the events in terms of professionalism and honesty. Consider the following other views:

A. “In my opinion the success of any channel resides in its being neutral and impartial, but being biased constitutes a failure and disrespect for journalism and news media ethics as is the case with Al-Jazeera nowadays” (L 13 ).

B. “If there were differences in the reporting what were they? BBC coverage was more professional; the language was not partial and tried to include the two sides’ version” (L14).

Some ascribed this to experience and professionalism:

“The BBC is an old channel and is popular all over the world. We used to listen to the BBC before the establishment of Al-Jazeera and it is the best amongst other r channels and was successful in covering the Arab spring revolutions, but Al-Jazeera was exaggerating” (L 12 ).

“For Al-Jazeera, as I said things were inflated and no one can deny that the BBC has not a clear bias” (L 6 ).

As such, Al-Jazeera was not considered a successful channel in reporting the events.

“Al-Jazeera in my opinion did not succeed in reporting this international event because it constituted a test for the TV channels and whether they handled and reported it in a fair and just way. Unfortunately, Al-Jazeera failed in doing so and

the viewers found out its true color. The BBC showed its experience in dealing with events like these and succeeded in reporting them” (L 9).

Additionally, lecturers said that the focus of both channels was different in terms of the events they reported. Al-Jazeera focused on demonstrations and other forms of information gathering so as to inform that all people are against the regimes:

“I think that the intention is to move the street. Al Jazeera for example, they want to move all the people to revolt against the rulers in that period” (L6).

The BBC, on the other hand, attempted to shed light on the events without focusing on particular events or exaggerating them:

“ The BBC wanted to make clear to the world that an historical event was taking place but Al-Jazeera wanted to prompt the movement of the people especially the Moslem Brotherhood’s” ( L 9 ).

Nonetheless, most of lecturers agreed that both channels had impacts on the events of Arab Spring:

“The channels have a very significant role in reporting and conveying news as they really happen. Events were well arranged and broadcasting in a very professional way” (L 8).

This impact was varied and targeted all community strata, a matter I discuss in the following subsection.

#### 5.2.6. Impact on the university/ students/ staff

The impact of reporting the events was obvious from the perspectives of the lecturers.

“The reason for the delay in the study and concern of the Arab peoples...Yes, the process of transferring the news (media) have a significant impact because the news is stronger than the machine guns and this has a negative impact on the country's image to the world and this is

reflected negatively on the university and the people I would like to add that Al-Jazeera took advantage of Facebook and Twitter to support the new revolutions.” (L 7).

Given the events were considered to have been reported in an exaggerated way on the part of Al-Jazeera which was more watched than the BBC, people felt the situation was critical hence they were reluctant to send their children, especially the girls, to universities. In addition, not all people were agreed on the course of events, thus the dangers of dispute resulting in actual fights among the students were high, which further encouraged the parents in keeping their children away from the universities. The following excerpt from one lecturer summarized the situation and the impact of the media channels on people:

“The coverage of the incidents fueled the revolutions but did not affect my performance because the teaching and learning operations were not involved. Yes, it impacted in a negative way; the transmitting operation of the news was like a sharp sword cutting necks. So people and the world imagined that Libya has become an unbearable hell, which caused a preconceived paralysis to the country. The broadcasting of some news on the channels was disrupting the educational process because some parents were afraid for their daughters in particular. There was a difference of opinion between the students who supported the revolutions and those who were against them. Delay in paying wages because of the lack of money float. There was Power cutting for long periods, which disrupts the educational operation. “There was a shortage of combustibles and difficulty in moving round. Difficulty in going back to my home country (Egypt) because I went back through Tunisia (Jerba air lines)I received bad treatment by the officers guarding the security gates. There was a difficulty in exchanging money and carrying it on me to my country (Egypt).Shortage in some food items and people’s rushing to stock them. There are Worries and anxiety if there is no stability” ( L 4 ).

Another lecturer maintained that Al-Jazeera’s reporting of the events spread the fear among people and had impacts on engendering huge negative psychological impact on students. Additionally, the differences between both channels make people in confusion towards the right decision to do. Al-Jazeera reports the events in a very frightening way, whereas with the BBC such events were not reported as being so dangerous:

“Al-Jazeera used the methods of frightening in the reporting of the news. This had a huge psychological effect on the jobs and studies. that academic establishments closed or in fact many students were disrupted or cut short their studies .even outside Libya if we take Libya as an example for the countries of the Arab Spring ,we find many Libyan students were disrupted in their studies in Britain for example, and they needed extensions because they were victims of TV channels like Al-Jazeera. it had psychologically affected students, their performance and their learning. True, they did not suffer from the same problems as in Libya caused by fighting but they were psychologically affected due to the transmission of the picture to them. In Britain, they attend the university but they do not focus on their learning, may be they could not focus in there laboratories or on the writing for those who were submitting theses. I personally lived in Britain during that period and I was affected. We were going to the university for six months and we accomplished nothing; we were following what was broadcast by the channels mainly Al-Jazeera and what assured us what we heard from the BBC. However, there were some news broad cast by Al-Jazeera and were not broadcast in the BBC. This created some doubts and we know that the BBC is truthful and correct, yet because of the war and the difficulty of the situation we became overcome by doubt. So we go to the social sites like Face-book to make sure of the truthfulness of the news or otherwise. So, we came across contradictions and confusion from the other channels and this is the problem that affected us” (L5).

Some lecturers maintained that Al-Jazeera used to report the events in an exaggerated way so as to trigger people against the existing regimes which were at odds with Qatar, the homeland of Al-Jazeera Channel. In this way it was felt that Al-Jazeera was politicized:

“Al-Jazeera (Qatar) played a big role in denigrating the country’s image so that the Qatari or Gulf citizen would not think of uprising. That image had also a bad effect on the university and its staff because most of them went back to their countries which created a staff shortage and myself was affected in terms of security due to the frightening reports...Al-Jazeera English is an Arabic channel and everybody thinks that reports the news as they are. But it took advantage of some people’s trust and unleashed its hidden poison, which led to the foreign teaching staff leaving the country. This made the study in the university obsolete and this institution became a meeting place for exchanging the news. Some teachers and students took part in the events and some of them did not leave their homes only if it was necessary. The university was pillaged and inoperable. Libya,

Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Syria fell into the abyss and the stage, the initiatives the influence and the solutions were in Qatar's and some Gulf rulers' hands I say to Al-Jazeera where is the freedom of the press? Where is integrity? Where is the profession ethics? Where is fairness and justice? Where is truthfulness and the just word? But I believe that Al-Jazeera reporters have been brain washed and become soldiers used in creating troubles and chaos so that the burning flames would not reach the kings and princes of the Gulf States...But the BBC was more experienced in reporting the news”( L 11 ).

The message was reiterated by another lecturer:

“Untruthful news has an impact because the channel which is not impartial serves its interest in any way. For example, Al-Aljazeera tried to blacken the image of the ruling regimes; this presents a negative image of the country, its institutions and the citizens...The work in the university was disrupted; the studies became intermittent and then were suspended. The university became a place for listening to the news and the exaggerated news had a big role in the disruption and suspension of the studies in the university...I listened to the BBC because it more exacting in its news. Therefore, I was relatively affected because my country was denigrated all over the world” (L 12).

Another lecturer said that Al-Jazeera used to report in this way so as to spread the Arab Spring across Arab World.

“Al-Jazeera's reporting had an impact on the revolutions and contributed to spreading them from one country to the other and put them in this predicament... The BBC as I said was a neutral channel in reporting those events but the problem was Al-Jazeera because it was not neutral and its reporting created fear amongst the people. As I was in Libya I knew that there were many agreements between the government and many building companies to carry out building projects among these was the building of the new airport in Tripoli, but because of the lying media, those companies left Libya, which had lost many millions of dollars in those projects because they were not carried out up to now. Adding to that, hundreds of lecturers left the universities, which had resulted in the falling apart of the educational procession in those universities” (L 15).

Most of lecturers agreed on that universities were badly affected by Arab Spring. One of these effects was the suspension in studies and even the closing of universities and schools:

“The studies were suspended and the university turned into a meeting place for exchanging the news became like a stock exchange. The first responsible for this situation was Al-Jazeera because it wanted to create troubles between the citizens of the same country. Honestly, although Al-Jazeera presents some astounding programmer, it tries to attract the people and gain their trust in order to control their minds. Honestly, I do not know whether Al-Jazeera is a TV channel or is part of Facebook, Youtube and Twitter. This means that Al-Jazeera uses any means to support what is called the Arab Spring Revolutions, which are in fact the Arab destruction revolutions and which had been previously planned by Qatar and its allies. The BBC did not have any effect on the university because its reports were free from any exaggeration” (L 10).

Another lecturer said:

“certainly, the reporting of the event had affected the image of the country and the university because Al-Jazeera did not report the news as they were which led to some countries closing their embassies and the shortage of teaching staff in the universities because false news gives the country a bad image. But the BBC’s reporting was truthful” (L 9).

Such concerns can also be discerned in the following excerpt from the data about the effect of the role exaggeration conducted by Al-Jazeera in affecting peoples’ life.

“In my opinion, most of the news media is not independent and only a handful of it works with integrity. For the recent events in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, Al-Jazeera channel treated them with vigour as if it was a partner in the success of these revolutions; unfortunately things reached exaggeration and went off the ethics of professionalism. As I am in Libya, honestly the magnifying of the events in the media denigrated the image of the country all over the world and made it like a disastrous country. This in turn has affected the universities and the performance of their employees. But the BBC was neutral in reporting what was going on when the reporting of a news item is not fair, it has a big impact on the country’s situation and I will mention what happened because of the exaggerated reporting: some embassies suspended their work and building companies left Libya and everything came to a standstill including schools and universities. I was frustrated and worried and left my job at that time and the cause of that was Al-Jazeera but the BBC has been known to be an independent and neutral channel for a long time”( L 13 ).

To summarize, most of lecturers agreed that both channels were different in terms of their reporting to the events of the Arab Spring and also different in how they reported them. The general conclusion which can be drawn thus far is Al-Jazeera was not considered to be professional in its reporting of the events. Respondents considered that the channel used to exaggerate the events in a way inciting people inside the country against the existing regimes and informing people outside the country that Arab revolts were successful so as to entice them to rebel their regimes.

In the following section, I will shed light on the students' views towards Al-Jazeera and the BBC and how they both report the events and whether this reporting affected their personal and academic life.

Having shown the lecturers' main views and standpoints towards the role of both Al-Jazeera and the BBC in shaping their attitudes towards Arab Spring, let us now shift the gears towards students' replies. As indicated above, I conducted interviews with the students so as to reach a comprehensive picture on the role of Al-Jazeera and the BB in the academic life at Sabha University. Students are integral part of the educational process at the university; hence their feedback is substantive and to the point.

### 5.3. Students' replies

In this section, I highlight students' replies to the main questions of the interviews. It will become clear that the students mostly shared the mainstream opinion of the lecturers in terms of the most critical events of the Arab Spring as well as their views towards Al-Jazeera and the BBC and their putative role in the Arab Spring. The discussion in the section is pursued as follows. Section 5.3.1 highlights what the students were worried much about, namely the lack of security. Section 5.3.2 indicates what the students said on the critical events of the Arab Spring revolt. Section 5.3.3 spotlights students' attitudes towards Al-Jazeera and the BBC. Section 5.3.4 includes students' reaction towards how Al-Jazeera and the BBC represented the events. Section 5.3.5 capitalizes on the notion whether Al-Jazeera and the BBC succeeded in representing the events of Arab Spring professionally. Section 5.3.6 spells out how such reporting impacted the students' lives. Section 5.3.7 explores the students' vision towards Al-Jazeera's role, given that Al-Jazeera appeared to have propaganda-related roles. Section 5.4 concludes the discussion.

### 5.3.1. Lack of the security

The students appeared so keen to tell me about the changes which occurred in the teaching and learning processes after the revolutions had ended. Most of the students indicated that the situation was deteriorating without any signs for better or improvements. Consider the following:

“There is no change and for us in the university there no change for the better and the situation gets worse every day; that is from worse to the worst” (S 2).

One student made it clear that the university even become less secure place for study, given that there was no security to save the students:

“I noticed a difference in the university environment because in the past there was security and I could stay in the faculty for long hours but now I could not because of the lack of security” (S 3).

As compared to the past, students get no motivation to enter the university or work with other students. The university life got worse. For instance, the lecturers themselves were bullied and the study has been suspended for long for non-academic reasons. One student indicated that a person carrying a weapon could suspend the study at the university since he could kill anybody without any security saving the students.

“First, in the past the university was distinguished for the importance it gave to the quality of study programmes, scientific research and the sending of the distinguished students abroad for their postgraduate studies; this helped the student to acquire knowledge and improve his learning. ...But nowadays, in these changed times, which people thought will bring ample good to the country, we see that this a catastrophe caused by those who hate and detest Libya and its future. These are the events which took place in the university: the lack of security, the bolting of lecturers, the suspension of the studies due to the whims of a person carrying a weapon and intent on killing” (S. 5).

The students all time drew comparisons between the situation before and after the Arab Spring. Most of them indicated that the situation was completely different from it before the revolutions. The situation looked like ‘a disaster’ during the Arab Spring. Students lost their education for one year without the ability to reach the university.

“Prior to these revolutions the studies were enjoyable but after this disaster the studies were suspended and I lost a year because of this crisis. Most of the students have lost an academic year and on top of that we lost security” (S. 6).

“The difference is that the university studies deteriorated for a year and most of the students lost a year” (S.8).

Even the students were aware of the fact that nowadays they can speak freely of what they think but they assumed that the same time that the price for this is that no security, the matter that made university students difficult to pursue.

“Yes, the previous regimes were powerful and oppressing and it was hard to talk about politics; nowadays we have no fetters (we are free) but we lost the most precious thing: security and feeling at ease” (S 9).

Accordingly, the students expressed their concerns about the lack of security, which was the main issue they are worried about. Others students said:

AS a student the most important thing for me is that the university should be safe but the events of the Arab Spring affected the security in the country to the extent that students were afraid to live in student halls of residence due to the lack security” (S.11).

Everything has changed after the revolutions because of the war, which took place in the country. Some students lost an academic year especially amongst those who come from outside the city because they left the city and did not come back because of the bad situation and the lack of security” (S. 5).

The issue that there was no (enough) security at the university and outside

### 5.3.2. Critical events and their reporting

The students' attitudes of the main events of the Arab Spring were similar to those of the lecturers with approximately the same divergence of opinions.

Firstly, as far as the Tunisian revolution is concerned, the students highlighted two critical events which they think are of significance to the main course of the events. These two events are Bouazizi's self-suicide and the Tunisian president's flight of the country. Students' replies are to some extent expected because these two events demarcate the beginning and the end of Tunisian Revolution, respectively, a matter I will return to in the discussion section.

“There are many and I am going to mention them without bias and with honesty because everything should truthfully be reported and narrated even if I am opposed to it. The most important events are: In Tunisia, Al-Bouazizi and Ben Ali's flight, in Libya, Kaddafi's speech and death, the fall of Tripoli in the revolutionaries' hands and in Egypt, the Camel 's incident and Mubarak's speech. In fact, all the revolutions had a profound impact on us and dealt a massive blow to our countries. They created disasters, the lack of stability; I ask Allah to retaliate from those who caused these troubles” (S. 12).

“The incident of Al-Bouazizi is one of the most important events, the others are: Ben Ali's flight, the death of Qaddafi who thought that he will not be defeated, the fall of Tripoli, Mubarak's speech and the camel incident in Egypt. The revolution which had a profound impact on me is the Tunisian revolution because it was the beginning of the journey” (S.9).

Another student indicated:

“the decisive events are: Al Bouazizi's incident, which can be considered as the first strange one, Ben Ali's flight, the camel incident in Egypt and in Libya the Gaddafi's speech in which he described the opposing people as rats, the moment of his capture and his treatment in an inhuman manner and the relinquish of Tripoli from his grip.

Concerning the reporting method, I believe that it was neither fair nor exact and Al-Jazeera was greatly biased...The same events mentioned above...and the BBC had tried not to be biased” (S 5).

Secondly, the students mentioned that the Egyptian revolution had several critical events. They singled out the Mubarak’s stepping down and the camel event. The students did not highlight Mubarak’s speeches, unlike the lecturers who thought that such speeches were critical events.

“We start with Tunisia where the first seeds of change had been sown, I still remember the event of Bouazizi, especially when visited by Tunisian President Ben Ali to try to placate the Tunisian people and Bouazizi who was virtually dead, he refused Ben Ali by turning his body to the right which means that he did not want to meet him. In respect to Egypt, the start was the Tahrir Square crowded by people, who were repeating the following slogan “the people want to topple the regime.” I still remember when the Egyptian regime used the camel to hit people in Tahrir square specifically in Ramssis street, and also remember that the vehicle of security forces trying to run over demonstrators which resulted of the death of one person. I have seen this picture on the BBC ...after that, Omar Suleiman appeared in the media and said that Mubarak had decided to relinquish the Presidency of the Republic. At that time, we knew and understood that Gaddafi's end was close. As for the Libyan revolution we lived these events, not the events of the TV only, but even other events were eventful and the first speech of the tyrant showed that was like tiger made of paper....and we also recorded a video tape that demonstrates rebels in Al-Shati area located in the south were against the Gaddafi regime, and for the new revolution, and ... took responsibility to deliver the video to Tunisia which has been published across the channel Libya Al-Ahrar “(S 1).

As regards the Libyan revolution, the students indicated that the demonstrations in front of the National Court in Benghazi was a critical event, given that it was the main trigger for the revolution. Another group of the students indicated that the falling of Tripoli was the most critical event since the whole revolution has taken another complete path since then.

“the most important are: power cuts, shortage in bread, lack of security and the increase in thefts...they are failed revolutions and do not have objectives which are compatible with our religion as Muslims because our religion orders us to love and respect each other and follow the book of Allah and the way of the prophet (pbuh) but unfortunately, these revolutions which are called the Arab Spring brought destructive ideas and a foreign

agenda supported by Al-Jazeera which is financed by some countries particularly Qatar... I think that the Tunisian revolution is and it is also the one which had a profound effect because it was virtually free from casualties and marked the beginning” (S. 6).

“the events which mostly drew people’s attention are: Al Bouazizi ‘s incident because the media took advantage of this incident and turned it into the main catalyst in turning the people against Ben Ali’s regime, also when the revolutionaries invaded Tripoli in Libya and the Camel Incident in Egypt. The revolution in Tunisia played a major role and its success encouraged the other revolutions in Egypt and Libya” (S. 11).

This being the case, the students and the lecturers shared almost the same attitudes towards the most critical events of the three Arab revolts under discussion, namely the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions. Consider the following two replies:

“the most important events are: Al Bouazizi’s burning, Ben Ali’s flight in Tunisia, the camel incident and Mubarak’s stepping down, and in Libya Gaddafi’s death, his famous speech and his loss of Tripoli. In fact, Al-Jazeera was not neutral during those events but it was biased and this is an irrefutable fact...The same events; the difference is the BBC was neutral in reporting those events” (S .8).

“The decisive events are: Qaddafi’s speech and death, the invasion of Tripoli by the revolutionaries, Al-Bouazizi’s death, Ben Ali’s flight, Mubarak’s speech, stepping down and the camel incident. Honestly, Al-Jazeera was not fair; it was so biased as if it was a partner in the crisis...The same events and the BBC is known as a neutral channel and everybody relies on it for the news” (S. 14).

In this next section, I show students’ perspectives how such events and others were presented in Al-Jazeera and the BBC. I focused on the notion whether the students observe any differences exhibited between these two channels in terms of the events presentation.

### 5.3.3. The presentation of events in media.

On the basis of the students’ replies, it transpires that most of the students were convinced of the assumption that the BBC is more professional than Al-Jazeera in depicting the events.

“I think that because of the exaggerated and magnified news that we entered an endless dark tunnel. Unfortunately, Al-Jazeera and its financier Qatar, which works behind the scene, were the culprits in this case and should be punished for that...it is shameful to use social media sites to spread personal motives for achieving specific objectives. Unfortunately, Al-Jazeera had

recourse to that. The other media channels watched out for their countries' interest and most of them are not free; and may be the BBC enjoys more independence" (S 9).

This disparity between both channels had been ascribed to the notion that the BBC is more experienced with more independence.

"What I noticed was that Al-Jazeera covered the events dramatically, but like it was addressing a particular group of people, the BBC's way was different. Yes, the image was the same, and the event was the same as well, but the BBC focused on the events as global events and the BBC is more experienced and professional than Al-Jazeera because sometimes we watch the BBC correspondents in the heart of the event" (S 1).

Another group of the students indicated that the difference between the BBC and Al-Jazeera must be grounded with bias; the BBC is not a biased channel, whereas the Al-Jazeera is.

"The presenting of the events was different from one channel to the other; some were biased like the BBC and others were greatly not biased like Qatar's channel Al-Jazeera" (S 6).

On the other hand, other students mentioned that the channels did not focus on the most important aspects for the students and their families. Instead, what concerned the channels was the events and their repercussions on their main course of the revolutions without concentrating on how these events affect the locals.

"The media did not concentrate on people's daily problems; instead they concentrated on other events like Ben Ali's flight and other incidents" (S 8).

"The presentation of the incidents hugely affected us psychologically; in fact, it was not fair and I add that Aljazeera channel was biased towards the new revolutions and was not fair. Frankly, I did not follow the BBC" (S 2).

In the next subsection, I highlight how students perceived reporting of the events.

#### 5.3.4. Students' reactions to the different reporting of the events

Students appeared worried of how the events of the Arab Spring revolts were expressed by both channels.

“I had worries because I am a citizen who does not understand politics and the media so we were in a situation between believing and disbelieving the news” (S 2).

In general terms, the main concern was related to how Al-Jazeera depicted the events. Most of the students indicated that there was exaggeration of the events and the way in which these events was expressed was wrong.

“It was not in the same way because Al-Jazeera was not fair and exaggerated the news” (S 13).

Students indicated that such depiction would tell incorrect messages about the course of the events and how people used to live the events:

“Yes, I have a lot of those concerns because Aljazeera sometimes showed footage from the war arena of the bearded people. I mean we are frightened that the Western countries will suspect them to be from al-Qaeda as Al Gaddafi claimed and withdraw its support for the new revolution” (S 1).

What was broadcast is false not correct news:

“Yes, especially Al-Jazeera's style because it exaggerated the news and the false news created troubles and division amongst the people” (S 7).

Additionally, students thought that the whole country would be destroyed even though they did not see that in their eyes. This false thinking was mainly created by the news broadcast by Al-Jazeera.

“Yes, we or I was frightened that my country will be destroyed because of the media like Aljazeera channels engagement against us but unfortunately, we fell into the trap that was set for us” (S 9).

“The fear was caused by the biased channels like Al-Jazeera which used to magnify the events to cause troubles” (S15).

This incorrect reporting of the news affected the students’ university life. The students become worried about their academic future.

“ I, as a student, used to worry about my studies because they play a major part in my future, but unfortunately, I lost an academic year because of the media which did not report the news in a truthful way” ( S12 ).

Another student indicated that false reporting appeared to incite the fight between locals and create troubles. False reporting not just made wrong misconceptions among people but also trigger people to fight each other and thus spread the chaos among people:

“Yes, fear was there since the beginning of the revolution, unfortunately, most of the things we were afraid of happened and we hope that what we think is coming won’t happen because the aim of reporting according to reason is to create troubles and incite people to keep them going on for a long time. Why???Because turning the event from rumors to reality and its being criticized by another media party constitutes the biggest fear and harbingers the destruction of civilisation due to the hatred of the corrupt media. So, the manner of reporting smelt of bad intentions and apparent hatred” (S 5).

The students indicated that Al-Jazeera was politicized in the sense that it used to fulfill the benefits of Qatar rather than representing the events as they are:

“Al-Jazeera did not report any event with fairness and neutrality at all. Whenever, Al-Jazeera reports any news about any Arab country, you should know that 97% of that report serves the interest of Qatar and denies the other party’s fair share. The most

important events are: Al Bouazizi's incident, Ben Ali's flight which were a delight for Al-Jazeera, the camel's incident in Cairo, Mubarak's speech and in Libya, Gaddafi's speech, the entry of Qatar's revolutionaries to Tripoli and the delight of Qatar and the Gulf countries for the death of Gaddafi...The decisive events are similar and the same ones I mentioned above; the difference is that the BBC reports without any noticeable bias. So, the BBC was fairer and this is due to its expertise in reporting the news" (S 6).

When asking the students whether they were differences between the BBC and Al-Jazeera in terms of representing the events. Most of the students mentioned that Al-Jazeera is different from BBC, which the students thought to be sincere. One student said:

"I think it was not in the same way, I remember when Tripoli fell, Al-Jazeera's correspondent came with the rebels in the same cars, which entered Tripoli and then proceeded to report the events from Tripoli while the BBC's cameras were in Tripoli prior to its fall and was broadcasting directly from Tripoli before the occurrence of the event. The BBC was stationed in a strategic location from where it reported the facts"( S 1 ).

Al-Jazeera was a tool for achieving political purposes rather than a news agency reporting what is happening as it is:

"No, it was not in the same way because the BBC was only a news reporter but the Qatari Al-Jazeera was a problem stirrer and a soldier fighting with the media weapons" (S.6).

The students highlighted the idea that the BBC was neutral:

"I do not think so, because the description of the events was presented in two different ways; that is Al-Jazeera was biased and the BBC was neutral and that is all" (S 11).

The main conclusion is that most of the students expressed that the BBC was a professional channels without any political message or goals to achieve. To the contrary, Al-Jazeera was a biased and exaggerated the negative impacts of the events in a way the students felt that their country would be destroyed. I think that this conclusion is captured in the following reply:

"The media work in the same way if they carry out their duties with integrity and truthfulness. But if they depart from the profession's ethics and resort to falsehood and exaggeration as is the case with Al-Jazeera channel, then the difference becomes great and apparent in the method of describing and reporting the events" ( S 15 ).

In the next subsection, I provide more responses from the students on how the BBC succeeded in reporting the news on Arab Spring, whilst Al-Jazeera failed to do so.

### 5.3.5. The success or failure of Aljazeera and the BBC in reporting the events.

When asking the students whether the BBC succeeded in representing the events of the Arab Spring as they were, the students all agreed on that.

“I want to confirm it was the BBC network that was concerned by transmitting the suffering of the Libyan people for long time ago. For example, it was the forerunner with oldest dissidents living in Europe. Those people were staying in Europe as those countries characterized by greater freedoms and more rights. BBC's network was in contact with those people living abroad and those who live inside Libya such as the freedom fighter Mr. Ali Bin Abass Alshareif. I think that the BBC channel was successful in broadcasting the suffering of the Libyan people first hand from an early age for example the massacre of Abu Salem, unfortunately, some of the channels do not address these issues, only when they are given permission” (S 1).

This success was mainly motivated by their assumption that the BBC was neutral, professional channel:

“The real success for the media is its commitment to neutrality and truthfulness; this was not the case with Al-Jazeera so it was not successful but the BBC was good” (S 14).

“We should differentiate between the two channels because the BBC is a successful channel, possesses many years of experience and is largely independent. However, Al-Jazeera as its name suggests is biased or refers to a specific region. Moreover, it was established to serve the interests of the Qatari state and its American master who pulls up its strings and this not success” (S 13).

Students assumed that Al-Jazeera was nothing to be compared with the BBC when it comes to which channels depict the events as they were.

“Al-Jazeera was biased and the rate of its success is 5% and the BBC's is 90% in the reporting the events of what is called the Arab Spring” (S 11).

Al-Jazeera for the students appear to flout the journalism conventions. A channel must be fair and without bias towards any issue, the notions one did find them with Al-Jazeera.

“In my opinion, Al-Jazeera was not successful and the reason is that it was biased to a degree of being considered as a partner in the change. This contravenes the principles of

journalism, but the BBC had expertise in this kind of events and reported them with neutrality” (S. 8).

Consider this reply as well:

“In my opinion, the successful channel is the one which reports the news the way they are with accuracy and without any bias but if it is the other way round it will not be successful and will lose its integrity such as Al-Jazeera” ( S 12 ).

Having indicated how Al-Jazeera and the BBC reported the news and the students’ perspectives towards them. Let us here focus on how this reporting affected the students and staff at Sebha University.

#### 5.3.6. Impact on the university/ students/ staff

As hinted at above, reporting false news on the part of Al-Jazeera was utterly disastrous for the students’ and their families. First of all, the study was suspended and tension between the locals had been created.

“Yes, everything was negatively impacted, for example, I am a master's student and my studies were disrupted in particular the field study because I am studying geography and it was not safe to conduct a field study. Al-Jazeera, although it covered all the events of the Arab Spring, but it was deliberately exaggerating and tampering with the news and of course this has a negative effect on the image. In contrast, the BBC’s network has always focused the fact that there are states but perhaps there is apolitical mishap. Aljazeera has an Arabic background, which is controlled by an Arab state that understands and knows the level of thinking in the Arab Spring revolutions. So they convey the news to affect the way the Arab people think and always play on this chord. So it creates an atmosphere of tension among the people, affecting the university environment and study while the BBC on the contrary, was addressing educated people”(S 1).

Bogus reporting intimidated the students. They were no longer able to attend their university. There was a feeling that they would be killed and/or robbed. The students’ lived in a state of frustration.

“Yes it has a great influence on us students, and I as a student living in the internal section belonging to the university ; whenever we heard any news we were frightened more and we were told go back to your homes because the studies will be suspended. The method

of reporting the news frightened people and caused frustration. The news reports had an effect on the university and on the studies, so that the university was robbed by the followers of the former regime especially this faculty because it was surrounded by tribes and individuals who supported Gaddafi's regime. This has affected the progression of the work and the studies were suspended. For me it was a disappointment and I did not expect some people to destroy their homes with their own hands"(S 2).

The students were almost angry of the fact that one year of their academic life went on astray because of Al-Jazeera's intervention and its mistaken reporting of the events. Al-Jazeera's reporting forced the families not to send their children their children to the university, given there is a fear that students could be killed.

"Yes, Al-Jazeera played, in a way, a role in the success of those revolutions and the blackening of the country's image. This had an effect on education and other sectors and it had a personal effect on me because I lost an academic year...This is what it really wanted because the international community stopped its political dealings with the country and the foreign teaching staff went back to their countries and we, the students, suspended our studies and lost a year because of the troubles created by Al-Jazeera and its stirring of the divisions and problems. I, one day, will complain to Al-Jazeera and ask for compensation for the loss of a year" (S 6).

Another student reported that reporting the news in a wrong way triggered most of the countries to flee the country and thereby destruction of the economy:

"Yes, the reporting of the news has affected the image the country because most of the companies left Libya, chaos engulfed the country and public institutions were suspended...I am a student and the studies are related to the university and the university closed down because there was no security" (S 4).

"The impact was that the false news affects the country's reputation especially if it comes from a biased channel; I mean the lie is greater in order to serve their interest and this is what Al-Jazeera used to do. However, the BBC was not biased...The lack of security turned the university from an educational illumination to a market where there were news exchanges and the revelation of the latest news. The university was also robbed and pillaged because of the lack of surveillance and security and the students lost an academic year and some of them took part in the troubles and lost their lives" (S 7).

Another students said that the picture of the whole country was distorted because of the false reporting which brought nothing but misery to the country:

“Certainly, it did affect especially, Al-Jazeera which had distorted the image, stirred the streets and caused chaos all over the country. All employment sectors were affected and the people were divided into two groups; those who were for and those who were against the revolution....the reporting of an event has a big effect especially the magnified news by Al-Jazeera. The BBC news were neutral and did not have a clear impact.....The university stopped functioning and was ransacked and the students went back to their towns and cities and some of them stayed because they were fearful due to the lack of security on the roads because of the false news” (S10 ).

In the next subsection, I maintain how students conceived of Al-Jazeera’s role in the Arab Spring. It turned out that all students were aware that Al-Aljazeera had some political role to galvanize. This role is to help in eliminating the then existing regimes and support the opposition.

#### 5.3.7. Students’ perspectives of Al-Jazeera’s role

All students thought that Al-Jazeera used to support the opponents of the then existing regimes.

“, Al-Jazeera was biased towards the opponents of the ruling regimes.... the media is a dangerous weapon and makes use of any means to spread its poison. For example, Al-Jazeera used Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to bring down the previous regimes.” (S 13).

Such support had been implemented in the way that Al-Jazeera triggered people to demonstrate and create tensions and troubles:

“Yes, the media shed light on the movements which terrorise people, especially Al-Jazeera which tires to stir the street in any way, and among those movements there are criminals because its objects are to create troubles in the country” (S 5).

“These are things which are hard to understand because, may be, they could have been done through pre- agreed arrangements” (S 12).

For the students, Al-Jazeera supported the rebels not because it wanted to deliver their voice but rather to achieve its own goals which were to destroy any possible contender against Qatar in particular and all Gulf countries in general:

“Al-Jazeera was biased towards the rebels and supported them in the media especially the Muslim Brothers because the country sponsoring Al-Jazeera wanted their involvement in the troubles and the destruction of their reputation and the destruction of

the strong countries in the region in particular Libya because it is a big competitor to Qatar. In order that the Gulf States have a prosperous life they decided to get rid of the competitive countries to them because they constituted a threat to them. The BBC reported things the way they happened” (S 14).

Another student raised the following:

“Yes, Al-Jazeera supported the revolutionaries, while it was aware that amongst them there were some criminals; it turned the blind eye to that in order to create endless chaos in the country because that is what Qatar and its backers wanted, but the BBC was neutral” ( S 8 ).

#### 5.4. Conclusion

In this section, I raised the students’ main replies to the main questions of the current study. The students appeared to have similar views as compared to the lecturers. The main problems the students suffered from is the lack of security, which made their university life difficult to pursue at that time. The BBC for them is neutral and professional, whereas Al-Jazeera was biased with its own political propaganda.

## Chapter 6

### Analysis of the articles

#### 6.1. Introduction

As stated in the previous chapters, both the lecturers and students who were involved in the study agreed on the critical events of the Arab Spring revolts. What I mean by *critical* is that these events played the main role in shaping the relevant revolts in their final shape. For instance, the fall of Tripoli was the main event in the Libyan revolt, given it demarcates the actual triumph of the Libyan Arab Spring revolt in that the capital city of Libya was then under the control of the opposition forces (i.e., anti-Colonel Muammer Gaddafi forces). I reiterate these critical events relating to Tunisian, Libyan, and Egyptian revolts in the following Table:

**Table 6: the most critical agreed-upon incidents in the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions**

<b>Revolution</b>	<b>Incidents</b>
Tunisian	Bouazizi's self-suicide
	Ben Ali's fleeing the country
Egyptian	Mubarak's stepping down
	Camel's occasion
Libyan	fall of Tripoli
	Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder

**Table 3 the most critical agreed-upon incidents in Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan revolutions**

Additionally, the previous chapter spelled out the assumption that for most of the lecturers and the students there were several significant differences between BBC and Al-Jazeera in reporting these events. The general claim advanced was the BBC was deemed to be professional in reporting the events without any hidden or secret agenda the channels used to propagate their views. On the other hand, almost all of the lecturers and students made it clear that Al-Jazeera used to report the critical events of the Arab revolution in a biased way. Al-Jazeera used to emphasise the importance of some occasions while they did not pay much attention to other important incidents. What was more relevant to us in the previous chapters was the negative effects of Al-Jazeera's reporting of the significant events on the staff and students of Sebha university. By and large, it turned out that such reporting had several negative effects on the lecturers and the students and by extension on the university (see the previous chapter for more details). What is most relevant for us in this chapter is to how Al-Jazeera and the BBC reported the events through analysing their articles on these events. As

indicated at the outset of this thesis, the critical events were sought in order to pick the articles made by these channels. Both CDA and SFL will be used to examine this reporting and determining how both channels reflect on the respective event and whether their reflection and reporting lines up with the lecturers and the students' views made on both channels.

In what follows, I will investigate the articles produced by both channels on the events (Table 1). Firstly, I investigate the critical events of the Tunisian Revolt, namely Bouazizi's self-suicide and Ben Ali's fleeing of the country. I use the CDA and SFL theorizing to explore the differences between the two channels. Afterwards, I investigate the Egyptian revolt's main events, i.e. Mubarak's stepping down as well as Camel's occasion and Libyan revolt's critical events fall of Tripoli and Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder. It will become clear that there is a huge difference between Al-Jazeera and the BBC in terms of their reporting and reflection on the respective event. Al-Jazeera's ideology, which was to incite the public against their regimes, was clearly evident in all articles. On the other hand, the BBC was impartial in reporting the main events. h

## 6.2. Tunisian revolt

Out of the many events happening in the Tunisian revolt, both Bouazizi's self-suicide and Ben Ali's fleeing the country received most of the credit from all lecturers and students. The direct cause for this emphasis on these two events comes from the fact that Bouazizi's self-suicide is actually the event that instigated the Arab spring, whereas Ben Ali's fleeing the country is the last critical event in this revolt and at the same time the hard evidence for the overarching role of public in shaping the political life in the country. Ben Ali's fleeing the country was like a surprise for many Arabs throughout the Arab World given that no one expected such a conclusion. Hence this event was so important even for people from outside Libya.

### 6.2.1. Bouazizi's self-suicide

Reading carefully the BBC's reporting of Bouazizi's self-suicide, it is obvious that this reporting was just a clear and unbiased report without any further elaboration in irrelevant details. Investigating the article at the micro-level where the focus is to be placed to the semantic relations between propositions, syntactic, lexical and other rhetorical elements of coherence in the text (Van Dijk 1995 and Sheyholislami, 2001), it can be advanced that there is no special mechanism the Channel had adopted to report the accident differently. For

instance, consider the following excerpt taken from the BBC's reporting of Bouazizi's self-suicide:

*"Mohammed gave his life to draw attention to his condition and that of his brothers," Mr Horchani, said.*

*"President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, who has ruled Tunisia for 23 years, condemned the riots, in which at least one demonstrator died when the security forces opened fire.*

*Officials say the officers retaliated in the central town of MenzelBouzaïene after coming under attack with Molotov cocktails thrown by the crowd.*

*The government said the demonstrations, which then spread to the capital, were exploited by the opposition.*

*But the president, who visited Mr Bouazizi in hospital before his death, said that he would seek to find a solution to the problem of unemployment - and has since appointed a new youth minister".*

The whole excerpt is just a report without any reflection. Coherence was established through stating what others said about the relevant occasion. It is clear that the one quotation saying is robustly related to the topic under discussion. The rest of the excerpt represents background information, which are important for readers especially those without any knowledge about the event, in addition to some reactions to the events. Most important is that the reporting includes the reactions of both parties, the demonstrators and the president. The reporting makes it clear that Mr Bouazizi died of immolation because of unemployment. On the other hand, the president's acts in a reaction to this event were mentioned in that he replaced the minister to solve the problem. No special lexical words with certain import (emotional) were used. Additionally, all the propositions of the given excerpts were clear and relevant to the point discussed. For examples, the proposition of the first bit talks about Mr Horchani's comment on Mr Bouazizi's suicide, while the second bit's proposition is related to some background information relating to the event. Additionally, on the macro-level where the focus is placed on the thematic/topic structure of the news stories and their overall schemata,

it is evident that the whole article addresses one single topic, i.e, Mr Bouazizi's suicide and the repercussions of this event either on the local people of the government in a direct way.

Now let us shift to Al-Jazeera's reporting of the same event. It is clear that the reporting is complicated in terms of the structure and theme, unlike that of the BBC. At the micro-level, Al-Jazeera used certain words that reflect the assumptions raised by the students and the lecturers in that Al-Jazeera exaggerated the event, reflecting its effects and consequences in a less actual way. *'The rampant problem of unemployment, a wave of social unrest'*, and *abused him* are representative examples of the words Al-Jazeera used in the article. A reader can tell that the situation in Tunisia is so dangerous, given the detail on who died in addition to Mr Bouazizi. What is significant is the macro-level analysis to the article. It is evident that Al-Jazeera linked the Mr Bouazizi's suicide to other irrelevant news which clearly aimed to defame the government and the president. Consider the following excerpts that reflect the main sub-themes of the article and their course:

#### **Bouazizi's suicide**



*"A 26-year-old Tunisian man who set off a wave of protests after attempting to commit suicide by setting himself on fire last month has died of third-degree burns in hospital, his relatives and human rights groups have said. Mohamed Bouazizi died at 5:30 pm local time on Tuesday at a hospital in the town of Ben Arous, his brother Salem Bouazizi told the AFP news agency. Bouazizi is the fourth person confirmed to have died in a wave of social unrest that entered its 20th day on Wednesday "*

#### **Information blackout**



*"Information from Tunisia has been scarce as the government has moved to censor Internet access. Activists and those writing about the protests have found their email, Facebook and blog accounts hacked, Ben Mhenni told Al Jazeera. The Tunisian Bar Association has scheduled a general strike for Thursday. Activists had tried to organise a national strike on Monday, coinciding with the day that students were set to return to school from their holidays, but it was hard to verify whether the strike had occurred"*

#### **Disputed details**



*“Al Jazeera's coverage has been criticised by Tunisian politicians and some journalists, while other writers and activists have praised it. Since Ben Ali became president, Tunisia has moved away from centralised economic control, reduced tariffs, and sought loans from the World Bank. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated in September that Tunisia's unemployment rate is 13.3 per cent, but non-governmental sources believe it rises higher in certain areas, such as Sidi Bouzid, the heart of the protests, where 44 per cent of female university graduates and 25 per cent of male graduates are reportedly unemployed”.*

The article is thus not about Mr Bouazizi's suicide and its repercussions on the public as well on the government as the case with the BBC (see above). Al-Jazeera brought some other irrelevant subtopics including the information blackout and some disputed details which all aim to make people inside and outside Tunisia have negative perspectives towards the exiting regime of Tunisia at the time. Additionally, the note on the information blackout indicates that the aggression practiced against people is supported by government. Besides other sub-themes of the articles, it can be assumed that the main import of the article is not to report on Mr Bouazizi's suicide which is really one bit, but rather about the aggravation of the then existing regime. This assumption lines up with the students' and lecturers' views that Al-Jazeera attempted to trigger people revolt against the existing regimes at the time. Following the main assumption of Fairclough (1995, 2001) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), it can be stated that Bouazizi's suicide is a communicative event. For Fairclough, analysis in this dimension pertains to three aspects of the sociocultural context of a communicative event with political message delivered by ideology of the media of Al-Jazeera.

Additionally, within the Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which reconceptualises language as a semiotic tool utilized in the negotiation, construction, organization, and reconstruction of human experiences (Fang, 2005: p. 366), we can reach the same conclusion we drew above on Al-Jazeera's and the BBC' reporting as far as the paper on Bouazizi's suicide is concerned. The most obvious observation related to the both articles in terms of SFL is the excessive use of the present perfect in Al-Jazeera's reporting, as compared to the BBC's article. Consider the following examples from Al-Jazeera's article:

*“Information from Tunisia **has been** scarce as the government has moved to censor Internet access*

*The Tunisian Bar Association **has scheduled** a general strike for Thursday*

*But Ben Ali **has also taken steps** to try to placate the demonstrators: He **has removed** three ministers and two governors from their positions and promised a \$5 billion state jobs programme.*

*Though the IMF **has praised** Tunisia's economic performance and liberalisation, extolling its rising growth rate throughout the global economic crisis, it **has noted** that unemployment is also on the rise”.*

The use of the present perfect tense in such a way is significant. First, present perfect indicates that the events happened in the ‘near past’ whose effect is still present for the time being (cf. Sheyholislami, 2001). In this way, the direct message is that the event is still underway and not finished. The use of the present perfect can be seen as an attempt to inform people indirectly that the event is important, given its effects on the present, and at the same time unfinished so people can be updated with any developments, which is taken as an endeavour to attract people’s attention to this particular event. Present perfect is not excessively used in the BBC’s report, which as I mentioned, was a mere reflection of the reality of the situation. For instance, the BBC made use of the present perfect to proclaim the death of Bouazizi who has just died.

*“A Tunisian graduate whose attempted suicide set off violent protests over unemployment across the North Africa nation **has died**”*

This being the case, we can assume that the BBC makes use of present perfect naturally to indicate the cases where the events happened in the near past without politicising the situation, as carried out by Al-Jazeera.

In the next subsection, I will investigate the second article on the critical event of Ben Ali’s fleeing the country which demarcates the end of Tunisian Arab Spring.

## 6.2.2. Ben Ali’s fleeing the country

Given that this event was significant for the course of the events of the Tunisian Revolt and indeed the trigger for subsequent Arab Spring Revolutions, understandably, both the BBC and Al-Jazeera placed strong emphasis on this event. This can be observed in the length of the articles, as compared to the previous articles on Bouazizi's suicide. However, if one takes a closer look at both articles in question, one finds that the Al-Jazeera article (1491 words) is much longer than the BBC's (835 words). The length of Al-Jazeera's article is, however, accounted for once we find that the article was not only about the event of Ben Ali's fleeing the country. At the macro-level, the article can be divided into several sub-themes, which are summarized below with a representative excerpt for each subtheme.

### **Ben Ali's departure to Saudi Arabia**



*“Saudi Arabia has said that Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia's president for more than 23 years, and his family are in the kingdom, a day after they fled a mass uprising in their country. The departure came as a dramatic climax to weeks of violent protests against Ben Ali's rule in the north African nation and as the army struggled to tackle groups marauding through Tunis, the capital, setting fire to buildings and attacking people and property”.*

### **Unwelcome in France**



*“Earlier on Friday, after it was confirmed that Ben Ali had fled Tunis, rumours flew regarding the whereabouts of the president and his family. Sources speculated they were flying to Malta, Libya, France or elsewhere. Eventually, it appeared Ben Ali's aircraft had been en route to Paris, but Al Jazeera's Jacky Rowland, reporting from the French capital, said that Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president, had refused to welcome Ben Ali following crisis negotiations with his prime minister”.*

### **Buildings ransacked**



*“Tensions remained high despite Ben Ali's exit, with protesters reported to be ransacking government buildings in the capital, Tunis, and throughout other provinces. Police have also been accused of participating in looting, and citizens have made appeals for the protection of their property. Ben Ali's apparent downfall has not calmed all the protesters; there were reports of*

*continued protests outside the interior ministry on Friday night calling for Ghannouchi's immediate resignation”.*

#### **Expressions of discontent**



*“Kamaal Bin Younis, a Tunisian journalist, reported that there have been expressions of discontent with the choice of a Ben Ali ally as interim president. State media earlier reported that Ben Ali had imposed a state of emergency in the country and promised fresh legislative elections within six months in an attempt to quell the wave of dissent sweeping across the country. There were also reports that the airport in Tunis had been surrounded by troops and the country's airspace has been closed. At least one journalist, from CNN, reported on Twitter on Friday night that his flight had been allowed to land and he had arrived at his hotel in Tunis”.*

Al-Jazeera provides much detail about this event. Additionally, it reflects on the ensuing bad situation of Tunisia that occurs because of Ben Ali’s flight from the country. On the other hand, the BBC’s article placed much emphasis on the event itself without bringing out any irrelevant details. Two subthemes highlighted in the BBC’s article were the stranded tourists and the welcome form Saudi Arabia. Consider the following examples:

#### **Welcomed**



*“A Saudi palace statement said Mr Ben Ali arrived in the country early on Saturday, according to the official SPA news agency. "Out of concern for the exceptional circumstances facing the brotherly Tunisian people and in support of the security and stability of their country... the Saudi government has welcomed President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his family to the kingdom," the statement said. The protests started after an unemployed graduate set himself on fire when police tried to prevent him from selling vegetables without a permit. He died a few weeks later...”*

#### **Stranded Tourists**



*The state of emergency decree bans gatherings of more than three people and imposes a night-time curfew. Security forces have been authorised to open fire on people not obeying their orders. President Sarkozy said he stood side-by-*

*side with the citizens of Tunisia, his country's former protectorate. "Only dialogue can bring a democratic and lasting solution to the current crisis," said Mr Sarkozy in a statement".*

This being the case, it can be advanced that the Al-Jazeera used to link the event with other details which mirror the situation as aggravated. On the other hand, the BBC's reporting of the event is free from any irrelevant details. Additionally, two significant points related the BBC's article are in order. Firstly. The BBC always inserted some background information on the event under discussion. Secondly, the BBC's reporting is free of any reflection. It is just the event as it happened in addition to what other people said about the event. It is quite clear that the quotations in the BBC's reporting are much more than those in Al-Jazeera's reporting which was mainly oriented towards reflection on the event and any future repercussions. Consider the following examples from the BBC that represent the background:

*"The protests started after an unemployed graduate set himself on fire when police tried to prevent him from selling vegetables without a permit. He died a few weeks later.*

*President Ben Ali, who had already promised to step down in 2014, dissolved his government and the country's parliament, and declared a state of emergency.*

*Then, in a televised address on Friday afternoon, the prime minister announced that he would be taking over from President Ben Ali".*

Now, consider the following quotations which are just a representative sample from the BBC's reporting:

*"Only dialogue can bring a democratic and lasting solution to the current crisis," said Mr Sarkozy in a statement.*

*US President Barack Obama condemned violence against Tunisian citizens "peacefully voicing their opinion in Tunisia".*

*In a statement, he said: "I applaud the courage and dignity of the Tunisian people.*

*"I urge all parties to maintain calm and avoid violence, and call on the Tunisian government to respect human rights, and to hold free and fair elections in the near future that reflect the true will and aspirations of the Tunisian people."*

*“Out of concern for the exceptional circumstances facing the brotherly Tunisian people and in support of the security and stability of their country... the Saudi government has welcomed President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his family to the kingdom,” the statement said.*

Along these lines, it can be assumed that the BBC’s reporting of the event of Ben Ali’s fleeing the country was just a deception of the event as it happened in addition to what other prominent/relevant people said on. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera’s reporting was full of reflections by its reporters on the event with emphasis placed on what should be the next stage. Consider the following example from Al-Jazeera’s reporting of the event of Ben Ali’s fleeing the country:

*“Al Jazeera's special correspondent in Tunisia said that things were extremely quiet on Saturday morning as people went about their daily business.*

*Our correspondent said the feeling there was that "people had indeed woken up to a new era, after 23 years of Ben Ali's rule".*

*"There is a lot of apprehension, but at the same time total euphoria about the next step towards the democracy that they fought for so much."*

*Ghannouchi, 69, is a trained economist who has been a close ally to Ben Ali for many years. Prime minister since 1999, he is one of the best-known faces of Tunisia's government”*

Al-Jazeera’s reporting of the event is not only restricted to description but rather reflection on the event as observed by its reporters.

At the micro level, one prominent point is related to the selection of the welcome. The BBC indicated that Ben Ali was welcomed in Saudi Arabia, as actually reported by Saudi Arabia. One of the subtitles of the article was the word **‘welcomed’**, as seen in the quotation above, repeated below for convenience:

### **Welcomed**



*“A Saudi palace statement said Mr Ben Ali arrived in the country early on Saturday, according to the official SPA news agency. "Out of concern for the exceptional circumstances facing the brotherly Tunisian people and in support of the security and stability of their country... the Saudi government **has***

*welcomed President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his family to the kingdom," the statement said. The protests started after an unemployed graduate set himself on fire when police tried to prevent him from selling vegetables without a permit. He died a few weeks later...*

On the other hand, Al-Jazeera stressed the notion that Ben Ali was unwelcomed in France though the news that Ben Ali was not allowed to enter France was based on rumours. Consider the following:

#### **Unwelcome in France**



*“Earlier on Friday, after it was confirmed that Ben Ali had fled Tunis, **rumours** flew regarding the whereabouts of the president and his family. Sources speculated they were flying to Malta, Libya, France or elsewhere. Eventually, it appeared Ben Ali's aircraft had been en route to Paris, but Al Jazeera's Jacky Rowland, reporting from the French capital, said that Nicolas Sarkozy, **the French president, had refused to welcome Ben Ali following crisis negotiations with his prime minister**”.*

The discrepancy between Al-Jazeera (unwelcome in France) and the BBC (welcome in Saudi Arabia) reflects really the agenda on both channels. Al-Jazeera depends on rumours exaggerating that Ben Ali is a despicable man who is rejected even from his close allies. On the other hand, the BBC reports the genuine news issued by real agencies and mirror the news as it happened. Following the power considerations within the CDA (Fairclough, 1989, 1995, Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000, and Richardson, 2007) it is obvious that Al-Jazeera attempted to empower the demonstrators who were treated powerful and render Ben Ali powerless in characterizing him as a casted man who fled the country in fear of the powerful demonstrators. On the other hand, the BBC used to report the power relations as they were. Demonstrators were struggling to defend their rights against Ben Ali's local government, whereas Ben Ali fled the country, as a response to the demonstrators. Thus, it is clear that the power was distributed to both parties, i.e. the demonstrators and the Tunisian president Ben Ali. Such power relations and the so-called hegemony could be detected in reference to the use of passive voice (cf. Yan 2005, Matthiessen and Halliday 2009, and Butt 2009, among others) in the two articles. It is clear that Al-Jazeera used active voice with the actions associated with the demonstrators, whereas events related to Ben Ali and his relatives were

depicted more in the passive voice. Consider the following quotations from Al-Jazeera's article:

*"Members of **Ben Ali's family**, reportedly including some of his in-laws, **were arrested** as they tried to leave the country.*

*"Since **the president is temporarily unable to exercise his duties**, it **has been decided that** the prime minister will exercise temporarily the [presidential] duties," Ghannouchi said in a statement broadcast on state television.*

*"Logically, there is bound to be a lot of distrust, because Ghannouchi is part of the very close inner circle ... of **Ben Ali**. Past promises **that have been made** [by that government] have not been kept."*

*He also vowed to address problems of inflation and unemployment "exactly" as they **had recently been announced by Ben Ali**".*

Now we may address the use of Active Voice used to describe the actions related to the demonstrators:

*"Ben Ali, who has ruled Tunisia since coming to power in a bloodless coup in 1987, fled amid violent demonstrations and **protesters** who **rejected** his last-minute raft of concessions.*

*Matters came to a head in the capital, Tunis, on Friday, as police tear-gassed **protesters gathered** outside the interior ministry building demanding Ben Ali's resignation, even after the president had delivered a speech the night before offering major concessions.*

*Witnesses said police used batons to disperse the crowd, but **the protesters insisted** they would not leave until Ben Ali stepped down".*

The use of Active Voice with the protesters indicates that the latter have the AGENT role and thus has the power. On the other hand, Ben Ali and his relatives were treated as PATIENTS or THEMES, the two semantic roles that are affiliated with Passive Voice. Ben Ali and his relatives were submitted to the protesters.

On the other hand, the BBC used both Active and Passive voices alike with Ben Ali and the protestors. No emphasis on the notion that Ben Ali is submitted to protestors was maintained. Consider the following excerpts form the BBC's article:

*"Tunisian President **Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali** has **stepped down** after 23 years in power as protests over economic issues snowballed into rallies against him*

*Mr Ben Ali left Tunisia with his family, and has since arrived in Saudi Arabia, officials said.*

*Saudi palace statement said Mr Ben Ali arrived in the country early on Saturday, according to the official SPA news agency*

*President Ben Ali, who had already promised to step down in 2014, dissolved his government and the country's parliament, and declared a state of emergency”.*

As for the actions related to the protestors, the BBC did not place much emphasis on them, given that the major theme of the article is Ben Ali's fleeing the country rather than providing details on the protestors who were not the main topic. In this regard, one specific point related to the BBC's reporting of the critical event of Ben Ali's fleeing the country is that the channel used the word 'demonstrations' instead of 'the protestors'. No special reference to the word 'the protestors' or 'demonstrators' was used.

*“Demonstrations came to a head on Friday as thousands of people gathered outside the interior ministry, a symbol of the regime, and many climbed onto its roof. Police responded with volleys of tear-gas grenades”.*

I claim that the use of the word 'demonstrations' instead of 'the protestors' can be ascribed to the assumption that the BBC reflecting the actual situation attempted to maintain the power balance between the protestors and the president Ben Ali. The protestors are powerful, given their demonstrations which, though, can be suppressed. This careful selection of the word used to describe the protestors adds further evidence that the BBC mirrors the then actual situation without contributing to the power relations.

In the next section, I investigate how the BBC and Al-Jazeera reports the critical events of the Egyptian revolt.

### 6.3. Egyptian revolt

As indicated above, the critical events of Mubarak's stepping down and Camel's occasion received much attention from all lecturers and students as far as Egyptian revolt is concerned. The obvious motivation for this emphasis on these two events stems from the fact that Mubarak's stepping down was like an earth-shaking event that nobody in the Arab World expected to occur. That is because Mubarak's regime was, as raised by students and lecturers, rooted in Egypt and it was never easy to force Mubarak to step down. Additionally, this event

was evidence for the success of the Arab World revolts in forcing the then existing regimes to step down. The Camel's occasion was special, given it was a serious attempt from Mubarak to remain in the power but, unfortunately, a sad occasion where many protestors died. In the following two subsections, I shed light on how these events were reported by Al-Jazeera and the BBC, using the major assumptions of the CDA and the SFL.

### 6.3.1. Camel's occasion

Reading the BBC's and Al-Jazeera's articles on this occasion reveal Al-Jazeera's hidden agenda whose existence was pressed by most of the students and the lecturers. If we draw a comparison between Al-Jazeera and the BBC in terms of which aspects of the event have been stressed, it turns out that Al-Jazeera insisted on the alleged people who were behind this event. Al-Jazeera stated that some official from Mubarak's regime were responsible for this occasion and hence the focus on the protestors. This is a clear attempt from Al-Jazeera to convict the existing regime at the time and trigger people against it, given the implied message that this regime could do anything to kill people and remain in authority. Consider the following excerpts from Al-Jazeera's article reporting Camel occasion.

*"Investigators have found that a former speaker of Egypt's upper house of parliament was behind the "battle of the camel" in which government loyalists rode horses and camels through the protest camp in Tahrir Square*

*Sharif is said to have "contacted MPs, members of the NDP and financiers of the party, inciting them to disperse the protests in Tahrir Square by force and violence", according to the MENA.*

*The mounted attack, which included whip-wielding riders, led to street clashes and was later seen as a pivotal event in rallying more Egyptians to the anti-government cause*

*Along with Sharif, Fathi Surur, a former lower house speaker, stands accused of "inciting murder and killing protestors", a judicial official told the AFP news agency".*

On the other hand, the alleged people behind this occasion was just a subtheme of the BBC's article, which revolved around some background information about this occasion, and most

importantly the news that some officials were acquitted from any involvement in this occasion.

Consider the following excerpts from the BBC's article reporting Camel occasion:

*"An Egyptian court has acquitted 24 former officials who were accused of sending men on camels and horses to break up a protest in Cairo in 2011.*

*In the incident, later called the Battle of the Camels, supporters of then President Hosni Mubarak charged protesters in Tahrir Square.*

*Some senior members of the old regime were among those accused.*

*They included the men who were then speakers of Egypt's two houses of parliament, Fathi Srur and Safwat al-Sherif.*

*Prosecutors said Mr Sherif, who was also the secretary general of Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NPD), had "contacted MPs, members of the NDP and financiers of the party, inciting them to disperse the protests in Tahrir Square by force and violence".*

*A 25th defendant died during the legal proceedings.*

*Tahrir Square was the focal point for the tens of thousands of who joined the uprising, and the Battle of the Camels helped to galvanise support for the protesters".*

On the basis on these excerpts, it can be stated that Al-Jazeera placed the emphasis on the alleged notion that officials in Mubarak's regime were responsible for the attack, whereas the BBC reported the event in a professional way stating all relevant information about it. Said this, it can be concluded that Al-Jazeera either placed much emphasis on particular point in the given event when it was considered an attack against the then existing regime or brought some irrelevant details on the event so as it can exaggerate it and thus achieve its own ideology. On the other hand, the BBC was mirroring the event as it happened without placing emphasis on a specific point or bringing about irrelevant details. It is evident that Al-Jazeera attempted to incite locals and the whole world to act against the then existing regimes. This finding lines up with what other pertinent studies found. For instance, Wenden (2005) which worked out a whole profile of Al-Jazeera's perspective on this second Intifada found out that Al-Jazeera first rationalized the Intifada and the theme behind and then once these themes were provided, the covert ideologies of Al-Jazeera were revealed, most notably by the characterization of the actors, their concomitant actions and the occasions which created or exacerbate this conflict. This follows from the underlying role of media in politics and motivating people indirectly towards certain goals. All studies of Dunmire (1995), Min (1998), Hassan (2003), Shabana

(2006), Al-Ali (2006), and Izadi (2007), among others, stressed the role of the media in directing people towards certain goals through representing the events in the way triggering people. This so being, it is not unusual that almost all of the lecturers and the students were affected by Al-Jazeera's reporting the news.

In the next subsection, I investigate how both channels report Mubarak's stepping down.

### 6.3.2. Mubarak's stepping down

Given the importance of this event, both channels allocated much space to describe it and capitalize on its significance and any future consequences. However, both channel at odds concerning the subthemes. For the Al-Jazeera, the premium emphasis was placed on the oppositions and protesters' sayings and their extreme happiness with this triumph. On the other hand, the BBC focused on the army statement and what other officials from different countries comment on this event. First consider the following excerpts from the Al-Jazeera's article commenting on the event:

*"Mohamed ElBaradei, **an opposition leader**, hailed the moment as being the "greatest day of my life", in comments to the Associated Press news agency.*

*"I have waited, I have worked all my adult life to see the power of the people come to the fore and show itself. I am speechless." **Dina Magdi, a pro-democracy campaigner in Tahrir Square** told Al Jazeera.*

*"The moment is not only about Mubarak stepping down, it is also about people's power to bring about the change that no-one ... thought possible."*

*In Alexandria, Egypt's second city, our correspondent described an "explosion of emotion". He said that hundreds of thousands were celebrating in the streets.*

***Pro-democracy activists** in the Egyptian capital and elsewhere had earlier marched on presidential palaces, state television buildings and other government installations on Friday, the 18th consecutive day of protests".*

On the other hand, as indicated above, the BBC focused on how other world leaders commented on the event.

*"UN Secretary General **Ban Ki-moon** said he respected the "difficult decision" taken in the people's interests, and called for an "orderly and peaceful transition".*

*European Union leaders reacted positively to the news of Mr Mubarak's resignation.*

*Foreign policy chief Baroness Ashton said the EU "respected" the decision.*

*"It is important now that the dialogue is accelerated leading to a broad-based government which will respect the aspirations of, and deliver stability for, the Egyptian people," she said.*

*UK Prime Minister David Cameron said this was a "really precious moment of opportunity to have a government that can bring the people together", and called for a "move to civilian and democratic rule".*

This difference in focus can reveal the aims of the channels. For Al-Jazeera, the internal reaction to Mubarak's stepping down was the most important bit. This channels attempted to showcase the efforts of locals and the opposition to overthrow Mubarak. On the other hand, for the BBC, as in international channel, noted that what was important was to mirror this event to the world and at the same time to report what others outside Egypt has said. The BBC's message can thus be characterized as global, whereas Al-Jazeera as local. Furthermore, this difference in focus can be ascribed to the fact that the BBC has an international audience, so it was important to report how the prominent leaders of the world countries received the news of Mubarak's overthrow. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera's audience was in the first place from Egypt as well as the Arab world, so the focus had been placed on the internal situation of Egypt. That the audience is important for the orientation of the news and how it is reported has been widely attested in the relent literature. For instance, El-Badry (2010) found out that the study found out that the CNN stories in Arabic and English versions of the war in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are different in length, thematic structure, and foregrounding/backgrounding. Besides, the discourses are varied in terms of the lexical choices, syntactic and functional structures. He assumed that the CNN takes advantage of various discourses to address various audiences. A similar result had already been reported by Eilders (2000) capitalizing on the role of media as political actors in focusing and selective emphasis in the German quality press. Eilders (2000) assumed that placing emphasis on specific aspects and issues in media is affected by the audience who are subjected to the ideological profile of the media.

As for power relations, it is clear that Al-Jazeera envisioned the protestors as powerful in that they were portrayed as having the final say on the shaping the situations. They were the power that led to overthrow Mubarak's regime and in retrospect the strong factor whose calls must be respected and executed. Consider the following excerpts from Al-Jazeera's article:

*“Outside the palace in Heliopolis, where at least ten thousand protesters had gathered in Cairo, another Al Jazeera correspondent reported that there was a strong military presence, but that there was "no indication that the military want[ed] to crack down on protesters".*

*She said that army officers had engaged in dialogue with protesters, and that remarks had been largely "friendly".*

*"The moment is not only about Mubarak stepping down, it is also about people's power to bring about the change that no-one ... thought possible."*

*“Our correspondent said the crowd in Heliopolis was "gaining momentum by the moment", and that the crowd had gone into a frenzy when two helicopters were seen in the air around the palace grounds*

*Our correspondent at the square said the "masses" of pro-democracy campaigners there appeared to have "clear resolution" and "bigger resolve" to achieve their goals than ever before”.*

Moreover, Al-Jazeera depicted Mubarak as power-less who was devoid of all of his authorities.

*“Protest organisers have called for 20 million people to come out on "Farewell Friday" in a final attempt to force Mubarak to step down”*

It seems that Al-Jazeera always focus on the powerful protestors and weak leaders. On the other hand, the BBC reported the event as it was, mirroring the actual power relations without any exaggeration to any party. Consider the following excerpts from the BBC’s article.

*“Hosni Mubarak has stepped down as president of Egypt, after weeks of protest in Cairo and other cities*

*Announcing Mr Mubarak's resignation, Vice-President Omar Suleiman said the president had handed power to the army.*

*Later an army officer read out a statement paying tribute to Mr Mubarak for "what he has given" to Egypt but acknowledging popular power.*

*The anti-government protests that began on 25 January were triggered by widespread unrest in Egypt over unemployment, poverty and corruption. They followed a popular uprising in Tunisia which brought about the downfall of President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali”.*

There is no special mention for the ‘powerful’ protestors and ‘power-less’ Mubarak. According to Fairclough's (1995) approach to CDA, it can be assumed that Al-Jazeera’s

depiction of the protestors as ‘powerful’ is a case of ‘the sociocultural practice’, which includes social and cultural structures which give rise to the communicative event. Al-Jazeera’s political message was clear in that the protestors’ calls must be taken into account; otherwise, the regimes would be overthrown as happened to Mubarak. Additionally, part of the communicative events is that the protestors were powerful and hence they must not be silent. Looking at the course of the Arab Spring revolutions, it can be advanced that Al-Jazeera attempted to trigger other protests in other Arab World, which reflects its ideological message. Following Blommaert (2005), I claim that Al-Jazeera attempted to empower the powerless, give voices to the voiceless, expose power abuse, and mobilize people to remedy social wrongs (the corruptions of Mubarak’s regimes).

In the next section, I investigate how the BBC and Al-Jazeera reported the critical event in the Libyan revolt.

#### 6.4. Libyan revolt

As discussed the previous chapters, the critical events of the fall of Tripoli and Colonel Muammar Gaddafi’s murder gained a lot of attention from all lecturers and students as far as Libyan revolt is concerned. The clear motivation for this attention on these two particular events comes from the fact that the fall of Tripoli was the sign of end of the Libyan civil war which both lecturers and students suffered much. Additionally, this event was additional evidence for the success of the Arab World revolutions that overthrow the then existing regimes. As for the Colonel Muammar Gaddafi’s death, this event was important because it was hard-evidence for the end of Libyan civil war and the beginning of a new era in Libyan politics. In the following two subsections, I shed light on how these events were reported by Al-Jazeera and the BBC, using the major assumptions of the CDA and the SFL.

##### 6.4.1. Fall of Tripoli

As is the case with other articles, the BBC reported the event through introducing several quotations from world leaders on the event. Consider the followings excerpts.

*“President Obama said the Gaddafi regime had reached a "tipping point". The UK said the end was near for the Libyan leader, and urged him to go.*

*In Washington, President Obama said in a statement: "Tonight, the momentum against the Gaddafi regime has reached a tipping point. Tripoli is slipping from the grasp of a tyrant."*

*UK Prime Minister David Cameron said it was clear "that the end is near for Gaddafi".*

*Mr. Cameron said the Libyan leader had "committed appalling crimes against the people of Libya and he must go now to avoid any further suffering for his own people"*

Additionally, the BBC mentioned the events without any reflection, so they are mirror to what occurred. Consider the following examples:

*"Fighting has continued overnight in some districts while the rebels and their supporters have been celebrating on Green Square - which they renamed Martyrs' Square.*

*During the day, one group of rebels had pushed in from the west while another set up checkpoints on the eastern outskirts.*

*It is clear there have been bloody battles in parts of Tripoli, the BBC's Matthew Price reports from the city.*

*TV footage showed Libyans kneeling and kissing the ground of Tripoli in gratitude for what some called a "blessed day".*

*"Government forces still control parts of the city, including the areas around Col Gaddafi's Bab al-Azizia compound and near the hotel where foreign journalists are staying, south of the city centre.*

*In an audio message broadcast late on Sunday, the Libyan leader urged residents to "save Tripoli" from the rebels".*

Furthermore, the BBC reported what the officials in Gaddafi's government said about the opposition's attack of Tripoli.

*"The Libyan information minister accused Nato of backing "armed gangs" with air power. He added that the Gaddafi government was prepared to negotiate directly with the NTC.*

*Libyan Information Minister Moussa Ibrahim said fighting in the city since noon (10:00 GMT) on Sunday had left 1,300 people dead and 5,000 wounded. There is no confirmation of the figures"*

Following the macro-structure of the article, it is obvious the BBC did not place focus on one party, but reported all news related to all parties involved in the battle of Tripoli. As indicated above, the BBC mirrored the situation and power relations as they were without any exaggeration. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera placed much focus on the idea that the rebels were powerful and the aims of the Libyan Civil war had been achieved.

*"A rebel spokesman told Al Jazeera that "Libyan territory is 90 to 95 per cent under the control of the rebellion".*

*"We've been told about clashes as rebels try to regain control of Abu Salim, the pro-Gaddafi neighbourhood that took a lot of casualties yesterday when rebels took on Gaddafi loyalists there."*

*The rebels are also determined to find Gaddafi, and have offered amnesty and a reward to anyone who kills or captures the 69-year-old Libyan leader.*

*Gaddafi's forces are still fighting, we are surprised. We thought they would surrender with the fall of Tripoli," rebel commander Fawzi Bukatif said.*

*Rebels said Gaddafi forces were pounding rebels holding the centre of Zuwarah, west of Tripoli, adding that they needed reinforcements to help them break the siege".*

The whole article is about the rebels and the fact that Tripoli was under their control. This emphasis can be accounted for following my assumption above that Al-Jazeera used to empower the protestors (here rebels), give voices to the voiceless, expose power abuse, and mobilize people to remedy social wrongs (Gaddafi's corruption). Furthermore, Al-Jazeera insisted on the notion that pro-government forces might kill the locals and hence the assumptions that these forces are so bad and they can do anything to sustain Gaddafi's regime.

*" Sue Turton, Al Jazeera's correspondent in Tripoli, reported on Thursday that locals are very worried that there are going to be attacks by pro-Gaddafi supporters across the city.*

*"There are check points popping up all over the city. Locals are managing to get hold of weapons to police their streets," she said.*

*"There is a lot of nervousness ... people are very worried that Gaddafi loyalists are coming through these streets.*

*"They are worried that there will be some sort of attacks across the city, not just in areas we know about but even in areas like this that look quite sleepy.*

*"We've been told about clashes as rebels try to regain control of Abu Salim, the pro-Gaddafi neighbourhood that took a lot of casualties yesterday when rebels took on Gaddafi loyalists there."*

Reporting the bad deeds which can be carried out by the government forces aligns with the assumption raised by the students and lecturers in that Al-Jazeera attempted to spread fear between people and hence the situation was dangerous. As indicated clearly in the previous chapters, the student and lecturers discovered that Al-Jazeera attempted to amplify the danger of the government forces, the matter, which affects their academic and personal life severely. Additionally, it is observable that Al-Jazeera reporting the fall of Tripoli focused on the role of NATO in helping the rebels. This focus can be analysed as an attempt by Al-Jazeera to minimize any deadly outcomes of the rebels attacking the city, given that the international community helped them. According to both channels, there were a lot of death and casualties among locals, which could cast doubt on the main objectives of the battle of Tripoli. Although the role of NATO had been reported in the BBC, Al-Jazeera elaborated on it in a way that legitimize the offensive conducted to capture Tripoli. Consider the following Table that includes how NATO's role in the battle to capture Tripoli had been reported by both channels:

**Table 7: reporting NATO's role in the battle to capture Tripoli**

The BBC	Al-Jazeera
<p><i>Rebel forces advanced from the east and west in recent days, backed by NATO aircraft enforcing a UN resolution to protect civilians.</i></p> <p><i>The Libyan information minister accused NATO of backing "armed gangs" with air power. He added that the Gaddafi government was prepared to negotiate directly with the NTC.</i></p>	<p><i>Liam Fox, Britain's defence minister, said on Thursday that NATO is supporting Libyan rebels in hunting Gaddafi and his sons and has stepped up air raids targeting Gaddafi loyalists.</i></p> <p><i>Fox said NATO operations would continue until pockets of resistance containing Gaddafi loyalists were eliminated, and this could take some time.</i></p> <p><i>"There was increased NATO activity last night including British fast jets because there are areas of resistance by the regime which has had considerable levels of military expertise, still has stockpiles of</i></p>

	<p><i>weapons and still has the ability for command and control.</i></p> <p><i>"They may take some time to completely eliminate and it is likely there will be some frustrating days ahead before the Libyan people are completely free of the Gaddafi legacy."</i></p>
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**Table 4 the role of NATO**

It is clear that BBC even reports what the officials in Gaddafi's government said about NATO's role. This indeed reflects how professional is the BBC, and the same time how Al-Jazeera driven by its ideology in conceiving the rebels as powerful.

In the next subsection, I shed light on the last critical event, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder.

#### 6.4.2. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder

As is the case with other articles, the BBC focused on the news itself, brought some background information about it, and cited some relevant quotations from world leaders without any reflection on the event. Consider the following excerpts taken from the BBC's article reporting this event.

#### **Focus on the event**



*"Acting Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril announced the death, and later said the colonel had been killed in a crossfire between Gaddafi loyalists and fighters from the transitional authorities. He confirmed that Col Gaddafi had been taken alive, but died of bullet wounds minutes before reaching hospital.*

*"When the car was moving it was caught in crossfire between the revolutionaries and Gaddafi forces in which he was hit by a bullet in the head," said Mr Jibril, quoting from the report.*

*"The forensic doctor could not tell if it came from the revolutionaries or from Gaddafi's forces."*

### **Background information**



*“Col Gaddafi was toppled from power in August after 42 years in charge of the country”.*

### **quotations from world leaders**



*“US President Barack Obama said it was a "momentous day" for Libya, now that tyranny had fallen. He said the country had a "long and winding road towards full democracy", but the US and other countries would stand behind Tripoli.*

*UK Prime Minister David Cameron, who had taken a leading role in Nato's intervention, said it was "a day to remember all of Col Gaddafi's victims".*

*UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called it a "historic" moment, but warned: "The road ahead for Libya and its people will be difficult and full of challenges."*

Based on this and following Fairclough's (1995, 2001) assumptions of CDA as a Critical Language Study, it can be stated that the BBC's process of production and consumption (what is called as 'discourse practice' is driven by the event itself not by its hidden ideology. The text is produced following its background and present status without any type intervention in directing the audience to focus on one part and neglect another part. This gives rise to the assumptions that the BBC does not mirror the event as a communicative occurrence with hidden ideology to be delivered to the readers.

On the other hand, Al-Jazeera did not only focus on the news itself but also reported what other Libyans said about the event. Reading Al-Jazeera's article, it is clear that Al-Jazeera focused much on the locals' happiness in murdering Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Consider the following table which summaries the main topics of Al-Jazeera's article reporting Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder:

### **Some information on the event**



*“Muammar Gaddafi has been killed after National Transitional Council fighters overran loyalist defences in the toppled Libyan leader's hometown and final stronghold of Sirte.*

*But questions remained on Thursday over the circumstances of Gaddafi's death as footage appeared to show he had been captured alive, following an apparent attempt to flee the besieged coastal city in a convoy which came under fire from French warplanes and a US drone aircraft.*

*Other footage showed Gaddafi's lifeless and bloodied body being dragged along a road”.*

#### **Locals' happiness with Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder**



*“Crowds took to the streets of Sirte, Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi, the eastern city that spearheaded the uprising against Gaddafi's 42-year rule in February, to celebrate the news, with some firing guns and waving Libya's new flag.*

*"I'm so proud now," a Tripoli resident told Al Jazeera. "It's a new era. Look to our eyes and you'll see happiness, finally.*

*"I'm so proud now," a Tripoli resident told Al Jazeera. "It's a new era. Look to our eyes and you'll see happiness, finally”*

#### **Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's son's murder**



*“One of Gaddafi's sons, Mutassim, was also killed on Thursday, having been hiding with his father, Mahmoud Shammam, Libya's information minister said. Earlier reports had suggested that he had been captured alive but injured*

*"Thank God they have caught this person. In one hour, Sirte was liberated," a fighter said.*

*Al Jazeera's Tony Birtley, reporting from Sirte, said Libyans there were celebrating the beginning of a "new Libya".*

*"This is bringing a form of closure," he said. "Gaddafi stayed true to his words, that he would stay in Libya till the end.*

Al-Jazeera depicts the event as a communicative event that expresses how happy locals were with Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder. This can be taken in par with the ideology of Al-Jazeera in conceiving Arab Spring revolts as legal and anything protestors did is legitimate, while all deeds of the then existing regimes. In view of this, it can be claimed that Al-Jazeera's sociocultural practice (cf. Fairclough 1995, 2001) is driven by its ideology rather than the event itself. On the other hand, power is a crucial constituent of analyzing discourse and the ways in which linguistic forms are utilized in various expressions and manipulations of power.

The last point I discuss here is the lexical choices chosen by the two channels to describe Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and his murder. Examining the words used is important both in revealing how the microstructure level of the articles is constructed (cf. Sheyholislami, 2001) and in uncovering any implicit messages the channels is to deliver (cf. Al-Ali 2006). A closer look at Al-Jazeera's article it is evident that Al-Jazeera used several words to describe Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. For instance, Al-Jazeera used the expressions *Gaddafi's lifeless and bloodied body*, whereas the BBC remained using the word *killed*. I interpret this lexical choice as it is derived from power relations. Within the CDA, power is a crucial constituent of analyzing discourse and the ways in which linguistic forms are utilized in various expressions and manipulations of power. Al-Jazeera stresses the notion that Colonel Muammar Gaddafi becomes totally powerless, while protestors are powerful. As discussed above, this comes from Al-Jazeera's ideology in depicting Arab revolts as successful and powerful in overthrowing the existing regimes at the time. On the other hand, the BBC expressed the power relations as they were.

## 6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I applied the main assumptions of the CDA and SFL on the 12 articles on the critical events of the three chosen Arabic revolts. It turned out that Al-Jazeera's reporting to these events was different from that of the BBC. Firstly, Al-Jazeera used to place focus on the opinions of the protestors in the three countries concerning the three revolts. What was important for Al-Jazeera was to report the event as seen by the protestors. Additionally, Al-Jazeera always envisioned the protestors as the powerful, whereas the government forces and the leaders as powerless. This could be understood as a trigger for other locals to participate

in the revolt in their country. Furthermore, it was obvious that Al-Jazeera used to bring some irrelevant information on the event. Such information might be related to what other journalists said or some occasions that were not part of the main event. Al-Jazeera always attempted to maximise the wrongful acts of the then existing regimes, while no mention had been reported to any attempt from the existing regimes to remedy the situation. In line of this pursuit, I claimed that Al-Jazeera made use of the critical events to propagate its own agenda and spread its ideology which is 'invocation and trigger of locals against the existing regimes and destroy any trust between the two parties (i.e. the locals and the then existing regimes).

On the other hand, the BBC used to report the news without any hidden agenda. The main focus was placed on the event itself without bringing any irrelevant details or peripheral occasions related to the event. Additionally, the BBC used to provide some background information on the respective event, so as the reader can understand the following news correctly. In a related vein, the BBC used to highlight what the international community commented on the event, reflecting the international character the BBC possesses. Accordingly, no hidden ideology used to propagate by the BBC, which is best characterized as professional.

Accordingly, the differences between the two channels raised by all of the students and the lecturers can be corroborated by the way both channels report the critical events of the three Arab Spring revolt.

## Chapter 7

### Discussion (part one)

As was clearly evident from the previous two sections, the lecturers and the students held similar views on the main events of the Arab Spring revolutions in relation to both the differences between the BBC and Al-Jazeera with respect to their role in the Arab Spring revolutions and the way by which they reported the critical events of this revolution on the other. Similarly, as for the critical events that played an important role in main course of the revolutions, both the lecturers and the students reported the same views. Table (1) below shows these in tabular form:

***Table 8: the most critical agreed-upon incidents in the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions***

No	Revolution	Incidents
1-	Tunisian	Bouazizi's self-suicide
		Ben Ali's fleeing the country
2-	Egyptian	Mubarak's stepping down
		Camel's occasion
3-	Libyan	Fall of Tripoli

***Table 5 Repeated the most critical events***

If one surveys the related media at the time, it becomes clear that all events appearing on Table had received a great deal of coverage and analysis. This state of affairs reflected the significance of these events both on the course of the revolutions on the people in general and staff and students in particular. Almost all of the lecturers and students maintained that the BBC was unbiased in reporting the critical events of the Arab Spring revolutions. The BBC was

considered fair in that it was seen to express the situation as it was without adding any irrelevant details or reporting it in a way reflecting that the situation is extremely serious. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera was considered to report events in a way that was inaccurate. Many lecturers and students indicated that there was a clash of reality between the actual events and the way Al-Jazeera reported them. It seemed for them that Al-Jazeera politicized the events in a way that helped to spread the revolution to other neighboring countries and augmented the ability of the opposition forces to overthrow the existing regimes at the time. In this section, I will elaborate on these conclusions, placing focus on how the BBC's and Al-Jazeera's reports affected the students' and staff's educational life at Sebha University, Libya.

### 7.1. Al Jazeera and the BBC: how events were reported

As indicated in the previous sections, most of the lecturers and the students indicted that the BBC is different from Al-Jazeera in that the former was professional and transparent in reporting the events of the Arab Spring revolutions whilst the latter was not. Consider the following replies from both lecturers and students:

A. "I think that the transmission of either of the channels was not in the same way ; there was transparency in the reporting and filming of the incidents by BBC was more apparent and closer to reality" ( L 3 ).

"I want to confirm it was the BBC network that was concerned about transmitting the suffering of the Libyan people for long time ago. For example, it was the forerunner with oldest dissidents living in Europe. Those people were staying in Europe as those countries characterized by greater freedoms and more rights. BBC's network was in contact with those people living abroad and those who live inside Libya such as the freedom fighter Mr. Ali Bin Abass Alshareif. I think that the BBC channel was successful in broadcasting the suffering of the Libyan people first hand from an early age for example the massacre of Abu Salem, unfortunately, some of the channels do not address these issues, only when they are given permission" (S 1).

Several studies exploring how the BBC reported the events indicated strongly that this channel is professional without a politicized agency concerning the course of the events and playing down the events in way different from the reality (see, e.g. Barkho 2008a and Khondker, 2011). This assumption is compatible with Barkho's (2011) analysis of the underlying role of the internal guidelines of the BBC in structuring and patterning the news discourse. Barkho (2011) concluded that the BBC retains a professional pattern in depicting the news events and their reporting. This retention comes from the internal guidelines of the BBC which aims at reporting the news in an unbiased way, as compared to other news channels, including Al-Jazeera. This assumption is reinforced when surveying the students' and the lecturers' views on the differences between the BBC and Al-Jazeera. Another lecturer indicated that:

‘The description of the events was not carried out in the same way because the BBC reported the news without any bias but Al-Jazeera was exaggerating and reported the news with an apparent bias and sometimes lied because it is a politicised channel and works for Qatar and aims at changing some ruling regimes; it concentrated on information because it is a double edge sword’ (L9).

On the other hand, almost all lecturers and students voiced their concerns about nature of Al-Jazeera's role in the events. They indicated that Al-Jazeera did not express the events as they happened.

‘... Al-Jazeera exaggerates and lies. For example, when it reports an incident of one hundred words, ninety of those words can be divided between exaggeration and lies and only ten which are true’ (L 11).

In this regard, several pertinent studies indicate that Al-Jazeera is not merely a news channel but a tool to implement the views of the Qatari government towards world issues in general and Arabic affairs in particular (Bahry,2001 and Khatib, 2013). Barakat (2012) argued that

Al-Jazeera spreads peacemaking through Qatari lens, while Ulrichsen (2014) assumes that Al-Jazeera is a reflection of the Qatar's propaganda towards world's causes with special appearance and involvement in the surrounding countries and the rest of the Arab world. It follows from this that Al-Jazeera is a mixture of a media channel and a political organisation. Therefore, it is not strange to find out that lecturers and students almost all agree on the notion that Al-Jazeera has a strongly political message in its depiction of the events of the Arab Spring. When comparing their views, it is patently clear that lecturers and students were more convinced of the political role of Al-Jazeera in the Arab Spring, which was in turn a fertile domain where the political role of the Al-Jazeera became tangible (cf. Edwards, 2011, Harb, 2011, Sultan, 2013, and Ulrichsen, 2014, and numerous others) Such views line up with Castells' (2011) argument on the role of Al Jazeera in Arab Spring events. He refers to the role of Al-Jazeera in creating a system of mass communication which was built like a mix between interactive television, the internet, radio and mobile communication systems. At the same time, Castells has argued that this creation was triggered by Al-Jazeera's tendency to be involved in the events and even redirect some of them, attempting to help demonstrators to overthrow the then regimes.

Consider the following relevant replies both from students and lecturers:

A. "It was not in the same way but it was 100% different; Al-Jazeera magnified things and created stories but the BBC was insistent on reporting the news fairly and impartially" (L 13).

B. "In short, it was different; the BBC was committed to the profession's ethics, which are neutrality and fairness but Al-Jazeera has broken all the rules and was engaged into a covert operation whose success depended on exaggeration and the magnifying of events" (L 15).

C. "Regarding Al-Jazeera it was obvious that it was biased towards the people and wanted to change the rulers and was supporting the Moslem

brothers in an indirect way in Egypt and I do not know the reason behind that bias. But, I believe that the country financing Al-Jazeera was trying to create governments which were following their agenda like wagons in a train; this was not because they liked the Moslem Brothers but they wanted to exploit them and use them any way they like. However, I think that the BBC was not biased towards any particular party and even if it did so it was done in subtle way.” (L 10).

D. “Yes, I have a lot of those concerns because Aljazeera sometimes showed footage from the war arena of the bearded people. I mean we are frightened that the Western countries will suspect them to be from al-Qaeda as Al Gaddafi claimed and withdraw its support for the new revolution” (S 1).

Accordingly, it is not unclear that Al-Jazeera attempted to implement its political agenda in its reporting of the events of the Arab Spring, while the BBC was professional without an underlying agenda or propaganda to implement, a result attested to by several pertinent studies in the field (cf. Fahmy and Al Emad, 2011, Sharaf, 2013, Elmasry *et al.*, 2013, Sultan, 2013).

Additionally, these views provide support to notion that the media play a vital role in armed conflicts. Pan, *et al.*, (1994) indicated that exposure to media makes one familiar with the main events of war, whereas McLeod *et al.*, (1999) found that media channels played a central and principle role in enabling and triggering local political participation. The same results have been confirmed in Eilders (2000) and Besley and Burgess (2001). Furthermore, the students’ and lecturers’ views square with Schudson’s (2002) findings that media in some cases is a mere representation of the political authorities behind the channel.

In the next subsection, I will shed light on how Al-Jazeera’s dubious reporting of the Arab Spring events affected staff’s and the lecturers’ life and academic involvement.

## 7.2. Negative effects of Al-Jazeera's reporting of the Arab Spring revolutions on staff's and the lecturers' life and academic involvement

In the previous subsection, I highlighted the lecturers and students' views on Al-Jazeera's and the BBC's reporting of the main events of Arab Spring revolutions. Almost all lecturers and students indicated that Al-Jazeera's reporting of the relevant events was politicized and the events played down to implement its political propaganda over the critical events. On the other hand, the BBC was deemed professional and unbiased. Relevant here is the point that since Al-Jazeera's reporting of Arab revolutions events had impinged on the lives of lecturers and staff alike and the academic life in its entirety, as shown in the views above. Firstly, female students were not allowed to go to the university by their parents who were afraid of sending them to their place of study because Al-Jazeera informed that there was no security, hence the chance for, say, kidnapping and disruption deeds.

“...the broadcasting of some news on the channels was disrupting the educational process because parents were afraid for their daughters in particular.” (L4)

Secondly, Al-Jazeera's politicised augmentation of the news led to controversies among students and lecturers themselves. Some students/lecturers supported the existing regime, while others supported the opposition, the matter creating splits and clashes between the students/lecturers themselves.

“There was a difference of opinion between the students who supported the revolutions and those who were against them”. (L4)

Other lecturers highlighted the psychological effect imposed on the lecturers themselves and the students because of the perceived bias in the reporting of the events. Consider the following:

“Aljazeera used the methods of frightening in the reporting of the news. This had a huge psychological effect on the jobs and studies. that academic establishments closed or in fact many students were disrupted or cut short their studies .even outside Libya if we take Libya as an example for the countries of the Arab Spring ,we find many Libyan students were disrupted in their studies in Britain for example, and they needed extensions because they were victims of TV channels like Aljazeera. it had psychologically affected students, their performance and their learning. True, they did not suffer from the same problems as in Libya caused by fighting but they were psychologically affected due to the transmission of the picture to them. In Britain, they attend the university but they do not focus on their learning, may be they could not focus in there laboratories or on the writing for those who were submitting theses. I personally lived in Britain during that period and I was affected. We were going to the university for six months and we accomplished nothing; we were following what was broadcast by the channels mainly Aljazeera and what assured us what we heard from the BBC. However, there were some news broad cast by Aljazeera and were not broadcast in the BBC. This created some doubts and we know that the BBC is truthful and correct, yet because of the war and the difficulty of the situation we became overcome by doubt. So we go to the social sites like Face-book to make sure of the truthfulness of the news or otherwise. So, we came across contradictions and confusion from the other channels and this is the problem that affected us” (L5).

In this regard, Dyson and Renk (2006) argued that attending a university for the first time can be a stressful experience for many new college students and hence there should be some mechanism available to get the students involved in their university life. In addition, when the students become involved in their university, there must not be anything disrupting their life, given that university life requires the students to focus on their subject matters without any distraction. In relation to this, I assume that Al-Jazeera’s dubious reporting affected the students negatively in distracting their attention and thus made them less focused in their university life. Consider the following reply from one student:

“Certainly, it did affect especially, Al-Jazeera which had distorted the image, stirred the streets and caused chaos all over the country. All employment sectors were affected and the people were divided into two groups; those who were for and those who were against the revolution...the reporting of an event has a big effect especially the magnified news by Al-Jazeera. The BBC news were neutral and did not have a clear impact...The university stopped functioning and was ransacked and the students went back to their towns and cities and some of them stayed because they were fearful due to the lack of security on the roads because of the false news” (S. 10 ).

Several researchers have indicated that university life has its unique characteristics which must be taken into considerations, otherwise students developed depression and anxiety to life-stress and achievement (see, e.g. Broadbridge and Swanson 2005, Krause and Coates 2008, Wintre and Yaffe, 2010, Peseta et al. 2016, among others). In view of this, university students must be treated carefully and their needs must be satisfied in an appropriate way. Reporting news inaccurately and alleging that the situation in the country is very dangerous and that there was no way but fighting can be regarded as a huge source of depression for the university students. News agencies are bound to depict the news in a genuine way, reflecting the actual situation and attempted to report it professionally, that is, in a way that considers the different people who will watch the news (Buckingham,2000, Williamson et al, 2012). Al-Jazeera did not respect this practice but attempted to spread fear and inaccurate depiction of the reality within the local community. Consider the following replies:

“The presentation of the incidents hugely affected us psychologically; in fact it was not fair and I add that Aljazeera channel was biased towards the new revolutions and was not fair. Frankly, I did not follow the BBC” (S2).

“Yes, Al-Jazeera played, in a way, a role in the success of those revolutions and the blackening of the country’s image. This had an effect on education and other

sectors and it had a personal effect on me because I lost an academic year...This is what it really wanted because the international community stopped its political dealings with the country and the foreign teaching staff went back to their countries and we, the students, suspended our studies and lost a year because of the troubles created by Al-Jazeera and its stirring of the divisions and problems. I, one day, will complain to Al-Jazeera and ask for compensation for the loss of a year” (S 6).

False depiction of events led to suspending the education process for one complete year, which was a matter the students were much concerned about. Arab Spring viewed by Al-Jazeera looked like ‘a disaster’, leading to that students lost their education for one year without the ability to reach the university.

“Prior to these revolutions the studies were enjoyable but after this disaster the studies were suspended and I lost a year because of this crisis. Most of the students have lost an academic year and on top of that we lost security” ( S6 ).

“The difference is that the university studies deteriorated for a year and most of the students lost a year” (S.8).

In sum, reporting Arab Spring events in a false way had disastrous effects on the students and lecturers at all levels, academic, personal, social, and psychological.

### 7.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to shed the light on the lecturers’ and students’ views towards the role of Al-Jazeera’s and the BBC’s reporting of critical events of the Arab Spring revolutions. The general my main finding is that most of the lecturers and the students viewed that there were several significant differences between BBC and Al-Jazeera. The former was deemed to

be professional in reporting the events. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera was viewed as reporting the critical events of the Arab revolution in a biased way, implementing an agenda which some view as promulgated by external elements such as those of the Qatari regime.

## Chapter 8

### Discussion (part 2)

#### 8.1. Discussion

As was clearly evident from the previous two sections (the lecturers' and students' perspectives towards the impact of the role of Al-Jazeera and the BBC's reporting of the Arab Spring revolution on them) the lecturers and the students held approximately similar views on the issues under investigation. Moreover, when their opinions are juxtaposed, it is clear that they share almost identical views on the differences between Al-Jazeera and the BBC regarding reporting the events and commenting on the course of the revolution. First of all, the students and the lecturers almost all agreed on which events of the Arab Spring revolutions had the greater effect on the course of the revolutions, i.e., the critical events, including Bouazizi's suicide and the removal of Ben Ali and Mubarak. Secondly, they had similar views on the differences between the BBC and Al-Jazeera with respect to their role in the Arab Spring revolutions and the way in which they reported the critical events of one revolution on the other. They all made it clear that Al-Jazeera used to play down the events and exaggerate the violence committed by the then existing governments in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt.

In the following discussion, I will investigate these views, grounding them within the related literature and discuss their salient indications of the effect of the Arab Spring on staff and students at Sebha University, the main concern of the current research. In 8.2. will shed light on the critical events selected by the lecturers and students and the reasons that derived them to single out these events out of other events. In 8.6. will investigate the students' and the lecturers' views on how Al-Jazeera and the BBC reported these events. In 8.7. highlight the negative impacts of Al-Jazeera's reporting on lecturers and students, with special reference to their academic life.

#### 8.2. The critical events of the Arab Spring from students and lecturers' perspectives:

If we examine the critical events that played an important role in main course of the revolutions within lecturers' and students' views, both the lecturers and the students reported almost the

same views but with some greater detail on the part of the former. The lecturers provided full and detailed accounts of their choice but both parties were able to single out specific events, which they think played a vital part in the Arab Spring revolutions. Consider the following two replies whose content is reiterated by the majority of the students and lecturers:

“The most important events which drew people’s attention concerning the revolution in Tunisia were: the incident when Bouazizi who burnt himself, the flight of President Ben Ali and the sympathising of the army with the people. Regarding the Egyptian Revolution, it was Mubarak’s speech in which he showed his clinging to power and the Camel incident. For the Libyan Revolution, it was the speech of Gaddafi which disappointed people, the liberating of the capital Tripoli from his hold and his death. The revolution which had a profound impact on me was the Tunisian revolution because it was the first revolution” (L 9).

“The events repeatedly reported by Al-Jazeera are: Al Bouazizi ‘s incident, Ben Ali’s flight, Gaddafi’s speech, the spread of the new revolution in Tripoli, and in Egypt the camel incident, Mubarak’s speech and Khalid Saaid’s killing. But it was not fair in its reporting; it was conscripted by Qatar to make the revolutions successful in any way possible, even through exaggeration and playing on words...The same events were reported by the BBC but the BBC was fairer than Al-Jazeera and was distinguished by neutrality” ( L15 ).

Let us elaborate on these events, discussing the apparent reasons for such views deriving from the students and lecturers to describe these events as the most significant events in the course of the revolutions under discussion.

### 8.3. The critical events in the Tunisian revolution

The Tunisian revolution was the first one in the sequence Arab Spring revolution, both the lecturers and the students emphasised that Bouazizi’s suicide was consensually the main and critical event, being the major trigger for all of Arab Spring. This emphasis on

Bouazizi's suicide lines with the conclusions made by several works investigating Arab Spring (cf. Develotte and Rechniewski, 2001, Perthes, 2011; and van Niekerk *et al.*, 2011). For instance, Howard, *et al.*, (2011) argued that Bouazizi's suicide had triggered many huge waves of protestors who viewed that Bouazizi killed himself because of the morally reprehensible deeds of the then existing regime. Bouazizi's suicide invoked a massive call for democracy in the rest of Arab world. Drawing on many of social media websites, Howard, *et al.*, (2011) insisted that Bouazizi's self-immolation was one of several stories told and retold on all social media websites: Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. This event inspired the dissidents of the then existing regime to regulate the protests, criticize openly their regimes, and spread thoughts and ideas about democracy therein. Bouazizi's self-immolation was viewed as a source for local people to reveal their negative views towards the deeds of Arab World regimes.

The same assumptions made by Halverson, *et al.*, (2013) who argued that Bouazizi's suicide was an important source for the emergence of the nationalist martyr narratives and their posting and dissemination through new media as forces for political change as well as social mobilization. Bouazizi's suicide for Halverson, *et al.*, (2013) was not only a trigger for the demonstrations against the then existing regimes of the Arab World but also an inspiration to the literary movement which triggered the people's emotions against the regimes. Mohamed Bouazizi was posited as a nationalist martyr whose narratives were spread in the context of both religion and history of North Africa. Halverson, *et al.*, (2013) compared Mohamed Bouazizi, the owner of the contemporary stories of martyr to the pre-Islamic-period martyrs, reflecting the huge impact of Bouazizi's suicide to locals. Bouazizi helped spread the democratic ideas across the international borders.

Additionally, all of the students and the lecturers said that Ben Ali's fleeing of the country was not only critical and significant for the Tunisian revolution, but also for all of the Arab Spring revolutions. In this regard, Ryan (2011) stated that Ben Ali had to flee the country and take refuge in Saudi Arabia, which was said to be the only country to accept his request when he failed to control the demonstrations or to answer satisfactorily people's requests. During the Tunisian revolution, nobody thought that Ben Ali would flee from his country, even the local people. However, when the situation went out of his control, Ben Ali decided to flee the country and ended a 23-year long dictatorship over the country (Filiu, 2011). Several studies, including

Cook (2011), Sharp (2011a) and Witzel (2012), among others, argued that Ben Ali's fleeing was of the major triggers of the Egyptians revolution as other Arab revolutions. Ben Ali's fleeing Tunisia proved to be strong evidence for that regimes of Arab World are not strong and can be overthrown under the strength of demonstrations, as was the case afterwards in Egypt and Yemen. Ben Ali's fleeing was not significant for the course of Tunisian revolution but also to trigger and strengthen the other revolutions in the Arab World.

Accordingly, Ben Ali's fleeing Tunisia was a fertile ground for research. The question was what made Ben Ali's regime too fragile, and hence the inability to hold against the demonstrations. In this regard, Champagne (2012) ascribed the failure of Ben Ali's regime to control of the social media. He argued that the police who dealt with Ben Ali did not appear to be completely cognisant of the significance of social media. The regime itself was not well-equipped to cope with social media professionally or technically. Champagne (2012) mentioned that although the local police authorities acted against the social media users, it proved impossible for the government to block internet and other social sites. Arieff (2011) indicates that Ben Ali's fleeing appears to have had a strong impact on the demonstrations in Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Algeria, and other countries.

#### 8.4. The main events in the Egyptian revolution

As for the Egyptian revolution, the students and the lecturers expressed similar views on the main events occurring in this revolution. Mubarak's stepping down was reported as the most important event in the Egyptian revolution. Some lecturers commented that Mubarak's stepping down might be the most significant event in the Arab Spring and concrete evidence for the success of these revolutions in overthrowing the then existing regimes. The fall of President Mubarak in Egypt strongly shows the impact of the demonstrations on the regimes whatever the power of the latter is. The demonstrations all over Egypt forced Mubarak to step down the regime after 30 years in power (see, Cook, 2011; Sharp, 2011a and Witzel, 2012). Additionally, the importance of Mubarak's stepping down was reported in several works that investigated the impact of the Egyptian revolutions and other Arab Spring revolution on Libya (Edström and Gyllensporre, 2012). Wright (2012), amongst others, mentioned that after the success of the Egyptian Revolution (marked by Mubarak's stepping down), the Libyan

people's grievances against President Gaddafi were increasing and hence they asked for a change, freedom of speech and democracy. Mubarak's removal from power gave Libyans a strong motivation to demonstrate against Gaddafi used the national wealth and resources on his personal luxuries and trivial ambitions (Blundy and Lycett, 1987; Wright, 2012). In view of this, it is normal that all students and lecturers mention that Mubarak's stepping down is one of the landmarks of Arab Spring, given that this event provides them with the determination to do anything to overthrow Gaddafi's regime.

The second important event in the Egyptian revolution according to lecturers and teachers was the occasion when Camels were used to attack demonstrators. This occasion has been widely investigated in the related literature with other events in the Egyptian revolt. This occasion was a step from the then regime to fight the demonstrations via the use of camels to attack the demonstrators. Although there many people died in this occasion, but people did not give in and continue demonstrating against (Salama and Dick, 2014). This occasion was significant since it mirrors the determination of local people to overthrow the existing regime at the time.

#### 8.5. The main events in the Libyan revolution

As for the Libya revolution, all students and lecturers mentioned that the fall of Tripoli in the hands of the opposition groups was the most significant event. The fall of Tripoli is symbolic, given it signals the end of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime. The fall of Tripoli is by and large a watershed in the Libyan revolution because when the opposition forces hold control on the capital city of the country implies the success of these forces to overthrow Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime. This assumption has been widely raised by several studies investigating the course of Libyan Arab Spring (Lacher, 2011, Pack, 2013, and Deeb, 2013, among others). On the basis of the lecturers and students replies (see the previous chapter), it is quite clear that they had mixed feelings and perspectives about the Libyan revolution. Firstly, the Arab Spring led to the overthrow of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime which had been characterized being a totalitarian regime exerting many wrong deeds against the local people (cf. Witzel, 2011 and Witzel, 2013). On the other hand, the Libyan revolution of the Arab Spring had negative impacts on students and lecturers, given that this revolution brought lack of security and safety to people. In this regard, Detrie (2011) indicated that many students and

instructors were displaced in search of safety. This mandatory displacement deprived the students of the pursuit their study at their educational institutions and teachers were unable to teach. The higher education students in many Libyan cities were forced to fight the aggressive Gaddafi's regime forces themselves. Many of the Libyan higher education students and instructors were consequently part of the uprising. In view of this, it comes as no surprise that lecturers and students mark the fall of Tripoli as the most significant event in the Libyan revolution because it marks the end of the civil war and hence the possibility to get back to the study.

The second significant incident in the Libyan revolution was Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder. The importance of this event comes from its symbolic power. The man who ruled Libya for 42 years had been killed by his people, as a revenge of what he made to his people. Although Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder was not of itself an important incident to the course of the Libyan revolution, given that his murder happened after the fall of Tripoli, his murder reinforced the belief that the Libyan revolution came to the end since the person responsible for the whole of revolution died and there would be no conflict. Accordingly, students and lecturers mark Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder as one of the events that had a significant impact on them.

The tendency for the students and the lecturers to place emphasis on the events which mark the end of the civil war inside Libya line up with the finding of the studies which investigated the negative effects of the civil war on people. For instance, Lai and Thyne (2007) highlighted the devastating impacts of armed civil wars and the post-civil war circumstances on the educational expenditures and enrolment. Armed civil war is represented as a devastating danger for a whole system of education (schools and universities) because both enrolment and expenditures decline within the civil war. Akresh and De Walque (2008) argued that armed conflict affects the education badly and limits the chances for the students to complete their primary and secondary education and presumably their higher education. The students and lecturers were desperate of the Arab revolution because of its detrimental impacts on all level of education (i.e., secondary, higher, etc) (cf. Justino (2011). Furthermore, the students' and lecturers' replies indicated that the revolution had a negative impacts on both the girls and boys, running counter to the observation made by Shemyakina (2011) who argued that out that male students are less

affected by the regional and household conflict than the girls. The students' and lecturers' replies indicated, in the opposite, that the male students were more prone to the negative impacts of the revolutions. The students' and lecturers' replies are consistent with Justino et al. (2011)'s assumptions on the Timor Leste secession conflict that the boys were badly affected in worse rates than those of girls. The students and the lecturers indicated that they were forced to defend the government forces and fight for their lives and thus the students and lecturers became soldiers and hence subject to the danger of the war in a direct way.

The critical events of the Arab Spring revolutions under discussion are reproduced below in Table 9.

**Table 9: the most critical agreed-upon incidents in the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions**

<b>Revolution</b>	<b>Incidents</b>
Tunisian	Bouazizi's self-suicide
	Ben Ali's fleeing the country
Egyptian	Mubarak's stepping down
	Camel's occasion
Libyan	fall of Tripoli
	Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder

*Table 6 Most important events of the Arab spring revolutions under discussion*

As made clear in the methodology, I will choose the articles that I will analyse relating to these events, describing and analyzing the reporting.

## 8.6. Al-Jazeera and the BBC: how events were reported

Surveying the related media at the time, it becomes clear that all the events appearing on Table 1 had received a great deal of coverage and analysis. This state of affairs reflected the significance of these events both on the course of the revolutions on the people in general and staff and students in particular. Additionally, almost all of the lecturers and students maintained that the BBC was unbiased in reporting the critical events of the Arab Spring revolutions. The BBC was fair in that it expressed the situation as it was without adding any irrelevant details or reporting it in a way reflecting that the situation is extremely serious. On the other hand, it was felt by many<sup>7</sup> that Al-Jazeera reported the events in a manner that had bore little relationship to reality and was thus biased and unfair. Many lecturers and students indicated that there was a clash of reality between the status qua and the way Al-Jazeera reported it. It seemed for them that Al-Jazeera politicized the events in a way that help spread the revolution to other neighboring countries and augment the opposition forces will to overthrow the existing regimes at the time. In this section, I will elaborate on these conclusions, placing focus on how the BBC's and Al-Jazeera's reporting affected students and staff's educational life at Sabha University in Libya.

As indicated in the previous sections, most of the lecturers and the students indicted that the BBC was different from Al-Jazeera in that the former was professional and transparent in reporting the events of the Arab Spring revolutions. Consider the following replies from both lecturers and students:

“I think that the transmission of either of the channels was not in the same way ; there was transparency in the reporting and filming of the incidents by BBC was more apparent and closer to reality” ( L 3 ).

“I want to confirm it was the BBC network that was concerned by transmitting the suffering of the Libyan people for long time ago. For example, it was the forerunner with oldest dissidents living in Europe. Those people were staying in Europe as those countries characterized by greater freedoms and more rights. BBC's network was in contact with those people living abroad and those who live inside Libya such as the freedom fighter Mr. Ali Bin AbassAlshareif. I think that

the BBC channel was successful in broadcasting the suffering of the Libyan people first hand from an early age for example the massacre of Abu Salem, unfortunately, some of the channels do not address these issues, only when they are given permission” ( S 1 ).

Several studies exploring how the BBC reported the events indicated strongly that this channel is professional without a politicized agency concerning the course of the events and implying down the events in way different from the reality (see, e.g. Barkho, 2008a and\_Khondker, 2011). This assumption is compatible with Barkho’s (2011) analysis of the underlying role of the internal guidelines of the BBC in structuring and patterning the news discourse. Barkho (2011) concluded that the BBC retains a professional pattern in depicting the news events and their reporting. This retention comes from the internal guidelines of the BBC which aims at reporting the news in an unbiased way, as compared to other news channels including Al-Jazeera. This assumption is reinforced when surveying the students’ and the lecturers’ views on the differences between the BBC and Al-Jazeera. Another lecturer indicated that:

“The description of the events was not carried out in the same way because the BBC reported the news without any bias but Al-Jazeera was exaggerating and reported the news with an apparent bias and sometimes lied because it is a politicised channel and works for Qatar and aims at changing some ruling regimes; it concentrated on information because it is a double edge sword” (L9).

On the other hand, almost all lecturers and students voiced their concerns about the nature of Al-Jazeera’s role in the events. They indicated that Al-Jazeera did not express the events as they happened.

“...Al-Jazeera exaggerates and lies. For example, when it reports an incident of one hundred words, ninety of those words can be divided between exaggeration and lies and only ten which are true” (L 11).

In this regard, several pertinent studies indicated that Al-Jazeera is not merely a news channel but a tool to implement the views of the Qatari government towards world issues in general and Arabic affairs in particular (Bahry, 2001 and Khatib, 2013). Barakat (2012) argued that Al-Jazeera spreads peacemaking through the Qatari lens, while Ulrichsen (2014) assumes that Al-Jazeera is a reflection of the Qatar's propaganda towards world's causes with special appearance and involvement in the surrounding countries and the rest of the Arab world. It follows from this that Al-Jazeera is a mixture of an independent media channel and an organisation following a specific political agenda. For these reasons, it is not strange to find that lecturers and students almost all agree on the notion that Al-Jazeera has a purely political message of its depiction of the events of the Arab Spring. When comparing their views, it is patently clear that lecturers and students were more convinced of the political role of Al-Jazeera in the Arab Spring which was in turn a fertile domain where the political role of the Al-Jazeera became conspicuous and even tangible (cf. Edwards, 2011, Harb2011, Sultan, 2013, and Ulrichsen 2014, and numerous others)

Consider the following relevant replies both from students and lecturers:

A. "It was not in the same way but it was 100% different; Al-Jazeera magnified things and created stories but the BBC was insistent on reporting the news fairly and impartially" (L 13 ).

B. " In short, it was different; the BBC was committed to the profession's ethics, which are neutrality and fairness but Al-Jazeera has broken all the rules and was engaged into a covert operation whose success depended on exaggeration and the magnifying of events" ( L 15 ).

C. "Regarding Al-Jazeera it was obvious that it was biased towards the people and wanted to changes the rulers and was supporting the Moslem

brothers in an indirect way in Egypt and I do not know the reason behind that bias. But, I believe that the country financing Al-Jazeera was trying to create governments which were following their agenda like wagons in a train; this was not because they liked the Moslem Brothers but they wanted to exploit them and use them any way they like. However, I think that the BBC was not biased towards any particular party and even if it did so it was done in subtle way.” (L 10 ).

D. “Yes, I have a lot of those concerns because Al-Jazeera sometimes showed footage from the war arena of the bearded people. I mean we are frightened that the Western countries will suspect them to be from al-Qaeda as Al Gaddafi claimed and withdraw its support for the new revolution”(S 1).

Accordingly, it is not hard to discern that Al-Jazeera attempted to implement its political agenda on the events of the Arab Spring, while the BBC was professional without an underlying agenda or propaganda to implement, the result attested by several pertinent studies in the field (cf. Fahmy and Al Emad, 2011, Sharaf, 2013, Elmasryet *al.*, 2013, and Sultan, 2013).

Pertinently, several works have emphasised the notion that Al-Jazeera had a hidden agenda, given that its depiction of political events was not professional in that it played down the events to achieve some political aims. This assumption is supported by Wenden (2005) who made use of the obtained results of a discourse analysis of 12 newspaper articles which were cited on Aljazeera’s English website, marking the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the al-Aqsa Intifada. Wenden (2005) claimed that Aljazeera highlighted some specific themes to account for, represent, and rationalize the Intifada. These themes revealed covert ideologies including the characterization of the actors, their concomitant actions and the occasions to exacerbate the conflict.

Relevant here is the point suggested by students and lecturers that Al-Jazeera made use of the social communication websites to disseminate videos, pictures, and opinions that trigger people to fight the government forces which according to these videos, pictures, and opinions kill people in a brutal way. For instance, YouTube was full of videos with ghastly details which reflected the aggressive deeds of the government forces. Facebook and Twitter were used for the same purpose. In this regard, several works have highlighted the role of the social media websites in invoking people and disseminating propaganda among people. For instance, Bhuiyan (2011) mentioned that social media are important in spreading views because they allow people to share content with anyone who can access the internet. Although the social media websites would permit people to communicate in real-time and allow people to express and vent their opinions about government, political leaders, they also play a significant role in spreading news which might be fake.

Social communication websites are hence a significant tool which can be exploited by some agencies, such as Al-Jazeera, in order to indoctrinate people with ideas which aim ultimately to derive present difficult challenges for media policy makers. They cannot be controlled by the government and hence can be utilized by parties which are against the government. The students and the lecturers voiced their concerns that Al-Jazeera made use of such media websites to incite people against the existing regimes at the time.

This role of social media has been made clear in the Egyptian revolution. Storck (2011) looked closely at the extent to which Egyptian activists used social media networks (including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and weblogs) as social tools for organizing and spreading awareness of political mobilisation, in the uprisings that happened in Egypt in January and February 2011. The social media turned out to be an enormous potential tool which played an important role in facilitating and expediting political mobilisation. Abdallah (2011) argued that the opposition movements' activities via the social media websites helped to expose the regime's wrongdoings, corruption and injustice. Similarly, Bhuiyan (2011) examined the role of social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and weblogs) in the political and social revolutions in Egypt. This work revealed how the social media enhanced and increased people's desire for democracy and socio-economic advancement stalled by the long term authoritarian government. The assumption was that the social media is used as a platform for

discussion of ideas, experiences, and knowledge exchange. Aouraghand Alexander (2011) assumed that social websites are a space where collective dissent could be articulated. The students and the lecturers interviewed mentioned that Al-Jazeera used the social websites to mobilize people. This assumption was originally made by Castells (2011) who commented on the important and serious role of Al Jazeera in Arab Spring events. For Castells (2011), Al Jazeera has collected the information which was spread on the Internet by the people who used to use them as sources and organized groups on Facebook, then retransmitting free news on mobile phones. Al-Jazeera helped in creating a new system of mass communication which was built like a mix between an interactive television, internet, radio and mobile communication systems. The role of social media in triggering people and disseminating idea between them has been investigated and attested by other studies including Stepanova (2011) who argued that while the Arab Spring may refer to the role of new mass forms of socio-political protest triggered and facilitated by social media networks, with regard to their organizational and communication aspects, we should noted major reservations about the Arab Spring events' applicability to other potential conflicts and we should be wary of driving "direct lessons" which might be applied to other regional and socio-political contexts. Similarly, Frangonikolopoulos and Chapsos (2012) assumed that social media was one of the main catalysts for people to work altogether to overthrow the existing regimes at the time. Howard, et al., (2011) emphasized the actual role of social media during the Arab Spring, while Robertson (2013) argued that once the political unrest spread from Tunisia to neighbouring countries early in 2011, the established global broadcasters were swift to make available commentary on the part which was played by social media in mobilizing dissent, exploiting the same technology in their own reporting of the protests as they did so. The findings determined that social media do not play the major role in global television discourse expected by many. It added that the prominence and deployment of social media varies from one channel to the other.

In the next subsection, I will shed light on how Al-Jazeera's dubious reporting of the Arab Spring events affects staff's and the lecturers' life and academic involvement.

#### 8.7. Negative effects of Al-Jazeera's reporting of the Arab Spring revolutions on staff's and the lecturers' life and academic involvement

In the previous subsection, I highlighted the lecturers and students' views on Al-Jazeera's and the BBC's reporting of the main events of Arab Spring revolutions. Almost all lecturers and students indicated that Al-Jazeera's reporting of the relevant events was politicized and the events were played down to implement its political propaganda over the critical events. On the other hand, the BBC was deemed professional and unbiased. Relevant here is the point that since Al-Jazeera's reporting of Arab revolutions events had impinged on the lives of lecturers and staff alike and the academic life in its entirety, as shown in the views above. Firstly, female students were not allowed to go to the university by their parents who were afraid because Al-Jazeera had informed that there was no security, hence the chance for, say, kidnapping or other dangerous events.

“...the broadcasting of some news on the channels was disrupting the educational process because parents were afraid for their daughters in particular.” (L4)

Secondly, augmenting the situation by Al-Jazeera led to controversies among students and lecturers themselves. Some students/lecturers supported the existing regime, while others supported the opposition, the matter creating split and clash between the students and lecturers themselves.

“There was a difference of opinion between the students who supported the revolutions and those who were against them.” (L4)

Other lecturers highlighted the psychological effect imposed on the lecturers themselves and the students because of the fake reporting of the events. Consider the following:

“Aljazeera used the methods of frightening in the reporting of the news. This had a huge psychological effect on the jobs and studies. that academic establishments closed or in fact many students were disrupted or cut short

their studies .even outside Libya if we take Libya as an example for the countries of the Arab Spring ,we find many Libyan students were disrupted in their studies in Britain for example, and they needed extensions because they were victims of TV channels like Aljazeera. It had psychologically affected students, their performance and their learning. True, they did not suffer from the same problems as in Libya caused by fighting but they were psychologically affected due to the transmission of the picture to them. In Britain, they attend the university but they do not focus on their learning, may be they could not focus in there laboratories or on the writing for those who were submitting theses. I personally lived in Britain during that period and I was affected. We were going to the university for six months and we accomplished nothing; we were following what was broadcast by the channels mainly Aljazeera and what assured us what we heard from the BBC. However, there were some news broad cast by Al-Jazeera and were not broadcast in the BBC. This created some doubts and we know that the BBC is truthful and correct, yet because of the war and the difficulty of the situation, we became overcome by doubt. So we go to the social sites like Face-book to make sure of the truthfulness of the news or otherwise. So, we came across contradictions and confusion from the other channels and this is the problem that affected us” (L5).

In this regard, Dyson and Renk (2006) argued that attending a university for the first time can be a stressful experience for many new college students and thus there should be some mechanism available to get the students involved in their university life. In addition, when the students become involved in their university it is important that there must be nothing disrupting their life given that the university life needs the students to focus on their subject matters without any distraction. In relation to this, I assume that Al-Jazeera’s dubious reporting affected the students negatively in distracting their attention and make them less focused in their university life. Consider the following reply from one student:

“Certainly, it did affect me especially, Al-Jazeera which had distorted the image, stirred the streets and caused chaos all over the country. All employment sectors

were affected and the people were divided into two groups; those who were for and those who were against the revolution...the reporting of an event has a big effect especially the magnified news by Al-Jazeera. The BBC news were neutral and did not have a clear impact...The university stopped functioning and was ransacked and the students went back to their towns and cities and some of them stayed because they were fearful due to the lack of security on the roads because of the false news” (S. 10 ).

Several researchers indicated that university life has its unique characteristics which must be taken into considerations, otherwise students developed depression and anxiety to life-stress and achievement (see, e.g. Broadbridgeand Swanson 2005, Krauseand Coates 2008, WintreandYaffe, 2010, Peseta et al. 2016, among others). In view of this, university students must be treated carefully and their needs must be satisfied in an appropriate way. Reporting fake news alleging that the situation in the country is too dangerous and there was no way but fighting may be regarded as a huge source for depression for the university students. News agencies are bound to depict the news in a genuine way, reflecting the actual situation and they should attempt to report it professionally, that is, in a way that considers the different people who will watch the news (Buckingham 2000, Williamson et al, 2012). Al-Jazeera did not respect this practice but attempted to spread fear and wrong depiction of the reality within the local community. Consider the following replies:

“The presentation of the incidents hugely affected us psychologically; in fact it was not fair and I add that Al-Jazeera channel was biased towards the new revolutions and was not fair. Frankly, I did not follow the BBC.” (S2).

“Yes, Al-Jazeera played, in a way, a role in the success of those revolutions and the blackening of the country’s image. This had an effect on education and other sectors and it had a personal effect on me because I lost an academic year...This is what it really wanted because the international community stopped its political dealings with the country and the foreign teaching staff went back to their countries and we, the students, suspended our studies and lost a year because of

the troubles created by Al-Jazeera and its stirring of the divisions and problems. I, one day, will complain to Al-Jazeera and ask for compensation for the loss of a year.” (S 6).

False depiction of events led to the suspension of the education process for one complete year, a matter the students were much concerned about. The Arab Spring viewed by Al-Jazeera looked like ‘a disaster’, leading to that students lost their education for one year without the ability to reach the university.

“Prior to these revolutions the studies were enjoyable but after this disaster the studies were suspended and I lost a year because of this crisis. Most of the students have lost an academic year and on top of that we lost security” (S 6).

“The difference is that the university studies deteriorated for a year and most of the students lost a year.” (S 8).

This line of analysis is consistent with what UNESCO (2011) have stated since they note that students suffer from the impact of the armed conflicts. They suggest that students are subject to loss, injury, insecurity, dislocation of family, displacement, and community life, and psychological trauma (Gates et al., 2012). Furthermore, this is also consistent with Akresh and De Walque's (2008) findings that civil wars are among the most destructive factors having devastating impacts on the various social phenomena, including the effects on the wellbeing of children of the school/university-going age. We may also see the work of Detrie (2011) for a similar argument in the Libyan context, where the study indicated that many students and instructors were displaced in the search of safety, thus affecting their academic life.

In sum, reporting Arab Spring events in a false way had disastrous effects on the students and lecturers at all levels, academic, personal, social, and psychological. The actual role of the media and news networks in guiding local people and how media affects these people deeply.

Media can be seen as a driving force guiding people to take up positions advocated by this media. Additionally, media can re-shape the events or even the whole revolution to match their purposive goals and ends. These assumptions have been supported by the related literature, addressing the role of media in shaping people's opinions (Pinkleton and Austin, 2001, Schudson, 2002, and Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2003). In this sense media can do anything, not just manipulating people's opinions (Gerber, et al., 2006) but also their beliefs (Stroud 2008). My study accumulates further evidence for the underlying role of media in shaping and manipulating people's views and beliefs.

## 8.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, I shed light on the lecturers' and students' views towards the role of Al-Jazeera's and the BBC's reporting of critical events of the Arab Spring revolutions. The general finding is that most of the lecturers and the students viewed that there were several significant differences between BBC Al-Jazeera. The former was deemed to be professional in reporting the events. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera used to report the critical events of the Arab revolution in a biased way, implementing Qatar's agenda. The biased reporting exhibited by Al Jazeera clearly had a significant effect on the education of students at the university studied and also affected the attitudes of academic staff and the families of students who often saw the events that occurred through the lens of the inaccurate reporting that often spread fear and concern. Overall, the research conducted for this study revealed the major influence, for good or ill, that can be exercised by the mass media, especially in times of crisis.

## Chapter 9

### Conclusions and recommendations

#### 9.1. Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis as a whole. The main aims of the research are reiterated and the methods adopted are briefly restated. The major findings of the study of offered in detail and recommendations for changes in practice are posited and final conclusion. The thesis is completed with a final concluding statement.

#### 9.2. Main aims of the research

This thesis presented to what extent Arab and western media influenced the staff and students of Sebha University, Libya during the insurgencies that were labelled as ‘Arab Spring Uprisings’ (2010-2011). It addressed the nature of such an influence in order to report any differences between how the Arab Spring Uprisings were depicted in the given media. In addition to conducting a series of interviews with the staff and students of Sebha University to show how the media affected them, this thesis analysed a number of carefully chosen articles from the media which described the most critical incidents of the Arab Spring Uprisings and examined their impact on the students and staff of Sebha University. This analysis was put in place to construct a conceptual and analytical framework for understanding how Arab and western media can impinge on people working within an academic environment and the related effects of such coverage. This analysis highlighted whether such media played down the Arab Spring Uprisings in order to deliver any (overt or covert) ideologies.

As is clear from the previous paragraph, the current thesis investigated the Arab Spring Uprisings which were heavily analysed since their outbreak in late 2010 (cf. Hollis, 2012). Several studies linked such uprisings to certain political events including the end of post-colonialism (Dabashi, 2012) as well as the political change (Dalacoura, 2012), while other research papers focused on the economic problems that have been experienced across North Africa and the Middle East (Campante and Chor, 2012). Furthermore, a further line of research emphasized the differences between the components of these uprisings and between the countries in which they broke out (Nepstad, 2013). However, as seen from the literature review there was paucity of research concerning the role of the media (TV channels and social media services such as Facebook, Tweeter, YouTube, inter alia) on the course of the Arab Spring

Uprisings and how people interacted with one another, perceiving their main incidents and results (Storck, 2011; Howard and Hussain, 2013; Wolfsfeld et al., 2013). More specifically in relation to this study, the effect of the main TV news channels on people working within academic settings and their perspectives towards such effects during Arab Spring Uprisings has received much scrutiny by researchers. In a reflection to this paucity in the research, the current research attempted to bridge this gap in research via spotlighting these effects and perspectives.

Here, it is important to shed light on the factors that helped to trigger the Arab Spring Uprising. It is accepted widely that the Arab Spring Uprising were caused mainly by the absence or lack of democratic means for regime change and the pertinent societal pressures which were increasing in some countries of the Middle East and North Africa against the regime incumbents (Campante and Chor, 2012). In addition to the economic conditions which formed an important background to the main incidents of Arab Spring Uprising in countries in North Africa including Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, the discordance between the claims which are made by the extant regimes to legitimize themselves and the reality of regime repression and contempt were deemed the real driver of the Arab Spring Uprising. The regimes' refusal to tolerate the escalating active popular political participation in the process of governance would act, for many, as the real driver for Arab Spring Uprisings, once the appropriate catalyst could be found (Joffé, 2011). The main results were in general culminated in a set of new changes. The existing long-term regimes then were ousted, and new ones were established. The most significant impulse for the breaking out of the Arab Spring Uprising was that most of the Arab countries did not experience the real democracy that is a prerequisite for any political and social stability in any country. In many Arab countries, people did not get involved in any democratic process, including the choice of the local and national governments that, in some countries, were themselves unable to pass laws or even modify them. Those Arab countries were characterized by totalitarian regimes and unlimited authorities of countries heads (Witzel, 2011, 2013). By 2010-2011, people across Arab countries were keen for real change for democracy and for the suppression of corruption. This change indeed demonstrated the obsolete authority of people.

Given the notion that there is no question that the media plays a vital and often principle role in organizing and publicizing social protests (Khondker, 2011; Fekete and Warf, 2013), this research identified whether the two channels investigated throughout this study attempted to

skew the events of ASU in order to reach certain goals matching their underlying ideologies. These ideologies, if any, can be assimilated through analyzing a set of chosen articles which depict the main incidents of ASU. Subsequently, the study aimed to determine how discursive methodologies and structures exhibited in some articles of these two media channels reflected or related to any social and political ideologies the channels attempted to spread.

Hence, the problem of whether Al-Jazeera and/or the BBC provided an example of advocacy media that supports or flouts the basic professional principles of journalism such as objectivity, neutrality and impartiality is targeted. On the other hand, this study's aim was to illustrate how media can affect people (staff and students) working in academic settings through assessing their own perspectives towards how the incidents of ASU were depicted by the both channels under question. Such perspectives were motivated by the fact that the way that the channels depicted the events of ASU was of key importance for local people, people working at universities, and students who can be prevented from attending universities if there was (real or potential) danger highlighted by the media channels. In short, the two problems of exploiting the Arab Spring Uprising events to spread or reach certain goals and ideologies as well as the effect of this exploitation (if any) were addressed.

Any observer of the Arab Spring Uprising noticed that the success of these democratic revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen was mainly associated with certain factors, including the media channels which played a vital part in shaping such revolutions (Aday *et al.*, 2013; Wolfsfeld *et al.*, 2013; Malik, 2014). This culminated in the way the media involved represent the critical incidents of these revolutions, reflecting their own ideologies, which may themselves influence future events. Every revolution was of great importance for various media channels. That is because the main principles and themes of one revolution heavily affected other, subsequent, revolutions. Thus, it is plausible to suggest that the Tunisian revolution (which happened first) triggered the following Egyptian one and so on in a predictable fashion, a point highlighted by various studies (Bayat, 2013; Malik, 2014). Accordingly, this study was meant to show how these two channels depicted and represented the main incidents of the Arab Spring Uprising and whether this depiction and representations are enveloped with any ideology the channel attempts to deliver.

In order to address these purposes, the study answered the following questions:

1. What were the background and reasons posed by Aljazeera and the BBC channel articles for the critical incidents during the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions?
2. What were the ideologies of both Aljazeera and the BBC which can be deduced by the way critical incidents were depicted?
3. How do the reports of both Aljazeera and the BBC channel characterize the participants and critical incidents that made up the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions?
4. To whom and how did Aljazeera English and BBC channels attribute the events in the revolutions?
5. What was the impact of the reporting of the revolutions on the staff and students of one university located in southern Libya?

### 9.3. Methods adopted

In order to answer these questions, a set of pre-arranged semi-structured interviews with both staff and students at Sebha University, Libya were conducted. As outlined earlier in this thesis, a total of 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Given that Sebha University offers only bachelor degrees in 15 different faculties, staff from different departments and only undergraduate students were asked to participate in these semi-structured interviews.

Both students and staff were purposively selected from different departments in the faculty of Education in order to provide a purposive sample that represents a 'cross section' of experience. What is worth mentioning is that the students and staff purposively selected were requested to gain their approval to interview. In addition, a specific number of staff and students were chosen from different departments in order to render the results of the study comprehensive and tangible. These interviews were meant to determine the most critical incidents, from the selected channels to focus on, and help further refine which articles to analyze.

In order to render the findings of the studies more reliable and valid, linguistic analysis of a sample of the reporting of the Arab Spring within the CDA as developed by Fairclough (1989) and Van Dijk (1993) and the systemic functional theories of Halliday (1985), which attribute the functions of linguistic structures to the social structure, were employed. The researcher downloaded and analysed the chosen materials from the official websites of both Al-Jazeera

English and the BBC. Two approaches were adopted. First, the study analysed the stories headlines used by the channels during the course of the revolutions. Second, it analysed stories the channels delivered to describe the main events of the revolutions such as rulers' stepping down through carrying out a multi-modal analysis of the entire stories. It is worth pointing out that the analysis targeted the whole articles including any images accompanying and that is because such images may provide with important clues on how both channels depict the events. The key aspects of the approach used included:

- a. The study followed the CDA of the on-line news output produced by the Al-Jazeera English in comparison with the online news output of BBC.
- b. It drew upon theories of systemic functional linguistics and the CDA to analyse the representation of the Arab spring revolutions on the websites of the two networks.
- c. CDA is used to elucidate the ideological representation of the revolutions in the selected networks.
- d. Systemic functional linguistics was used to analyse the experiential meaning of the news, their thematic structures, their lexical structures, as well as the grammatical metaphors used in the news.
- e. The study comprised a macrostructure analysis of the news in order to reveal the main topics that recur throughout the news coverage of the two channels.

This linguistic analysis aimed to figure out how both channels use specific vocabulary and structures to describe the events in a way which is in line with the general policy and trends of that channel. To put it differently, the study attempted to show how the description of the revolutions' events help us to determine and specify ideologies both channels adopt and promote. That was done by using the main stages of the CDA as put forward by Fairclough (1995) which highlights the text as a social practice standing for the writers' ideology. Furthermore, analysing such texts written in different times of revolution which underwent different situations of power relation between different parties involved is very helpful in order to understand the nature of social power and dominance throughout the course of the revolutions given that power and dominance are usually organized and institutionalized (Van Dijk, 1993).

#### 9.4. The main findings

As indicated already, the research attested to the widely-attested assumption that media exercise considerable influence over people. The life of the latter even can be shaped through what media broadcasts and propagates. This can be clearly identified with reference to the role played by Al-Jazeera throughout the Arab Spring uprisings. The data derived from the staff and students' responses, it can be stated that Al-Jazeera was considered as biased in reporting the critical events of Arab Spring uprisings of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. They mentioned that Al-Jazeera exaggerated the events in a way that triggered locals inside the country to act against the existing regimes as well as informing people outside the respective countries that the Arab revolts were influential and hence triggered them to rebel against their own regimes. The staff assumed that Al-Jazeera attempted to play down some events so as to spread its own political agenda. Accordingly, Al-Jazeera distorted the facts of the events, reporting them in a completely different way from the way in which such events happened. Furthermore, the students argued that Al-Jazeera's reporting of the events spread fear among people and had a strong effect on engendering huge negative psychological impact on students.

In addition, the students stated that Al-Jazeera's inaccurate reporting of the news was utterly disastrous for them as well as their families. It was noted in the data presentation chapter that study at the university was suspended and tension between local residents had been created because of this reporting. Many students were no longer able to attend their university because there was a feeling that they would be killed and/or robbed. This all led to a situation where the students lived in a state of frustration. Al-Jazeera's reporting forced the families not to send their children to the university, given there was what seemed a justified fear that students could be harmed or killed. The Arab Spring viewed by Al-Jazeera looked like 'a disaster', leading the students to lose their education for a year because of their inability to attend the university.

By contrast, almost all of the lecturers and the students stated that the BBC reported the events as they happened without adding any exaggeration or bias and that the BBC reported the events in a professional and honest way. The BBC was for them fair in that it expressed the situation as it was without adding any irrelevant details or reporting it in a way reflecting that the situation extremely serious when in fact it was not.

In order to explore whether student and staff perspectives towards the two channels can be verified by reference to how the critical events of Arab Spring revolutions are expressed in written discourse, 12 different articles taken from the two channels were analysed by the CDA and SFL. Both lecturers and students agreed on the critical events of the Arab Spring revolts.

What I mean by *critical* is that these events played the main role in shaping the relevant revolts in their final form. For instance, the fall of Tripoli was the main event in the Libyan revolt, given that it demarcates the actual triumph of the Libyan Arab Spring revolt in that the capital city of Libya was then under the control of the opposition forces (i.e., anti-Colonel Muammer Gaddafi forces). Table 10, below repeated and shows critical events relating to Tunisian, Libyan, and Egyptian revolts:

**Table 10: the most critical agreed-upon incidents in the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan revolutions**

<b>Revolution</b>	<b>Incidents</b>
Tunisian	Bouazizi's self-suicide
	Ben Ali's fleeing the country
Egyptian	Mubarak's stepping down
	Camel's occasion
Libyan	fall of Tripoli
	Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder

*Table 7 Shows most critical events*

Out of the many events happening in the Tunisian revolt, both Bouazizi's self-suicide and Ben Ali's fleeing the country received most of the credit from all lecturers and students. The direct cause for this emphasis on these two events comes from the fact that Bouazizi's self-suicide is actually the event that instigates Arab spring, whereas Ben Ali's fleeing the country is the last critical event in this revolt and at the same time the hard evidence for the overarching role of public in shaping the political life in the country. Ben Ali's fleeing the country was like a surprise for many Arabs throughout the Arab World given that no one expected such a conclusion. Hence this event was so important even for people from outside Libya.

The critical events of Mubarak's stepping down and the 'Camel's occasion' received much attention from all lecturers and students as far as Egyptian revolt is concerned. The obvious motivation for this emphasis on these two events stems from the fact that Mubarak's stepping down was like an over-shaking event that nobody in the Arab World expected it. That is because Mubarak's regime was, as raised by students and lecturers, was rooted in Egypt and it was never easy to force Mubarak step down. Additionally, this event was evidence for the success of the Arab World revolts in forcing the then existing regimes to step down. The

Camel's occasion was special, given that it was a serious attempt by Mubarak to remain in power but, unfortunately, a sad occasion where many protestors died.

The fall of Tripoli and Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's subsequent death gained a lot of attention from all lecturers and students as far as Libyan revolt is concerned. The clear motivation for this attention on these two particular events comes from the fact that the fall of Tripoli was the sign of end of the Libyan civil war which both lecturers and students suffered much. Additionally, this event was additional evidence for the success of the Arab World revolutions that overthrow the then existing regimes. As for the Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's murder, this event was important because it was hard-evidence for the end of Libyan civil war and the beginning of a new era in Libyan politics

Using the major assumptions of the CDA and the SFL and applying them to the previous events, the following conclusions were reported:

- Al-Jazeera's reporting to these events was different from that of the BBC. Firstly, Al-Jazeera placed much focus on the opinions of the protestors in Arab Spring revolutions under question. What was important for Al-Jazeera was to report the event as seen by the protestors.
- Al-Jazeera always treated the protestors as the powerful, whereas the government forces and the leaders as powerless. This could be understood as a trigger for other locals to participate in the revolt in their country.
- Al-Jazeera used to bring some irrelevant information on the event. Such information might be related to what other journalists said or some occasions that were not part of the main event.
- Al-Jazeera maximised the wrongful acts of the then existing regimes, while no mention had been reported of any attempt from the existing regimes to remedy the situation.
- Al-Jazeera made use of the critical events to propagate its own agenda and spread its ideology which is 'invocation and trigger of locals against the existing regimes and destroy any trust between the two parties (i.e. the locals and the then existing regimes).
- On the other hand, the BBC used to report the news without any hidden agenda. The main focus was placed on the event itself without bringing any irrelevant details

related to the event. The BBC provided some background information on the respective event, so as the reader can understand the following news correctly.

- The BBC used to highlight what the international community commented on the event, reflecting the international character the BBC possesses.
- Unlike Al-Jazeera, no hidden ideology used to propagate by the BBC which is best characterized as professional. This being the case, the differences between the two channels raised by all of the students and the lecturers can be corroborated by the way both channels report the critical events of the three Arab Spring revolts.

#### 9.5. Personal reflections and recommendations.

There are several problems I faced while conducting this research. The first challenge was working in two languages. Given that not all lecturers and students who agreed to take part in this thesis do not speak English, but they preferred to speak Arabic language, so it was necessary to translate the interviews into Arabic and translate their replies into English. Secondly, I suffered from the problem of lack of security in my home country and I was unable to travel because of security reasons. Therefore, I depended on Skype in conducting some of the semi-structured interviews. Consequently, there were many difficulties in securing an online contact with the staff and the student participated in the interview.

The study recommends the following:

- Further research on the role of Al-Jazeera on other Arab Spring revolutions which were not investigated throughout this work, i.e., Bahraini, Syrian, and Yamani revolutions must be conducted. Such an investigation must be aimed at exploring whether Al-Jazeera's reporting is still the same or different.
- Doing further research on other universities so as the conclusions of the current research can be attested or refined. Sebha University is situated in the city of Sebha which has limited access to other channels. It might be the case that the huge effect of media on the staff and students of this university is ascribed to its peripheral position and limited access.
- Placing conditions, if necessary by appropriate legislation of international agreement, on the TV channels and other types of media to be honest in reporting the news as it is without minimising or maximizing the reported events. It appears

that TV channels have considerable effects on people in general and staff and students in particular, hence such channels should be monitored to achieve larger degrees of professionalism in order to make sure that no hidden agenda is propagated.

- Conducting specific workshops that familiarize the students and staff about the role of media and they can search for the fact and do not depend on just one source in knowing the news.

#### 9.6. Final conclusion.

The current study investigated how the Arab and western media affected staff and students of one Libyan university, Sebha University. The Arab media was represented by Aljazeera the channel which was by many regarded as the most influential Arab media channel (El-Nawawy and Iskander, 2002; Miles, 2005; Zayani, 2005). On the other hand, the western media was represented throughout this study by the BBC which is one of the most professional news and media channels in the world (Barkho, 2006; Miladi, 2006; Barkho, 2008b). This study attempted to show how these two channels depicted and represented the main incidents of ASU and whether this depiction and representations are enveloped with any ideology the channel attempts to deliver. In addition, this study investigated the actual effects of the both channels' representations to the main incidents of the ASU on the lives of people under questions. As noted earlier in this text, this line of analysis is consistent with what UNESCO (2011) state when they note that students suffer severely from the impact of armed conflicts. UNESCO note that students are subject to loss, injury, insecurity, dislocation of family, displacement, and community life, and psychological trauma (Gates et al., 2012). Furthermore, this is also consistent with Akresh and De Walque' (2008) who found that civil wars are amongst the most destructive factors in relation to education since they have a devastating impact on various social phenomena, including effects on the wellbeing of children and on students of university-going age. We may also see also the work of Detrie (2011) for a similar argument in the Libyan context, where the study indicated that many students and instructors were displaced in the search for safety, which affected their academic life.

The study confirms the widely-attested assumption that media exercise considerable influence over people. As a researcher I was more concerned with the results of my research rather than expressing my own opinion regarding the BBC or Al-Jazeera. I know that the BBC is older and more experienced than Al-Jazeera in news reporting. The lives of many innocents, including university staff and students can be influenced by and even shaped through what media broadcasts and propagates. This can be clear with reference to the role played by Al-Jazeera throughout the Arab Spring uprisings. The staff and students' responses make it clear that Aljazeera was biased in reporting the critical events, whereas the BBC was professional and unbiased in depicting such events. Further, the study indicated that Al-Jazeera tended exaggerate certain events and understate others in order to serve its own ideology in helping the rebels in the countries in questions. The study found that the perceptions of the respondents were that the BBC did not have any ideology in reporting the incidents, whereas Al-Jazeera worked hard to support the rebels. As for the question 'What is the impact of the reporting of the revolutions on the staff and students of one university located in southern Libya?', the study concluded that all of the educational processes had been negatively affected by the manipulated reporting of the all incidents of the three revolutions under investigation and more needs to be done to make higher education institutions more robust in light of the challenges posed by such dramatic events.

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## Appendices:

### Appendix 1: interview schedule



## Interview Schedule

### **Title of Project:**

Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting.

*Name of respondent:*

Date

### ***Introduction***

*Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my project. As you know, I am studying Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting for a PhD at Liverpool John Moores University. As you have been informed, everything that you say will be kept in complete confidence and you have the right to stop or suspend the interview at any time should you wish to do so.*

### ***Section 1 - background***

- 5- How long have you been at Sebha University?
- 6- Do you enjoy working/studying in the University?
- 7- Have you seen any difference in the work or study environment after the revolutionary period in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt? If so, please can you explain the kinds of changes you have noted?

### ***Section 2 – Critical events and their reporting***

- 1- What do you think were the most critical incidents in Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan revolutions and which influenced you the most or had the most impact on you personally?
- 2- Do you think that these events were represented well and accurately by the media as a whole?

- 3- Did you have any concerns about the way things were reported? If so, why? If not what things reassured you that the reporting was fair and accurate?

### ***Section 3 – The role of Aljazeera and the BBC***

- 1- What critical incidents in the revolutions can you recall being reported by Aljazeera and did you think the reporting of those events to be fair and accurate?
- 2- What critical incidents in the revolutions can you recall being reported by the BBC and did you think the reporting of those events to be fair and accurate?
- 3- Do you think that both channels depicted these critical events in the same way? If so why? If not, why not?
- 4- To what extent did both channels pose (or suggest) the same reasons for these critical incidents? If there were differences in the reporting what were they?

### ***Section 4 – Impact on the university/ students/ staff***

- 1- Has the reporting on the revolutions, and specifically the reporting by Aljazeera and the BBC, impacted the condition of the country and the university and your own performance at the University? If it has affected you, how has it affected you?
- 2- Has the reporting by Aljazeera and the BBC affected the image of the country/University and your self-image? If it has had an effect how has it done so?
- 3- Do you think that some elements or issues in the revolution were pointed out or highlighted by Aljazeera/BBC? If so, what were they?
- 4- How did the reporting by Aljazeera/BBC affect the university work and study environment and what was the impact of reporting these critical events on you more generally?

***Closing statement - Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.***

## Appendix 2 Request to conduct research in the university



# LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE UNIVERSITY

### **Title of the project**

Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting.

### **Name of Researcher and School/Faculty**

Othman Mohamed Alshareif, PhD student at Faculty of Education, Health and Community Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool.

### **The Dean**

### **Faculty of Education**

### **Sebha University**

### **Libya**

I am currently on the process of conducting a research study aiming to analyse the two media networks' points of views towards the main events of the revolutions in and its impact on staff and students in one institution in Libya. In addition, this study will probe what commentators suggest about the links between participants and their actions. Most importantly, this study will examine how reporting the events of revolutions impacts on both staff and students of particular universities in Libya. This piece of research has been given full, categorical ethical authorisation from Liverpool John Moers University in the UK.

## **Invitation to participate**

This is a request to the student and staff from Faculty of Education, Sebha University to take part in this research study. The information gathered will improve the researcher's knowledge about the impacts of Arab Revolution on the staff and students at university level. In addition to an insight of the impacts, there will a set of recommendations be presented to improve the adverse effects of reporting and place images on staff and students at university level. to gain an insight into the participants' views about reading skills. Please be informed that there are no risks linked to the research.

I am hoping to pay a visit to your university in May 2014. Therefore, it is important for me to have a preliminary meeting with potential informants to explicate the aim of the research and clarify how I will go about the data collection. Information sheets will be given.

Taking part is voluntary and the interview will be carried out whenever it is suitable for the participants and it will be held in the faculty. While conducting the interviews, I will make sure that the process does not interfere at all with the day-to-day routines and activities of the faculty. As such, I am requesting formal approval to be allowed access to your institution in order to gather data for my piece of research.

## **Research Plan and Methods**

It is completely up to the potential informants to decide whether they want to participate in this study or not. However, if they intend to take part, an information sheet will be given to them to retain and they will be requested to sign the consent form. Once they decide to participate, they will still have the right to withdraw at any stage of the process. Every piece of information will be dealt with confidentiality and it is assured that no informant's name will be disclosed without their permission.

## **Further Information**

Should you require any additional information regarding the study, please feel free to contact the researcher.

I look forward to receiving your approval to allow me to gain access to your institution.

Yours sincerely,

Othman Mohamed Alshareif

Room H203, Faculty of Education, Health and Community

Liverpool John Moores University,

Holmefield House, I.M. Marsh campus

Barkhill Road

L17 6BD

Email: [O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk)

Mob: 00447455368768



**LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY**  
**CONSENT FORM FOR THE DEAN OF THE**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT SEBHA**

**Title of Project:**

Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting.

**Researcher:** *Othman Mohamed Alshareif, Faculty of Education, Health and Community*

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that participation is voluntary and that the staff and students are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect their legal rights.
3. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential.
4. I agree to let the staff and students to take part in the above study and give my consent for all participants to take part in this project.
5. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and that the researcher will look for consent from the participants if they are involved in these.
6. I understand that parts of the conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised.

*Name of Dean of faculty of Education at Sebha University:*  
Signature

Date

Name of Researcher: Othman M Alshareif  
Signature

Date

*Faculty of Education, Health and Community, Liverpool John Moores University, H203*

*Holmefield House, I.M. Marsh Campus, Barkhill Road, L17 6BD.*

*Email: [O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk)*

*Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher*

## Appendix 4 participants information sheet



# LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION SHEET

### **Title of the project**

Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting.

### **Name of Researcher and School/Faculty**

Othman Mohamed Alshareif, PhD student at Faculty of Education, Health and Community Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool.

### **Invitation**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you make your decision, It is important to know what the research will be involves and why it being done. Please read all the information below and you can discuss it with others if you like. Feel free to ask me if you need more information or anything that is not clear.

### **1. Purpose of the study**

The study aims to analyse of the two networks' points of views towards the main events of the revolutions in and its impact on staff and students in one institution in Libya. In addition, this study will probe what commentators suggest about the links between participants and their actions. Most importantly, this study will examine how reporting the events of revolutions impacts on both staff and students of particular universities in Libya.

### **2. Do I have to take part?**

It is completely up to you to decide whether you want to participate in this study or not. However, if you want to go ahead and take part, this information sheet will be given to you to retain and you will be

requested to sign the consent form. Once you decide to participate, you still have the right to withdraw at any stage of the process whether this is before or during the interview.

### **3. What will happen to me if I take part?**

Once your permission is granted, interviews will be carried out during which the researcher will make an audio record of the meeting, and engage in some note taking. The interview should last between 45 to 60 minutes approximately. questions will revolve around the views about the reporting the events of revolutions impacts on the informants. The choice of the questions you want to respond to is completely up to you. You can also choose to give short or in-depth answers to the questions. A discussion of the time and date of the interviews, which will take place at the institution, will be arranged with you very soon.

### **4. Are there any risks / benefits involved?**

There are no risks arising from your participation in this study. Similarly, you will not directly profit from taking part in such research endeavour; however, the information gathered will improve the researcher's knowledge about the impacts of Arab Revolution on the staff and students at university level. In addition to an insight of the impacts, there will a set of recommendations be presented to improve the adverse effects of reporting and place images on staff and students at university level.

### **5. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Concerning the information gathered about you during the interview, they will all be kept with the greatest confidentiality. Once the transcription of the interview is finished, it will later be destroyed. In addition, the transcript will be coded with either a number or a letter instead of your name. People involved with the study will be the only ones with access to the recordings and transcripts while being stored in safe place. Once the study is finished, these recordings and transcripts will be deleted. During or after the research, your identity will not be disclosed in any reports.

### **Further Information**

Should you require any additional information regarding the study, please feel free to contact the researcher by using the contact details given below.

Othman Mohamed Alshareif (Research student)

Room H203, Faculty of Education Health and Community,

Liverpool John Moores University,

Holmefield House, I.M. Marsh campus

Barkhill Road

L17 6BD

Email: O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk

Prof. Mark Brundrett (Academic Supervisor)

Faculty of Education Health and Community, Liverpool John Moores University

Email: M.Brundrett@ljmu.ac.uk

Appendix 5 consent form for students



**LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY**  
**CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS AT**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT SEBHA**  
**UNIVERSITY**

**Title of Project:**

Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting.

**Researcher:** *Othman Mohamed Alshareif, Faculty of Education, Health and Community*

7. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily

8. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

9. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential.

10. I agree to take part in the above study (one to one Interview).

11. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed.

12. I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised.

Name of student at Sebha University: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Researcher: *Othman M Alshareif*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Faculty of Education, Health and Community, Liverpool John Moores University, H203  
Holmefield House, I.M. Marsh Campus, Barkhill Road, L17 6BD.*

*Email: [O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk)*

*Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher*

Appendix 6 consent form for the staff



**LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY  
CONSENT FORM FOR THE STAFF OF SEBHA  
UNIVERSITY**

**Title of Project:**

Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting.

**Researcher:** *Othman Mohamed Alshareif, Faculty of Education, Health and Community*

13. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily

14. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

15. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential.

16. I agree to take part in the above study (one to one interview).

17. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed.

18. I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised.

*Name of Staff at Sebha University:*  
Signature

Date

*Name of Researcher: Othman M Alshareif*  
Signature

Date

*Faculty of Education, Health and Community, Liverpool John Moores University, H203 Holmefield House, I.M. Marsh Campus, Barkhill Road, L17 6BD.*

*Email: [O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:O.M.Alshareif@2013.ljmu.ac.uk)*

*Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher*



## Interview Schedule

**Title of Project:**

Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting.

*Name of respondent: xxx*

Date

***Introduction***

*Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my project. As you know I am studying Western media representation of the Arab Spring revolutions and its impact on staff and students in a Libyan university setting for a PhD at Liverpool John Moores University. As you have been informed, everything that you say will be kept in complete confidence and you have the right to stop or suspend the interview at any time should you wish to do so.*

***Section 1 - background***

**Interviewer:** How long have you been at Sabha University?

**Interviewee:** I have been working in the University of Sabha since 1993. I was an assistant in the university, then I completed my studies in Ukraine and Britain and now I am a member of the teaching staff in this university.

**Interviewer** Do you enjoy working/studying in the University?

**Interviewee:** Surely, I enjoy doing my job because I studied in and graduated from this university. I am still working in this university and have many friends and connections in all places, laboratories and teaching classes as I spent so many years in this place.

**Interviewer:** Have you seen any difference in the work or study environment after the revolutionary period in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt? If so, please can you explain the kinds of changes you have noted?

**Interviewee:** Obviously, we appreciate the answers on and Libya and Tunisia because I visited Tunisia twice After the Arab spring. I came to Libya during the Arab spring and after and now due to my job. Being in this place I can see no difference; the work goes on as before. It consists of carrying out teaching plans but the security situation has known some deterioration after the Arab revolutions or the Arab Spring. Security has lessened and become flimsy in these countries. Crime has become rife. People own weapons and there is no fear of the police and the forces which impose order in society.

### *Section 2 – Critical events and their reporting*

**Interviewer:** What do you think were the most critical incidents in Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan revolutions and which influenced you the most or had the most impact on you personally?

**Interviewee:** Many incidents are taking place but as an example, we will mention one: the incident of the suicide or the burning of Bouazizi, which resulted in the revolutions of the Arab Spring, was used by the media on a large scale, especially Aljazeera. There is also the incident of Ben Ali's fleeing and the resignation of Mubarak and the uproar it created in the different media apparatus. I also think that the story of Gaddafi from his refusal to step down to his death which took place in Sirte. Obviously, these incidents captured people's attention and the media played a big role in promoting them as indications of the success of the revolutions of the Arab Spring.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that these events were represented well and accurately by the media as a whole?

**Interviewee:** It means ...if we talk about the media in general we may say that many of the satellite channels or the media exaggerated in depicting what was going on in the Arab street specifically in Libya ,Egypt and Tunisia. Exaggerations from Aljazeera, at the same time some channels were fair and professional in doing their job. Amongst these was the BBC, which was neutral, and report the news as they were. The revolution, which had a deep effect, was the Tunisian revolution.

**Interviewer:** Did you have any concerns about the way things were reported? If so, why? If not what things reassured you that the reporting was fair and accurate?

**Interviewee:** Through my following of the different media and in the first place television and radio such as the BBC and Aljazeera whether be them visual or audio, I noticed that there were exaggerations and deceptions in the reporting of the news and attempts to incite the street and the focus on one side of the picture especially of what was reported through or by Aljazeera. It broadcast a dark side of the picture and on which it more light without focussing on the other side means when it tries to depict a side as being the oppressor or fanatic, when it focuses only on the corruption side and does not focus on the good sides of this party shows that it is biased towards one party at the expense of the other. IN the beginning the picture was not clear but after the revolutions these channels started to unveil themselves and started to fight between themselves. For example, there was an agreement between Aljazeera and Al-Arabia channels regarding the revolution in Libya. There was a virtual agreement between the two channels to criminalise what Gaddafi did or what he was doing and to support the other party opposing Gaddafi. Now there is a rift between them regarding what happening in the political arena in Libya; Aljazeera promotes something and Al –Arabia promote its opposite regarding the support for the political movements in Libya. This shows that these channels have their own agendas and they work according to specific agendas. This in turn proves that they have no credibility or accuracy in reporting the incidents that took place.

### ***Section 3 – The role of Aljazeera and the BBC***

**Interviewer:** What critical incidents in the revolutions can you recall being reported by Aljazeera and did you think the reporting of those events to be fair and accurate?

**Interviewee:** Incidents! There are many. For example, the liberation of certain places was reported by Aljazeera but with some paralogism. In other words, Aljazeera said that those places were completely liberated from Gaddafi's battalions and at the same time, the liberation was not completed. This is pre-emptive attempt to influence the other party and the Libyan street. But the incidents that Aljazeera reported with fairness and accuracy are limited to the liberation of Tripoli. When it reported this incident, it reported it as it was because the operation was settled and this is a complete and finished stage. The liberation was completed and that the last leaf that has fallen from Gaddafi's regime; it was said its demise.

**Interviewer:** What critical incidents in the revolutions can you recall being reported by the BBC and did you think the reporting of those events to be fair and accurate?

**Interviewee:** I am one of the followers of the BBC for a long time ago. I have been following it since we received it on the radio, which was the British radio Arabic Department from London. It was popular in Libya. My father was one of the followers of this channel, which has a great popularity amongst old people at that time. They followed the BBC because they considered it a professional and truthful channel in reporting the news to the extent that if they did not hear a news item from the BBC 's Arabic Department ' it was not true and professional. The BBC was fairer and more accurate in reporting the news especially the determining incidents like the liberation of Tripoli, the death of Gaddafi and the liberation of Misrata ect.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that both channels depicted these critical events in the same way? If so why? If not, why not?

**Interviewee:** If we talk about the two examples discussed in this meeting: Aljazeera and the BBC. We find that the Aljazeera's news discourse is oriented and work for the interest of a party at the expense of the other party. This is what the receiver of, viewer of and listener to this channel feels and notices. Now that the picture is crystal clear and the veil has dropped he feels that Aljazeera's news discourse is oriented and works for the interest of one party at the expense of the other. It supports specific factions especially now that many viewers and admirers of Aljazeera are sure that this channel supports a specific faction. For example, the Muslim Brothers' party, which Aljazeera promotes at the expense of other political parties and orientations .But the BBC is more professional and accurate in reporting the news .hence, it reports the news with a neutral attitude, so we cannot feel or notice that it is biased towards any party. The viewer of the BBC cannot say that the BBC is biased towards a specific Party or movement. Therefore, we feel that it is professional in reporting the news and it is up to analyse them.

**Interviewer:** Is there a difference in the method of reporting?

**Interviewee:** Yes, the experience factor has a big role and the BBC is an old channel and I have been following it for a long time and also the parents. The accuracy and truthfulness of the BBC is due to lists, programmes and the channel's policy adding to that the professionalism acquired by the journalists and also freedom and autonomy. So, if the channel is financially and administratively autonomous nobody can control it. But if it was subsidiary to the state, the latter will impose its conditions and orientations on it, especially if it is controlled by parties

or particular factions. For example, Aljazeera channel is promoted as a private channel, but if it is owned by a prince from the ruling family, which is at the head of the pyramid in that country; it is that family which directs it whenever, and whichever way it wanted. However, maybe, the BBC is an autonomous channel –I do not know its position in Britain-but I think it is financed by the people in Britain and not by the Parliament or the Government; this gave it its autonomy. It is autonomy, which makes the journalist free to perform his journalistic duties in the right way.

**Interviewer:** To what extent did both channels pose (or suggest) the same reasons for these critical incidents? If there were differences in the reporting what were they?

**Interviewee:** The BBC was fair in performing its news task through reporting the incidents as they were without justifying the actions of any party whereas Aljazeera was doing the opposite. If we take these channels as an exemplar of the channels in the arena, and where the news task consists of reporting facts as they are and allowing the receiver to explain or analyse them as he wishes without any interference or orienting. I noticed that Aljazeera was promoting one party as the oppressor and the other as the victim; that was clear through its news and political programmes. On the other hand, the BBC reported the incidents as they were, for instance, a battle took place between group A and group B and there were casualties –giving a specific number –without blaming the other party as the culprit. But it might provide the background if that party had committed some crimes in the past without insisting on describing it as being the oppressor side. In fact, the news is informing people through reporting the incident; it is not giving justifications for a specific act or for a description in the conflict or in a battle.

#### ***Section 4 – Impact on the university/ students/ staff***

**Interviewer:** Has the reporting on the revolutions, and specifically the reporting by Aljazeera and the BBC, impacted the condition of the country and the university and your own performance at the University? If it has affected you, how has it affected you?

**Interviewee:** Yes, it had a great effect because Aljazeera depicted a sombre picture but the BBC constituted a refuge for obtaining truthful news .When we listened to the news from Aljazeera we believed that what was going on in Libya was the policy of the burning land and that everything had collapsed and finished in Libya. This had inflamed the international community. I gave an example of one of Aljazeera channels' reports; I remember there was a

girl asking for help from a house balcony in Benghazi, screaming that they want to burn us. This picture had been repeatedly broadcast by Aljazeera even though it was taken by a mobile phone and it was at the beginning of the revolution in Benghazi before it was spread in the other cities. Aljazeera played this tune and repeated the broadcasting of that picture. This picture was the cause for Sheikh Qaradawi to issue a fatwa in which he allowed Jihad in Libya and that Gaddafi is behaving outside the religion remits and should be fought. This fatwa had inflamed the international and Islamic movements in Libya and gave it the green light to fight in Libya. This picture of the girl which was repeatedly broadcast became a joke in Benghazi. I myself visited Benghazi after the incidents and they told me it was not completely true in the way it was reported by the girl; it was not literally they are going to burn us. This picture was exploited by Aljazeera in order to inflame the Libyan street and ending a regime with which they disagree about many things. Obviously, the BBC was the refuge for obtaining to receive truthful news and we grew up receiving truthful news from it. May be the Psychological factor had a role in this thing if we compare the news reported by other satellite channels and if we compare the contradictions in them we find that the BBC broadcast only the confirmed news but Aljazeera broadcast the simple news without knowing its source.

**Interviewer:** Has the reporting by Aljazeera and the BBC affected the image of the country/University and your self-image? If it has had an effect, how has it done so?

**Interviewee:** Yes, it had definitely an effect on the psychology of the people. If you broadcast false news, for example, when a group or a particular faction, which does not have many followers in the country rob a bank or close oil fields; it could even be a group which left or escaped from prison. If this incident was exploited by Aljazeera and played this tune, yes this will have a negative effect on the image of the country; yes the wrong image has an impact.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that some elements or issues in the revolution were pointed out or highlighted by Aljazeera/BBC? If so, what were they?

**Interviewee:** Yes, It is noticeable that the BBC is fair even in choosing the personalities and in its focus on the elements and issues that are screened on its channel. But Aljazeera it is noticed these days that it is biased towards particular parties like the Muslim brothers 'party. This is what I noticed, so the BBC channel is fair and neutral and may be IT treat things with a professionalism because even the biased which work with professionalism does not show it and the lay man cannot see that it is biased. But Aljazeera does not know how to play this game or may be it intended to show its bias.

**Interviewer:** How did the reporting by Aljazeera/BBC affect the university work and study environment and what was the impact of reporting these critical events on you more generally?

**Interviewee:** Yes, Aljazeera used the methods of frightening in the reporting of the news. This had a huge psychological effect on the jobs and studies. that academic establishments closed or in fact many students were disrupted or cut short their studies .even outside Libya if we take Libya as an example for the countries of the Arab Spring ,we find many Libyan students were disrupted in their studies in Britain for example, and they needed extensions because they were victims of TV channels like Aljazeera. it had psychologically affected students, their performance and their learning. True, they did not suffer from the same problems as in Libya caused by fighting but they were psychologically affected due to the transmission of the picture to them. In Britain, they attend the university but they do not focus on their learning, may be they could not focus in there laboratories or on the writing for those who were submitting theses. I personally lived in Britain during that period and I was affected. We were going to the university for six months and we accomplished nothing; we were following what was broadcast by the channels mainly Aljazeera and what assured us what we heard from the BBC. However, there were some news broad cast by Aljazeera and were not broadcast in the BBC. This created some doubts and we know that the BBC is truthful and correct, yet because of the war and the difficulty of the situation we became overcome by doubt. So we go to the social sites like Face-book to make sure of the truthfulness of the news or otherwise. So, we came across contradictions and confusion from the other channels and this is the problem that affected us.

**Interviewer:** Would you like to add anything?

**Interviewee:** what I like to emphasize in this interview is that we need more profound studies of this topic; the professionalism of the news channels, their neutrality and their upholding of the principal of fairness in the transmission of the news and the none –biased attitude to one party at the expense of the other and none –toying with the mind of the viewer or receiver and mocking them .the viewer wherever he is, can be aware of things and knows. He can distinguish between the controlled channel and the not controlled one and the truthful one and the false one. These opinion polls, these interviews and these studies when they found their way to publishing, they will definitely impact the human course and will show the people where the truthful and fair channels are. I, for instance, relate that during the first Gulf war according to what I read in one of the newspapers that there was a poll by CNN channel, the known American channel. It carried out a poll for its viewers and found out a decrease in its popularity.

It started studying the reasons for the decrease in its popularity amongst the Americans. It found out that the people started accusing it of being biased to the American government at the expense of the Iraqi regime. It became clear that when CNN broadcast the news was biased, the receiver told it through the poll we want the news from you and let the analysis to us. Do not tell us that Saddam is a dictator and this and that in the news bulletins. After that it was described or called the channel of the cowards. Then, it discovered its mistake through the poll.

**Interviewer:** Do you think Aljazeera made the same mistake?

**Interviewee:** Yes, Aljazeera channel made the same mistake. It should correct it through opinion Polls and studies in order to rectify its mistakes because if it keeps doing things in the same way it will lose its popularity. The fair and credulous channel imposes itself and attracts the people looking for truth and credibility.

*Closing statement - Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.*