To Efe Dorian and Olivia Nil

This journey would not have been the same without you

REVOLUTION MODERNITY AND THE ARAB SPRING

Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
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PETRA CAFNIK ULUDAĞ

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

Professor Dr. Aley Çınar
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

Associate Professor Dr. İlker Aytürk
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

Assistant Professor Dr. Berk Esen
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

Professor Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

Associate Professor Dr. Burcu Sümer
Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

----
Professor Dr. Halime Demirkan
Director

ABSTRACT

REVOLUTION, MODERNITY AND THE ARAB SPRING

Cafnik Uludağ, Petra
Ph.D., Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Supervisor: Professor Dr. Alev Çınar

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This dissertation critically examines how linguistic and discursive practices in global media discourses devalorize the revolutionary implications of the so called Arab Spring. By using media framing analysis it approaches the global media's construct of the Arab Spring as a revolutionary event in three steps. First, it analyzes framing and usage of the name Arab Spring, showing how the name itself implies two defining characteristics of the events: the Arabness and the Springness. Second, it focuses on the universal conception of revolution, questioning its relationship with Western modernity that affects the way global media approach and represent non-Western revolutions. Third, it compares global media practices with local media practices, highlighting how Eurocentric understanding of the events affects media reporting in global news outlets.

The thesis finds that regional, cultural, and political peculiarities of the Arab Spring affected global media's reporting. When the global Western media approached the revolutions in the Arab world, the Arab Spring was not just a name; it became a condensation of political and social contexts that provided the meaning for the

events. Western media has conceptualized the Arab Spring as a regional Arab event, a temporary awakening, that can suddenly turn into a suppression of will and progress. Further on the concept of revolution as used by the media failed to explain the events: first, because the concept is defined by its own Western identity; second, because it is defined with its own understanding of modernization and progress that is specific to the European context.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Eurocentrism, Media Discourse, Orientalism, Revolution.

ÖZET

DEVRİM, MODERNLEŞME VE ARAP BAHARI

Cafnik Uludağ, Petra
Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Profesor Dr. Alev Çınar

Temmuz 2017

Bu çalışma, küresel medya söylemlerinin "Arap Baharı"nın devrimci çıkarımlarını nasıl dilsel ve söylemsel olarak değersizleştirdiğini eleştirel olarak incelemektedir. Çalışmada, medya çerçeveleme yaklaşımı kullanılmaktadır ve küresel medyanın "Arap Baharı" kurgusunu üç adımda ele alarak devrimci bir eylem olarak değerlendirmektedir. İlk olarak, "Arap Baharı" isminin çerçevelemesinin ve kullanımının kendisinin nasıl olayın iki farklı özelliğini imlediğini işaret ettiğini araştırmaktadır. Bunlar "Arap" ve "bahar" olmaya dair özellikler olarak öne çıkmaktadır. İkinci olarak, devrimin uluslararası kavramsallaştırmasına odaklanmakta ve bunun batılı moderniteyle ilişkisini sorgulayarak küresel medyanın batı dışı devrimlere nasıl yaklaştığını ve yansıttığını araştırmaktadır. Üçüncü olarak, küresel medya ile yerel medya pratiklerini karşılaştırarak, Avrupa merkeziyetçi anlayışın, olayları tanımlayışının küresel haber kaynaklarını nasıl etkilediğinin altını çizmektedir.

Bu çalışmaya göre, Arap Baharının bölgesel, kültürel ve siyasal özelliklerin küresel medya haberciliğini etkilemiştir. Küresel Batı medyası Arap dünyasındaki

devrimleri ele aldığında görülmektedir ki, "Arap Baharı" sadece bir isim olmaktan öte, olayların siyasi ve sosyal bağlamlarının bir yoğuşması haline gelmiştir. Batı medyası, Arap Baharını tüm Arap bölgesini kapsayan bir olay, her an irade ve kalkınmanın bastırılmasına dönüşebilecek geçici bir uyanış olarak kavramsallaştırmıştır. Buna ek olarak, medya tarafından kullanılan devrim kavramı, olayları bazı açılarından açıklamakta yetersiz kalmıştır. Bunların ilki kavramın kendi batılı kimliği ile tanımlanmış oluşu, ikincisi ise yine kendi Avrupalı bağlamına ait olan modernleşme ve kalkınma anlayışı ile anlamlandırılmış olmasındadır.

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A journey as long as this one, a process of many failures and a few successes, of constant fears and scarcely any moments of confidence, can only be surmount with an extensive amount of support and encouragement from those who accompany you on at least parts of this journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> In politics, words and their usage are more important than any other weapon
>
> (Koselleck, 2004, p. 57)

The aim of this thesis is to show how words and their usage can be used as silent weapons of control and power. After the events the so called Arab Spring commenced in Tunisia in 2010, they quickly spread across the Arab region. The revolutionary developments received a lot of media attention as the events were unfolding. In 2011 "the Protester" even became Time's person of the year. Over the following years, nonetheless, the same events that were at first met with the excitement over the possibility of change were eventually observed with cynicism as a failed revolutionary attempt. This shift in the way media reported about the events is the outset of this research. Revolutions are messy and complex processes demanding a lot of time to show their actual outcomes. In the case of the Arab revolutionary events, global media discourses started to characterize the events as a

revolutionary failure as soon as a few months after they commenced. This study is focusing on the three years long period between 2011 and 2013. In the first few months into the year 2011 media reported about the revolutions in the Middle East, about the collective and unified demands for liberty, democracy and freedom. In the second half of the year and even more so in the years 2012 and 2013 the reporting has significantly changed. The Arab Spring was at times renamed into the Arab Winter, and was now presented as non-revolutionary or even anti-revolutionary.

Revolutions of the past share many attributes with the Arab Spring that media characterized as non-revolutionary. The estimations show that more than 1.3 million people died in the course of the French revolution. The American Revolution did not replace the old political elites and the rule of Napoleon III in France brought back the repression and conservatism. If it is not the violence, the repression, the conservatism or the perseverance of the old ruling elite what turns possible revolutions into non-revolutions, what qualities render the Arab Spring, as it is presented in the global media, as non-revolutionary? The study approaches this question with two critical focuses.

The first critical focus of the study has to do with the name Arab Spring. Soon after the name became globally popular and widely used by the media and other observers, it became a contested issue. The critics say it is historically loaded with meaning, it was given to the events by its outside observers and it might be differently understood trough the symbolism of seasons. This study supports the criticism of the name Arab Spring by showing how the name itself is reflected in the perception of the events as reported in the global media by implying two defining characteristics of the events: *Arabness* and *Springness*. Here the *Arabness* is defined

with the region and religion, and the *Springness* defines a social movement as a short period, that will not last, like a season of awakening turning into withdrawal as soon as its time is up. The study shows that by defining the events as *Arab* and as a *Spring* the participants are denied claims of nationhood, sovereign voice, subjectivity and agency, while the revolutionary events are accompanied by a belief that they are a transitory quality that cannot be institutionalized.

Arabness as a defining characteristic of the events has an important place also in the Arab media, political and popular discourses. Their interpretation of the events as *Arab* has different connotations. It refers to the unity, the united fight and Arabs' own uprising.

> The "Arab Spring" […] has reclaimed unity of purpose and direction in a single term, a term that is the Arabs' own in form and substance.

With this example I want to emphasize how the idea of *Arabness* is used, understood and framed differently in the global and local discourses. If in the global media *Arabness* renders the events non-revolutionary, in the local media *Arabness* implies specificity, originality and dominion. This study nonetheless, because of its interest in the global Western media reporting about non-Western events, will focus solely on the idea of *Arabness* as it is framed in the global media discourses.

Even though the term Arab Spring has become contested, I use this name when referring to the events, because this is the name predominantly used in the media and scholarly discourses included into this study. At the same time, this study relies on the criticism of the name Arab Spring, but it is not trying to suggest the usage of another name. It recognizes how the name became popular and widely used already in the middle on the year 2011 and was after that used by the global and local media.

Thus, expecting or proposing the change of the name would not be fruitful at this point of time. Even more, it could be misleading and confusing. Ergo, to maintain and acknowledge the criticism and to preserve the clarity of the text, I use the name Arab Spring in between the quotation marks throughout the thesis, also because this is how the events were often referred to in the Arab media sources after the name Arab Spring gained its global popularity. Besides that, this study's intention is to expose the more general framing practices in the media. While these practices do reflect the name of the events and thus support the existing criticism of the name, they also reveal the depth of the problem. The events were framed with the ideas of a regional and short-lasting or temporary event not only because they were called the Arab Spring, but mostly, regardless of the name, because of the Orientalist knowledge of the region. This study aims at revealing these latent and deep seeded practices. From now on and throughout the thesis the events will be referred to as the "Arab Spring".

Furthermore, second critical stand focuses on the universal and normative conception of revolution. This study questions the way global media approach and represent non-Western revolutions. It looks at the concept of revolution as used in the media and questions its relationship with the Western modernity and how it provides the conceptual, political and cultural driving force of the key political concepts in use today. The thesis shows how the understanding of the concept of revolution in the Western mainstream media requires a particular locality and temporality. By locality I refer to the different regions of the globe with their particularities, such as race, culture and religion. Some of these particularities, according to the media, render the revolution possible and the others do not. Temporality, on the other hand, is

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discussed as a particular time period in history. Distinct historical time periods assume revolutionary events to have different characteristics. In some periods for example the violence is considered as normal, in others it is not. The criteria of locality and temporality affects the way Western media approach and represent non-Western revolutions. The words like "West" and "Western" are used throughout the thesis to refer to Europe and countries of substantial European ancestral populations.

The concept of *revolution*, one of the key political concepts has been a part of conceptual-historical debates because of its flexibility and fluctuating capacity enabling it to hold different meanings and refer to diverse occurrences and events. Similarly so the contemporary debates in the field of the studies of revolutions acknowledge multiplicity of distinct events that can all be named a revolution. They recognize the possibility of different origins, processes and outcomes, different actors and demands. Mainstream global media, the way that I have been reading their news reports, on the other hand, seem to understand the concept of a revolution very differently - as a normative standard. This study aims to show, how is the understanding and the mass usage of the concept as a norm problematic and at the same time a part of the long-lasting and latent discourses of power.

Around the time period when European languages underwent the transformation of the pre-modern usage, between 1750 and 1850, what Koselleck calls the "Saddle" time, four important Western revolutions took place: the Glorious Revolution, the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the Spring of Nations. It was in that time that the concept of revolution started changing and became attached to everything conceived in terms of change or upheaval (morals, laws, religion, politics, economy, etc.)(Koselleck, 2004, p. 48). Consequentially these events played an

important role in the way revolutions are defined today. Jakonen's conceptual historical analysis indicates that the concept of revolution is heavily loaded by the contemporary, or at least modern, historical and political imagination, especially because of the idea of great modern revolutions such as the French revolution and the October's revolution (Jakonen, 2011, p. 19). Thus, this study assumes a revolution to be a very loaded concept, and it demonstrates how in the global media discourses it is many times understood as modern and mainly Western, excluding anything "non-Western" and traditional. Therefore the study questions the concept of revolution, as used in the global media, and the way it conditions the observations and the reports about the "Arab Spring"?

The study shows that when applying certain political concepts outside of their assumed context they can diminish and misrepresent the character of the matter to which they relate. Because of the regional, cultural, and political peculiarities of the "Arab Spring", the concept of revolution, as used by the media, failed to explain the events: first, because the concept is defined by its own Western identity; second, because it is defined with its own understanding of modernization and progress that is specific to the European context. Particular nature of the "Arab Spring" cannot be comprehended trough the universal prism of the concept of revolution the media uses. This is how words as silent weapons of control and power diminish and trivialize the "Arab Spring" events.

This study nonetheless does not suggest that the concept of revolution should not be used or that it requires changes in the conceptualization. It also does not try to argue that the "Arab Spring" as a whole was a revolutionary event. This study's only intention is to problematize Western media discursive practices, their use of the

concept of revolution and the way they framed the "Arab Spring" as a non-revolutionary event.

The events in question being the "Arab Spring" also reveals another trait of the discourse that needs to be addressed. Particularity of the "Arab Spring" is burdened with yet another tendency of the observing Western media: the Orientalist lens – "a way of seeing that imagines, emphasizes, exaggerates and distorts differences of Arab people and cultures as compared to that of Europe and the US" (Said, 1979, p. 12). This study understands *Eurocentrism* and *Orientalism* as related ideological approaches creating the discourses of othering, where non-European is understood as secondary to European or Western because it does not or cannot follow the European model of development and progress. I take *Orientalism* not only as a physical manifestation of the ideological creation of power relations used to subordinate, overpower and exploit, but as what Said (1979) termed as *latent Orientalism.*

> A manner of regularized (or Orientalized) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient. (Said, 1979, p. 202)

In this understanding latent Orientalism is the unconscious and often unchallenged knowledge that is defined by its "unanimity, stability, and durability" (Said, 1979, p. 206). It is at this point where Orientalism and Eurocentrism integrate. The traditions of knowledge presenting the normative and globally universal standards of development based on the European experience are also the instruments of othering which often unconsciously create a divide between the observing West and the rest of the world or, in the case of the Orientalism, the Orient. Thus, seeing the Arab World as essentially different as the West, causes additional difficulty when trying to understand and explain Arab events with concepts that are intrinsically Western.

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Said's Orientalism was met with many criticisms, one of them being his preoccupation with the West resulting in the negligence of the non-Western discourses and approaches. This research, by supporting this assessment, places the Western media's discursive practices side by side with the Arab media's. The media framing analysis of 200 Arab articles reveals significant differences between the two media groups, additionally maintaining the argument of the study.

I argue that the framing of the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event is *Eurocentric*, because of the understanding of the concept of revolution, as used in the Western media. The concept of revolution in the media reports is culturally embedded in the historical knowledge of a few Western revolutionary events. *Eurocentrism* constructs the West as a modern, progressive, different than the rest, unique and at the same time a model to be followed by others. *Eurocentrism* uses European experiences as a measurement of development. In this study I am especially interested in *Eurocentrism* as a framework creating traditions of knowledge. In this case, how a few Western revolutions built a uniform and normative set of criteria that is now being used in the media to evaluate if an event in question is a revolution.

This thesis shows how words when used in particular contexts and with particular conceptualization can function as silent weapons of control and power. The way they frame the events by using such conceptualizations they can trivialize and diminish the significance of the events in question. In the case of the "Arab Spring", as this study intends to demonstrate, when the global media defines the events as *Arab, a Spring,* and a *non-revolution*, by generalizing and simplifying, they demean the actual magnitude and possible future implications of the events.

1.1 Research Question

This study tackles with research questions emerging from two sets of literature: (1) criticism of the name Arab Spring (Abusharif, 2014; Alhassen, 2012; Khouri, 2011) and (2) the idea that contemporary revolutions are conceptualized and measured based on the knowledge of past revolutions (Hermassi, 1976; Mardin, 1971). It shows how naming and understanding of particular events in media discourses reflects still present taken-for-granted beliefs about the world by answering the following research questions:

RQ 1a: How did the naming practices as used in the global media condition the reporting about the "Arab Spring" in The Guardian and The New York Times?

RQ 1b: How did the naming practices as used in the local Arab media frame the reporting about the "Arab Spring" in the Arab media?

RQ 1c: How did the global and the local media approach the name Arab Spring differently?

RQ 2a: How did the concept of revolution as used in the global media condition the reporting about the "Arab Spring" in The Guardian and The New York Times?

RQ 2b: How did the concept of revolution as used in the local Arab media frame the reporting about the "Arab Spring" in the Arab media?

RQ 2c: How did the global and the local media approach the concept of revolution differently?

To answer the first set of questions the study offers a short quantitative analysis of the naming practices. What were the names used in the press and how often were they used? After establishing that the name Arab Spring is the most often used name in the media, the study continues with the framing analysis of the events, questioning how the ideas of *Arabness* and *Springness*, constituted in the name itself, influence the reporting about the events. The two frames were deductively determined following the criticism of the name Arab Spring and the literature on the politics of othering. The analysis approaches the connotations brought forward when the "Arab Spring" is represented as a "spring": whether these are the seasonal character, a short lived movement or an awakening. Literature on the Postcolonial studies, on the other, offers critical means to access the idea of *Arabness*. The Arab world in Western discourses is often perceived as a unit made with parts that were almost identical, the same as the Arabs or "Orientals were almost everywhere nearly the same"(Said, 1979, p. 38). This study applies similar criticism when examining how the idea of *Arabness* is defining the reports about the "Arab Spring".

To answer the second set of questions six frames were deductively determined following a literature review on early Western revolutions (the Glorious Revolution, the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the 1848 Spring of Nations). Violence, public support, economic inequality, fundamental changes (in politics, society and religion), new governments, and the destruction of long-standing principles are attributes assigned to the revolutionary events in the time of Enlightenment in the texts contemporary to the events. This study will at first measure how often were these frames used in the discourses on the "Arab Spring". After confirming that these frames were used in the majority of articles, text-based

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framing analysis will approach the framing practices critically. It will question the maintenance of these frames in the media and how such framing constructs a discursive framework unable to comprehend the revolutionary character of the "Arab Spring".

With the two critical focuses this study approaches the "Arab Spring", the naming practices and the use of the concept of revolution differently than it has been done before. While many have tackled with these events, analyzing their beginnings, their course and their outcomes, this study proposes a different approach: to study the "Arab Spring" not as an event, but rather as a discursive creation. By that I mean that this thesis is not going to study the events as they happened, reasons behind them and the possible outcomes. It will study the events as they appeared to be happening and developing in the media reports. It will focus on media reporting and newsmaking and the ways the global media represented the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary failure, a revolutionary event that has lost its momentum. By turning the attention away from the actual events this study does not intend to downplay their gravity and significance. On the contrary, it is this studies aim to disclose linguistic and discursive practices that devalorize the revolutionary implications of the so called Arab Spring.

The "Arab Spring" was a very well covered event by its media and academic observers. Hundreds of scientific publications were published only in a few years following the first demonstrations. Case studies offer an in-depth analysis of the events and how they affected a nation-state of interest (Lawson, 2015; Matthiesen, 2012; Rashed & El Azzazi, 2011; Roccu, 2013). Some have examined and questioned the origins of the events (Kurzman, 2012). Others have studied the

dynamics of the events (Al-Rahim, 2011; Goldstone, 2011; Jones, 2012). Several

studies have a comparative angle. Some are offering a historical comparison ,

comparing the 2011 events with either 1848 the Spring of Nations (Weyland, 2012),

1979 Iran (Kashani-Sabet, 2012; Keddie, 2012; Nabavi, 2012), or other historical

revolutionary events (Almond, 2012). Others compare the states taking part in the

"Arab Spring" or particular events or changes occurring in more than one "Arab

Spring" state (Alianak, 2014, comparing Tunisia, Egypt and Libya; Anderson, 2011,

comparing Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Marocco). Theory building attempts have

used the "Arab Spring" to rethink or criticize the concepts and knowledge on security

(Sharon Erickson Nepstad, 2011), authoritarianism (Bellin, 2012), democratization

(Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013; Teti, 2012; Valbjørn, 2012), human development

(Kuhn, 2012),theories of revolutions (Akder, 2013), etc.

The study of this thesis distinguishes itself from the studies mentioned above and

other studies of the "Arab Spring" because it has less to do with the events and more

with the representation of the events and the concept of revolution as used in this

representation. Thus, this study encompasses all the approaches to study the "Arab

Spring" by offering a critical lens and by questioning the traditions of knowledge

used to assess the events. This research's focus is media's construct of the "Arab

Spring" as a revolutionary event. I will argue that the "Arab Spring" as a news item

is a media constructed event. With that I imply a certain distance between the "Arab

Spring" events as they occurred and the events we followed in media reports. To

support this claim, the study has two critical objectives. It will reveal how the

discursive creation of the events occurred trough the naming practices and trough the

definition of the events as revolutionary. The following chapters will not try to assess

the origins and the dynamics of the "Arab Spring", predict its outcomes or international significance. They will examine the construct of the "Arab Spring" and how it was presented as a revolutionary event.

The contribution of this analysis aims to go beyond the erring usage of the concept of revolution. Its intention is to bring the academic focus to the conceptual practices in media and everyday discourses. Scholars of conceptual history have already recognized the necessity to broaden their focus outside the limits of academic discourses (Richter, 1995); in turn, as this study shows, scholars of media and cultural studies should focus on concepts and their usage in discursive practices to reveal the hidden, persistent and rooted nature of the politics of othering. Such an approach to the study of concepts and the politics of othering may reveal the limits of the language in use.

This study also contributes to the literature by offering a new methodological approach, when studying the concepts using the media framing analysis and when reaching beyond the academic discourses to study the concept of revolution. And most importantly, this study reveals how the politics of othering persistently work trough the structures of language.

1.2 Method

To approach the manner in which the Western mainstream media covered and represented the "Arab Spring" events, this study conducts media framing analysis (MFA) focused on The Guardian and The New York Times. In the following chapters I refer to these news sources as the representatives of the Western

mainstream media or Western media or global media or press. What I mean by these references is the Western media sources included into this study.

Media play an important role informing their audiences about the events from near and far. When reporting about the distant happenings, developments and affairs, the fact that they are often the sole source, increases their influence. Moreover, by telling people 'what to think about' and 'how to think about it,' the media exerts political influence (Entman, 2007, p. 165), which affects more than just individual readers. The media also affects decision making processes in politics. Political decision makers are strongly influenced by prestigious papers, that are held in high regard by journalists and audiences (Kepplinger, 2007, p. 10). Thus, media reports about the "Arab Spring" do not only affect public opinions, they can influence political decisions and foreign policies. In short, what media say and how they say it, matters. News outlets are not just a source of information, they are an instrument that constructs and disseminates knowledge. This research's focus is the global media's construct of the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event. For that reason this study has less to do with the "Arab Spring" itself, than with discourses on the "Arab Spring", understanding and conceptualization of the events as revolutionary.

In this study framing is believed to be a useful tool when studying recent conceptual changes, especially the changes tracked trough media discourses. MFA refers to the techniques of tracing the constructions of knowledge, either consciously or unconsciously, which influence a particular kind of an understanding and interpretation. This study uses Reese's (2010) and Van Gorp's (2007) understanding of frames as "culturally embedded", shared and enduring.

1.2.1 Methodology: Concepts in Media Discourses

The main objective of this study is to critically examine how linguistic and discursive practices in global media discourses portrait the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event. The study focuses on the media because it is set on a premise, that mass media frames and reflects the way political events are represented in contemporary societies. The study uses media framing analysis to assess the quantity and the types of frames used to define the revolutionary character of the events.

This study focuses on media discourses, because media play a crucial role in spreading agendas and setting the tone of many other discourses informed by the news reports. Thus, this study is based on the knowledge that media discourses form and direct popular and everyday discourses, as much as discourses between political elites, and vice versa. It is following an understanding of media as a technology of discursive construction set forth by Althusser and further developed by Stuart Hall and Jodi Dean. According to Althusser, media, the ideological state apparatus, function as a tool to ideologically control the society (Althusser, 1968). This argument requires questions such as "can ideology be resisted or is it omnipotent?" and "do people subjected to an ideology have any agency?" Borrowing from Gramsci's theory of hegemony which allows agency in the processes where meaning is created and assigned (Gramsci, 1971), research done by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham shows that media messages can be perceived in multiple and distinct ways (Hall, Hobson, Lowe, & Willis, 2006). Thus media audiences do have agency and "a consensus in cultural studies, communication research and discourse analysis" attests "that the dominant ideology thesis underestimated people's capacity to offer resistance to ideologies" (Jørgensen

& Phillips, 2011, p. 16). The idea of agency in ideology is further developed by Slavoj Zizek and later adopted for media studies by Jodi Dean.(2002).

To Dean (and Zizek), ideologies are not Marxist false-consciousnesses which must be revealed as lies. Ideology instead consists of the beliefs implied by the conforming actions one takes that upholds traditional cultural institutions regardless of whether he or she actually believes in their principals. (Czolacz, 2017)

This is also the theoretical position of this thesis. The study acknowledges the significant role of mass media in the processes of conceptualization because of the power the technologies of mass communications hold in our lives with simply choosing the information they distribute, the format they represent the information in, and finally when they frame and contextualize the information into a story (Habermas, 2006, p. 419). But it also recognizes that media practices are organized around the traditions of knowledge, unquestioned believes and ideas, which the media creators do not necessarily hold, and neither do media audiences when reusing the same framing techniques. The concept of revolution as used in the media is problematic precisely because its origins and implications are not questioned.

Media effects are even more potent when discussing the events we cannot participate in or observe on our own. Media technologies and discourses they form bring the remote and the foreign into our homes and most importantly they shape an image of these places, events or people for us. Media "define a space that is increasingly mutually referential and reinforcive, and increasingly integrated into the fabric of everyday life" (Silverstone, 2006, p. 6). Furthermore, in the events representing a crisis of some sort, whether political, economic or social, the role of the media is

particularly compelling. The way media frame these events constitutes "how we collectively recognize and respond to what happens in the world" (Robertson, 2013, p. 4). This is why global news media outlets, such as The New York Times and The Guardian, to name just a few, also play an important role in disseminating concepts placed in different contexts, because they are the most important source of information for outside observers of any remote events. Studies (Aday et al., 2013) show that traditional mainstream media were crucial transmitters of news about the "Arab Spring" to the global audience and were also most read sources, especially if published online. Besides that, scholars of history of ideas and conceptual history are emphasizing the necessity to move away from studying academic texts and towards studying popular and everyday usage of concepts (Richter, 1995). For these reasons this paper will present a study of conceptualizing practices as they have appeared in the printed and electronic editions of two traditional global media outlets. Initial analysis will be further on compared with the analysis of Arab news sources (see Table 1), establishing crucial differences between the global and the local media approaching and reporting about the "Arab Spring".

1.2.2 Data Collection Process

In order to access the ways in which the concept of revolution is used in Western mainstream media coverage and how media represent the "Arab Spring", this study conducts media framing analysis (MFA) focused on The Guardian and The New York Times between the years 2011 and 2013. These two sources were chosen for three reasons: first, they are recognized as the most-read broadsheet newspapers published online; second, they occupy an "elite" status in the global media domain;

and third they are acknowledged to have a stronger effect on political elites and decision makers (Jakonen, 2011, p. 19).

According to the ComScore (2012), an internet technology company that measures global online activity, 644 million people worldwide accessed online news sources in October 2012. Mail Online, British tabloid, was the most read with more than 50 million unique visitors in a month. This tabloid was followed by two broadsheet newspapers published online, The New York Times with 48.7 million and The Guardian with 39 million unique monthly readers (ComScore, 2012). These two broadsheet newspapers will be included into the study because of their international readership online and in print and because of their content with less sensationalism and more in-depth reporting comparing to the first ranked tabloid Mail Online.

Both sources also have a global reach in the printed editions. The New York Times International edition is sold in 130 countries around the world with the readership as high as 420.000 ("INYT Reader Survey," 2014), The New York Times itself reaches an audience of 9.000.000 readers ("Readers of The New York Times in the U.S. 2016 | Statistic," 2016) while the number of subscribers to the digital edition, the website and the application, in the last few years has varied between 800.000 and 1.000.000 subscribers with more than 40.000.000 people using their web page or application, which places the webpage as the second most read news webpage in the world (ComScore, 2012). The Guardian's readership reaches over 1.000.000 ("The Guardian, our readers & circulation," 2010), with the readership nearly equally divided among the U.K., the U.S. and the rest of the world. Its online edition has ranked third in the world with more than 30.000.000 readers (ComScore, 2012). High readership numbers and the "elite" status of the two newspapers included into

this study consolidate their power in the opinion formation processes. Such power can be measured and determined with two important methodological approaches; agenda setting and framing seek to reveal the power of the media and how it affects public opinion and individual's knowledge and understanding of events.

In the study I consider the two global media sources as representatives of a global group of media as opposed to the group called local media. This is why the two global sources and the way they frame the "Arab Spring" events are not compared in detail in this study. As local media representatives are also not compared between themselves. This is not to say that this research is not aware of the differences between the sources. The Guardian and The New York Times are both globally known and read, while they both represent ideological spectrum left of the center and are grouped into the liberal model of mass media, they are approaching news differently. "The British media system is stronger than the US media system in terms of state intervention, liberal corporatism and social democracy" (Fahmy & Kim, 2008, p. 448). The two news outlets can also be differentiated based on their "political parallelism", the reflection of political ideologies in the news reporting. "The British media system may allow for more diverse viewpoints covered by a number of media outlets with different voices" (Fahmy & Kim, 2008, p. 448). This study's focus are global media discourses reporting about the "Arab Spring". While I do not intend to compare the two sources, I will in passing point out a few differences between the The Guardian's and the New York Time's framing of the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event. The data shows that the differences between the two are not striking, but they also should not be neglected.

The initial search of articles using the database Lexis Nexis comprised 282 articles. These were all the articles published in the period of three years between 2011 and 2013 with their main topic being identified as the events known as the "Arab Spring". To avoid the articles where the "Arab Spring" was only mentioned in passing, the criterion was set where the clear connection with the "Arab Spring" had to be established in the headline of the article. The main topic of the article was decided through a two-step topic identification process. At first a combination of a noun defining a geographical area in the Middle East and North Africa region and a noun defining a social movement or collective action had to appear in the headline of an article, as for example *Arab Spring, Egyptian revolution or Yemeni insurgency.* This resulted in 282 initially reviewed articles, out of which 195 (138 from The Guardian, 57 from The New York Times) were deemed relevant after duplicates, letters and blog posts were removed from the set.

As to the categories of articles, news items were the most frequent in both publications (146 articles; 75%), followed by opinion or comment columns (22 articles; 11%), editorials (14 articles; 7%), and features (13 articles; 7%). Considering the entire discourse as relevant, no distinctions were made between these categories of articles. For the same reason no distinctions were made between the authors of the articles or contributors mentioned in the texts themselves. Due to the selective nature of the journalistic and editorial processes (McQuail, 2010), deciding on what events to cover and how, whose statement to include and which article to publish, every circulated text contributes to the construction of news and thus to the framing of the event.

Every article was treated as a unit of analysis acknowledging the possibility of a single article using more than one frame. These articles were then read and analyzed to determine the location and names of the events and how were these events framed by the media. The study perceived all the events in the region as separate cases bound only to a country and not as regional developments and a part of the "Arab Spring". Separating the cases by a country also enabled this study to look at the differences between the events according to the media representation and to establish whether the events were depicted as regional (Arab) or national (Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan, Syrian, etc.). The repetition of frames will be emphasized as a factor of impact, because highly repeated frames affect the public more than others. The analysis of the articles will help us determine the conceptualization of the "Arab Spring" events by the media by examining their naming practices and identify conceptualizing practices used in the news articles.

The question that emerges after concluding with the MFA of the global press is whether non-Western media discourses conceptualize revolutions differently. Only than the claim that Western conceptualization is a product of Eurocentrism holds firmly. In order to access the ways in which the concept of revolution is used in the local media, this study also conducts a MFA focused on newspapers printed or published online. News sources included into the study were gathered from BBC Monitoring Library using Lexis Nexis database (for the full list of news sources see Table 1). BBC Monitoring Library is a collection of global news sources translated into English. The study includes all articles from this database on the "Arab Spring" accessible via Lexis Nexis published by regional news sources between the years 2011 and 2013. That makes in total 200 articles. The articles included into the study

are from 38 news sources originating from 14 regional states. 19 of these sources publish in English, other 19 were translated by BBC Monitoring Library either from Arabic or French. As to the categories of articles, in the Arab news, as before in the Western media, news items were the most frequent types of articles (140 articles; 70%), followed by opinion or comment columns (29 articles; 14,5%), editorials (17 articles; 8,5%), and features and interviews (14 articles; 7%). The use of the categories of articles in the global and the local media was almost identical. Here again the entire discourse was considered as relevant.

Throughout the study the local sources are, when referring to them as a group, either called local media sources or Arab media sources. I am aware that naming this diverse group of news sources as Arab is a simplification. Because they do not only publish in Arabic language, one of the sources even publishes in Britain (though in Arabic language and for the Arab or Arab speaking audience). When I refer to the group as a whole as Arab, what I have in mind is that this is a group of sources either coming from the Arab peninsula, or writing in Arab language for the Arab speaking audience.

While analyzing local media sources, similar as in the analysis of global media, every article was treated as a unit of analysis acknowledging the possibility of a single article using more than one frame. These articles were then read and analyzed to determine the location and names of the events and how were these events framed by the media. As done in the analysis of the global media, here as well, the study at first focuses on the name the "Arab Spring" and its connotations as used in the local media, and then on the concept of revolution and meanings assigned to it. In the final stage of the research the results of the two analyses are compared to determine the

differences between the global and the local media approaching the "Arab Spring" in

their discourses.

Table 1 (cont'd): The list of local news sources with the country of the origin and the language of the publication

COUNTRY	NEWS SOURCE	LANGUAGE
Algeria	El-Khabar Website	Arabic
Jordan	Al-Dustur	Arabic
Jordan	Al-Sabil	Arabic
Jordan	Al-Rai	Arabic
Lebanon	Al-Safir	Arabic
Libya	Birniq	Arabic
London	Al-Quds al-Arabi	Arabic
Marocco	Assabah	Arabic
Palestinian territories	Filastin Website	Arabic
Qatar	Al-Sharq Website	Arabic
Qatar	Al-Rayah	Arabic
Saudi Arabia	Al-Watan	Arabic
Sudan	Al-Khartoum	Arabic
Sudan	Alwan	Arabic
Sudan	Al-Ahram al-Yawm	Arabic
Syria	Tishrin website	Arabic
Syria	Al-Sharq al-Awsat	Arabic
Yemen	Al-Bayan Website	Arabic
Dubai	Khaleej Times website	English
Dubai	Gulf News Website	English
Jordan	Ammon News Website	English
Jordan	Petra-JNA website	English

Jordan	Jordan Times	English
Kuwait	KUNA News Agency	English
Lebanon	The Daily Star	English
Oman	Times of Oman	English
Palestinian territories	WAFA News Agency	English
Palestinian territories	Ma'an News Agency	English
Qatar	Aljazeera Website	English
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Gazette	English
Sudan	Sudan Vision	English
Sudan	The Citizen	English
Syria	Tishreen Website	English
Yemen	Yemen Fox	English
Yemen	Yemen Times	English
Yemen	SABA News Agency	English
Yemen	Arab News	English
Algeria	Liberte	French

1.2.3 Framing

This study uses framing techniques in the analysis of media's reporting about the "Arab Spring". It approaches the global media's construct of the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event in three steps. First it analyzes framing and usage of the name Arab Spring, showing how the name itself implies two defining characteristics of the events: *Arabness* and *Springness*. Second it focuses on the universal conception of revolution, questioning its relationship with Western modernity that affects the way global media approach and represent non-Western revolutions. Third it compares

global media practices with local media practices, highlighting how Eurocentric understanding of the events affects media reporting in global news outlets. In the three steps framing is used as a method.

Studies of media effects went through several paradigms since they emerged in the beginning of the 20th century. Early convictions of the almighty powers of the mass media were soon replaced with more thought out approaches to study the complexity of media effects. The more recent research of the effects started at the end of the 20th century and is still dominating the field. The two approaches used in this study, agenda setting and framing, originated in that era. Both approaches are closely related. While agenda setting affects the topics discussed in the media and accordingly in everyday discourses, framing affects the way these topics are discussed. Agenda setting theory thus describes the ability of mass media to assign importance to topics, events, people, etc. (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002), because a story is perceived as important as often it appears in the media. Framing, on the other hand affects how the audience perceives an issue. Framing "is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11).

The analytical technique of framing refers to tracing "a process whereby communicators, consciously or unconsciously, act to construct a point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be interpreted by others in a particular manner" (Kuypers, 2006, p. 8). Frames used in communication make some information more salient than others, affecting how the audience perceives an issue that is communicated to them (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

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After Entman introduced framing into approaches to media research (Entman, 1993), it became very popular and often used approach in media and communication studies. Framing is not a unified methodological framework. On the contrary Rees sees its value in the way it "bridges parts of the field that need to be in touch with each other: quantitative and qualitative, empirical and interpretive, psychological and sociological, and academic and professional" (Reese, 2007, p. 148). D'Angelo (2002) identified three paradigms where framing occurs: cognitive, constructionist and critical. This research focuses on the last two, leaning on a similar research method used by Reese (2010). Critical paradigm implies that framing is a form of power while constructionist grants participants – journalists, commentators, experts and editors participating in the discourse – professional autonomy. This study will borrow Reese's definition of frames as "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time" (Reese, 2001), implying that frames can manifest themselves in different settings by different users because they are a reflection of culture. Using this understanding and critical approach towards framing, this research is predominantly qualitative, using quantitative approaches to support its main arguments and qualitative findings.

When it comes to media discourses, culturally embedded frames are "appealing for journalists, because they are ready for use"(Van Gorp, 2010, p. 87). Meaning that culturally embedded frames carry connotations the intended audience easily grasps. "Because such frames make an appeal to ideas the receiver is already familiar with, their use appears to be natural to those who are members of a particular culture or society" (Van Gorp, 2010, p. 87). Culturally embedded frames are universally understood inside a particular cultural domain. They "influence the receiver's

message interpretation, which lends meaning, coherence, and ready explanations for complex issues" (Van Gorp, 2010, pp. 87–88).

The media, as an important actor in opinion formation processes contributes to the framing of events on two levels. On a macro level framing refers to social structures beyond individual's control. These are modes media institutions use to present information in a way that resonates with the existing cultural framework of their audience (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). On a micro level "framing describes how people use information and presentation features regarding issues as they form impressions"(Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). According to a number of studies Scheufele and Tewksbury assume "that a framing effect occurs when audiences pay substantial attention to news messages. That is, the content and implications of an issue frame are likely to be most apparent to an audience member who pays attention to a news story" (2007, p. 13). What is also important is repetition of the frames. Chong and Druckman's (2007) study shows that repetition of frames has greater impact on less knowledgeable individuals. More knowledgeable individuals, on the other hand, are more likely to compare different frames and asses the information given. Similarly, Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's "dependency theory" (1976) suggests that the effects media have on the construction of meaning varies and it depends on the issue depicted. According to them, the media has lass power when reporting on the issue the audience has a lot of experience with, and more power when the audience is less experienced with the issue. All the studies above complement each other when claiming that the audience actively uses the information from the media to produce meanings and is not taking the information provided as the whole truth and absolute, unquestionable knowledge. This is why

this study is not based on an assumption that media discourses and the way the "Arab Spring" is framed by the media change public opinion and ultimately conceptualization of the concept of revolution in the case of the "Arab Spring". But, as many studies show (Christen & Gunther, 2003; Daschmann, 2000; McLeod, Pan, Kosicki, & Rucinski, 1995; Mutz, 1989), media do add to the process by which individuals construct meaning and consequently to the process of building the public opinion. In the case of the "Arab Spring", an event that is geographically remote and unfamiliar to the outside observers, media also served as the primary source of information, increasing its role in the opinion formation processes. Another factor should also not be neglected when examining media representations of the "Arab Spring" in the western media outlets, this is media's characteristic to reinforce stereotypes, whether these are racial (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997), sexual (Fox & Renas, 1977), nationalist (Volcic & Erjavec, 2012), religious (K. H. Bullock & Jafri, 2000), class based (H. E. Bullock, Fraser Wyche, & Williams, 2001), etc. Studies specifically focusing on social movements also show that media tend to represent these movements by emphasizing certain "newsworthy" characteristics of the events (Chan & Lee, 1984; Gitlin, 1980; Hertog & McLeod, 1995; Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986).

Critical framing paradigm, as proposed by Van Gorp (2007) is methodologically not very different from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), especially as CDA is defined and used by Van Dijk (1993, 2003). In this study framing is believed to be a useful tool when studying recent conceptual changes, especially the changes tracked trough media discourses. Traditional conceptual studies are methodologically not very different from what media studies try to accomplish when using framing as a

method. Dunn's study (Dunn, 1989) of canonical texts, for example, was set to identify reappearing and dominant ideas defining a revolution. Framing and identification of frames is used in media studies with a very similar purpose. Gamson and Modigliani defined a media frame as a central organizing idea that provides meaning (1987, p. 143) which means that framing is a search of frames or dominant ideas most often used in the studies of media texts, while the studies of conceptual history search for the dominant ideas and definitions in academic or canonical texts (as did Dunn, 1989), or in encyclopedias and lexicons (as did Koselleck, 2004). But to grasp conceptual changes as a whole, it is not enough to look only at the language usage in the academia. To understand the whole specter of changes the concept of revolution went through in the case of the "Arab Spring", especially in the time ruled by mass communication practices, media discourses and their contribution to conceptual changes have to be examined. To do so, this study will use the method of framing to study the concept of revolution and to identify reappearing and dominant ideas attached to it.

1.3 Chapter Outline

The following five chapters approach media representation of the "Arab Spring" by showing how the name Arab Spring itself and the concept of revolution as used in the media affect reporting about the "Arab Spring". The second chapter introduces the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event. It offers an overview of the events, their developments and implications. It examines the literature on the "Arab Spring" and it identifies the contribution of this study to the existing discussions. The third chapter lays out the theoretical framework to the study, introducing the major concepts. The fourth chapter shows how framing of the events in the global media appears to reflect

the by the name itself, defining the events as "Arab" and as a "Spring", which resulted in reporting that denied the "Arab Spring" its revolutionary character, agency and possibilities of success. It then turns to local media and their attempts to name the events. This chapter highlights important differences between the global and the local news sources, and it show how these differences support the argument of the Eurocentric global media. In the fifth chapter I intend to answer the question how does the concept of revolution as used in the media affect reporting about the "Arab Spring" in two steps. First, by extracting common attributes of the concept of revolution through a conceptual historical approach. Second, by using these attributes as frames in media framing analysis (MFA). This chapter shows how the concept of revolution as used in the media is problematic, because it reinforces the imbalanced power relations between the observing Western media sources and the observed Arab states, and it leads readers to the faulty conclusion that the "Arab Spring" was a non-revolutionary event. The comparison of the two media groups (global and local) and the way they comprehend and approach the so called Arab Spring further supports the argument of the Eurocentric traditions of knowledge failing at explaining the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event. The concluding chapter provides a synthesis of the four chapters by pointing out the significance of the chosen method and the presented findings.

CHAPTER TWO

ARAB SPRING

The research question I develop in this research starts with Koselleck's thesis of the "Saddle" time, a period in modern history when the languages we use today started acquiring their contemporary meaning and form. This was also a period when the concepts, such as the concept of revolution, were assigned their modern conceptualization. I was drawn back to this idea when the whole world was watching the Tahrir square demonstrations on their TV sets. I began to wonder, knowing the studies of Eurocentrism, globalization, and modernization and post-colonialism, what happens with the concept of revolution when it is placed outside of the geography where it was created. This is why this study questions and problematizes the revolutionary character of the "Arab Spring" as it is represented in the media discourses. What follows is a short introduction of the events and an overview of the literature regarding the "Arab Spring".

The wave of revolutionary events that commenced in 2010 quickly spread across the Arab region. The initial protests in each country developed differently; from minor protests to partial governmental changes or even complete regime overthrows. Every

participating state underwent distinct developments, but what they had in common was the wave of events they participated in, the region and the expressed demand for a change. By the end of 2011 more than 20 countries in the region had taken part in what became known as the "Arab Spring".

Most sources and observers of the "Arab Spring" agree that the events started on 17 December 2010 in Tunisia with Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation. This specific designation of such an all encompassing political event seems very similar to the historical explanation given for the beginning of the WWI – commenced, or so it is very simplistically explained, with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Not only that events of such grandiose proportions do not start over night, and that there is a difference between a beginning and a critical juncture, some (Chomsky & Bishara, 2011; A. Wilson, 2013) even state that the first demonstrations in the region started not in Tunisia but in Western Sahara late in the year 2010. But the self-immolation was more shocking and news worthy. The young, unemployed, university graduate had set himself on fire when the police confiscated his cart used to sell fruit and vegetables. Protests quickly spread, at first all over Tunisia, followed by region wide protests in January 2011. Protests soon arose in Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Syria and Morocco. On 14 January 2011, Tunisia's president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali fled his country after weeks of mass protests. The first victory of the people spread hope across the region. On 25 January 2011, thousands of protesters in Egypt gathered in Tahrir Square, in Cairo. They demanded the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak. Mubarak resigned on 11 February and transferred his power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. The third country to join the movement with all force, enthusiasm and hope for a change was Libya. On 15 February protests

broke out against Muammar Gaddafi's regime. In the last week of August 2011, in the Battle of Tripoli in Libya, rebel forces gained control over the capital. When the government was overthrown, Muammar Gaddafi fled into hiding. He was killed by rebels on 20 October 2011. These events resulted in tens of thousands deaths in Libya alone. On 15 March 2011, protests also began in Syria, where to this day, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad continues fighting the opposition and where initial protests led to a civil war. Besides Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, Yemen and Iraq were also greatly shaken by the events. In Yemen president's resignation was followed by new elections and a few years later a civil war. In Iraq the withdrawal of US troops in 2011 was succeeded by sectarian tensions. This resulted in instability enabling ISIS to seize a large part of the country including several major cities. Demonstrations and minor protests also took place in several other countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Marocco, Mauritania, Oman, the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Somalia and Western Sahara). These events took different turns; some were answered with violence others with different degrees of negotiation and success.

Back in Tunisia, following Ben Ali's resignation, a state of emergency was declared. During the transition, the Constitutional Court affirmed a new president and a transitional government. Several politicians of the transitional period were previously active in the party of the ousted president. The Tunisian people kept protesting, demanding disbandment of Ben Ali's party and its members to be removed from politics. The party was dissolved in March 2011. Elections for the Constituent Assembly were announced in the same month and were held in October of the same year. The formerly banned Islamic party, Ennahda, won by capturing 41% of the

total vote. Human rights activist Moncef Marzouki was elected president by the constituent assembly; Ennahda's leader, Hamadi Jebali, was sworn in as prime minister. In less than a year the protests started again. This time against the newly elected government led by the Islamic party. People were protesting against the reduction of women's rights in the newly drafted constitution, where women are referred to as "complementary to men". In other protests throughout the country, people expressed issues such as unemployment, harsh living conditions and violence. In February 2013, following the months of protests, Prime Minister Jebali resigned. In October the governing party Ennahda agreed to hand over power to a caretaker transitional government of independent figures. The transitional government organized new elections in 2014. In October 2014, Nida Tunis, a party uniting secularists, trade unionists, liberals and some politicians from the Ben Ali era, won the elections. While Tunisia still has several obstacles on its way to reach the kind of change 2011 protesters called for, high unemployment, ISIS supporters and terrorist attacks among others, change takes time. For now Tunisia seems to be the closest to a success story of the "Arab Spring".

In the mean time in Egypt, thousands of protesters took to the streets again, this time under the slogan *Reclaiming the Revolution*!. The protesters were expressing dissatisfaction with the way the transitional Military Council was leading the country and diminishing the effects of the revolution. The protests in autumn 2011 were met with excessive force by military police. The protests continued until the end of the year. On 25 November, ten months after protests began in Tahrir Square, a crowd of 100.000 people gathered in the Square protesting the military rule after the appointment of the new transitional prime minister, Kamal al-Ganzouri, was

announced by the military. The announced candidate had been a part of Mubarak's political camp in the past. In January 2012, representatives of the People's Assembly were democratically elected. The majority of seats were won by the Freedom and Justice Party formed by the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization. Presidential elections followed in May with the election of Mohamed Morsi (Freedom and Justice Party) as the new president. In November 2012 protests started again after president Morsi granted himself unlimited powers to "protect" the nation and the power to legislate without judicial oversight or review of his acts. On the second anniversary of the 2011 revolution, protesters gathered nationwide demanding Morsi's resignation. Mohamed Morsi was deposed as President of Egypt in a coup d'état in July 2013. Egyptian armed forces headed by Abdul Fatah al-Sisi ousted the president, suspended the constitution and called for an early election. Violent clashes erupted in the aftermath. In the May 2014 elections, General Abdul Fatah al-Sisi was elected as president with more than 96% of voters choosing him over the other candidate. The election was held without the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood's banned Freedom & Justice Party. In the following years the causes for the start of it all were still not resolved. High unemployment, the rise of Islamic State affiliates, terrorist attacks, violence, arrests and general discontent are only a few of the issues still waiting a resolution.

In Libya the National Transitional Council declared the liberation of Libya and the official end of civil war on 23 October 2011. Elections for the General National Congress were held in July 2012. When elected the General National Congress appointed a Prime Minister and the Cabinet. However, the elections were marred with violence and protests. In October Ali Zeidan was elected as the new Prime

Minister. In the short time of his leadership he was kidnapped by armed militants and after he was unable to prevent rebels from confiscating a rogue oil tanker in March 2014, he was ousted by the parliament committee and fled the country. Zeidan was succeeded by Abdullah al-Thani who resigned a month after being selected. Political instability at Libya's political peak is a result of general instability since the 2011, caused by armed militias. According to the Global Conflict Tracker (2017), there have been approximately 1700 rebel militias active in Libya. While the government is trying to keep the rebel groups in control, maintaining order and rebuilding the state is no easy task with rival militias fighting for power in all parts of the country. The chaos in a country torn by a civil war also crated ideal grounds for the spreading of fundamental ideologies and ISIS trough the country. UN brokered peace talks in 2015 failed. Little was agreed the year later. In 2017 when the talks were supposed to happen in Algeria an important actor, General Khalifa Haftar, fighting the Islamists in the east of the country, refused to join the talks.

The protests in Syria also started as a part of the "Arab Spring" movement. Yet in the case of Syria, popular protests turned into armed conflict leading to a civil war. Mass protest started in March 2011. The Syrian government responded with violence. While protesters were at first demanding democratic reforms, their demands changed when the violence escalated, calling for the end of Assad's government. The violence continued with the Syrian Army executing large-scale military acts to stop the protests and the rebellion. Violence escalated when more and more protesters took up arms. On 29 July an oppositional army, the Free Syrian Army, was formed. The Free Syrian Army started receiving support in Turkey and grew in numbers. A year after its formation the Free Syrian Army started gaining control over some Syrian towns

and city districts. Many Islamist groups also opposed the rule of Assad. The sectarian split between the Alawite minority, Sunni majority and other groups based on either religious or ethnic identity resulted in an array of actors in this civil war. Foreign involvement played an important role in Syria up to the day these pages are being written. Especially when what we today know as ISIS, a jihadist militant group, helped establishing al-Nusra Front in Syria, and when the group itself later joined the rebellion against the president Bashar al-Assad, foreign forces, mainly US, Russia and Turkey, started actively engaging in the conflict. While offering backing to different local actors, ISIS was a common – global- enemy, ensuring the support for military involvement in Syria at home. The Syrian civil war was a main cause for the European refugee crisis. According to the UN, more than 5 million Syrians fled the war, with many more not registered by the UN ("UN," 2017). How and when the Syrian civil war will be resolved is still unclear. The peace talks in March 2017 expectedly bore no results. Not only that local force cannot find the common language, foreign forces too seem to be in disagreement about their support and plans for the future of Syria. Especially after the latest gas attack in April 2017, supposedly organized by Syria's president, foreign forces, on the side of the Assad's regime and against it, seem to be even more divided.

The "Arab Spring" was a revolutionary wave, where many Arab countries expressed their wish for a freer and more democratic state. The countries mentioned above are just the ones that were affected the most by the "Arab Spring" events. While Tunisia and Egypt seem to be the more successful cases, the "Arab Spring" took a very different turn in the cases of Libya and Syria. Tunisia and Egypt took a similar path. The first wave of protests was followed by their leaders' resignations and rule by

transitional government. This was followed by the second wave of protests, protesting the transitional government, calling for elections. In both countries an Islamist party was elected at first. Their ruling caused the third wave of protest, followed by new elections. The second time around a secularist party with at least partial ties to the old pre-revolutionary regime was elected.

Even though all four revolutionary movements were marked by violence, the numbers of causalities in Libya and even more so in Syria were catastrophic. Even after Qaddafi was killed, armed militias and militant movements kept fighting for power, preventing the process of rebuilding the state. The fall of the old regime caused higher degrees of violence and instability than the regime that was brought down. In Syria, the old regime never fell. This is why the revolution led to the civil war with several actors taking part in it. After recent events, following the latest sarin gas attack, it is still not clear what the future will hold for Syrians. In Tunisia and Egypt, on the other hand, the aftermath of the 2014 elections shows a possibility for positive developments. Tunisia's new constitution and relative peace shows promise for long-term stability.

2.1 Approaches and debates on the "Arab Spring"

The magnitude of the "Arab Spring", its surprising nature, new media presence and most of all its local and global prominence made the "Arab Spring" one of the most debated political events in the last few years. This section will offer an overview of how the academic debates tackled with the events in the first years after the commencement of the uprisings. Even a brief look at the literature on the "Arab Spring" reveals an immense amount of approaches dealing with the events. The

extensive literature review below discloses the most common topics trying to understand, measure, and explain the events or to predict the possible outcomes of the "Arab Spring". The following subsections will introduce the eight most often occurring debates regarding the "Arab Spring" in the scientific publications while paying extra attention to the literature on the "Arab Spring" and the media.

2.1.1 Comparing the "Arab Spring" with the other revolutionary movements

As early as a few months into 2011 several historical comparisons were being drawn, and questions of resemblance were made. Is the "Arab Spring" an echo of the 2009 Green Movement in Iran? Does it mirror the social movements of 1848 or 1989? Or could the parallels be made between the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the "Arab Spring"? Eric Hobsbawm is only one of the authors who pointed out the resemblance between the 1848 and 2011 events (Abusharif, 2014; Weyland, 2012; Whitehead, 2011). He called it "another self-propelled revolution which started in one country then spread all over the continent in a short time" (cited in Whitehead, 2011). Hobsbawm defined the 1848 events as "an immediate failure but a longer term partial success", which was not achieved in the form of a revolution. He believed the "Arab Spring" could be defined in the same way. Weyland (2012) pointed out even more similarities between the two historical occurrences. He compared the eviction of King Louis Philippe in Paris with the overthrow of autocrat Ben Ali in Tunis. Both events made a strong impression in the regions, causing one successful revolutionary event to spread the idea that the same could happen in other countries (Weyland, 2012). Similar resemblance was found in another set of revolutionary events crossing state borders in 1989. Mark Almond (2012) points out a connecting attribute of all three, 1848, 1989 and 2011: "the process of revolutionary change is

not linear, but filled with twists and turns. [...] Progress and regression intertwined after 1848 and 1989 alike" as they do in 2011 (Almond, 2012, pp. 35–6). For Mary Kaldor (2011) the "Arab Spring" could be a completing step of the 1989 revolutions. Both "are showing that the power of voice and conscience has the potential to provide the kind of stability that weapons and money have failed to provide." (Kaldor, 2011, p. 448). "This is what is needed to bring about the kind of democracy that we hoped for in 1989 and to which young people in Europe and the Middle East still aspire" (Kaldor, 2011, p. 448). Henry Hale's study (2013), on the other hand, compares the three through a model of regime change cascades, a phenomenon where events in one country trigger events abroad. He concludes that not one of these series of events constitutes a clear-cut case of a regime change cascade emphasizing differences between them.

> The events of 1848 show clear evidence of cascading protest and revolution, but not of fundamental regime change. A cross-national cascade process is widely found to be involved in the downfall of European communism that led to democratization. But research indicates that the dramatic collapses of 1989 are better explained by Gorbachev's actions setting in motion chains of events (including preference defalsification) in each country independently, leaving actual cross-national cascading to have been crucial primarily in the "end game" for hold-out communist regimes in Albania, Yugoslavia, and by some accounts the USSR. The 2011 Arab uprisings are left as potentially the best and purest case of a regime change cascade, although it remains to be seen whether regime change actually results. (Hale, 2013, p. 344)

Jack Goldstone (2011) also agrees that 1848 and 1989 are not the right analogies for what commenced in 2011. The main difference between the three lies in a form of government. The revolutions of 2011 are fighting neither traditional monarchies nor communist governments. Their fight is against "sultanistic dictatorships" (Goldstone, 2011, p. 8), as he calls a regime whit a sole purpose to maintain authority, a regime

without an ideology, with an absolute power even if it at time uses some formal aspects of democracy. The form of government, maintains Goldstone, affects the outcome of social movements and the possibility of a triumph (Goldstone, 2011, p. 8).

Hobsbawm also draw another historical parallel. At the end of 2011 the rising Islamism presented a new threat to the revolution. Hobsbawm recalls Iran in 1979, the first revolution to be brought about in the political language of Islam. "The people who had made concessions to Islam, but were not Islamists themselves, were marginalized. And that included reformers, liberals, communists. What emerges as the mass ideology is not the ideology of those that started off the demonstrations." This shift, continues Hobsbawm is "unexpected and not necessarily welcome" (cited in Whitehead, 2011). Not everyone agrees. Nikkie A. Keddie (2012) stresses that 1979 and 2009 had no influence on the "Arab Spring". What we observe are only similar responses to similar circumstances (Keddie, 2012, p. 152). Kashani-Sabet (2012) points out the main difference between the 1979 Iran and 2011 "Arab Spring": the Arab Spring is about freedom and not religion (Kashani-Sabet, 2012, p. 156). This is why the Arab Spring as a genuine grassroots movement resembles the events in 2009 Iran (Kashani-Sabet, 2012, p. 157). But to avoid generalizations, Kashani-Sabet calls attention to local differences. Events in Tunisia and Egypt are very much different from developments in Bahrain and Syria. The latter two are akin to the Iranian Revolution, but not the others (Kashani-Sabet, 2012, p. 157). Nagin Nabavi (2012) also recognizes the popular fear of the Arab Spring following the steps of the Iranian Revolution.

> From the outset, the fear has been that these revolutions will follow the same trajectory as Iran did in 1979—in other words, that they will marginalize those who launched the revolutions and provide the grounds for the rise to power of the most savvy, purposeful, and best organized of the opposition groups, namely, the Islamists (Nabavi, 2012, p. 145).

But she rightfully so recognizes that in 2011 the ideology lost its appeal and so did the ant-western sentiment. They do not play an important role in the "Arab Spring" (Nabavi, 2012, p. 154). Equally important is the fact that the "Arab Spring" does not have a leader (Nabavi, 2012, p. 154). Abbas Amanat (2012) on the other hand emphasizes the differences (the strength of the military) and the parallels (presence of Islamic sentiment and resentment towards Israel) between the 1979 and the 2011. Thus Amanat points out that although it is impossible to predict how will the "Arab Spring" develop over a wider span of time, it "is likely to unleash new dynamics and bring to the surface powerful social forces—especially among the younger generation—that will change the face of the Middle East forever" (Amanat, 2012, p. 149).

An assessment of political events in motion seems to necessitate a historical backing to compare, equate or dissociate the observed event with similar such past events. The problem emerges when such discursive and analytical tools prevent an objective and accurate appraisal as discussed in the section bellow and later on throughout the thesis.

2.1.2 Orientalism and Post-colonialism

In similar fashion as the main argument of this thesis, Bobby S. Sayyid (2011) argues that the problem with the popular mobilizations that started in 2011 is

conceptual. The language and the discourses that we use cannot apprehend the

current developments. As he says:

> If our discourse (that is, both linguistic and extra-linguistic signifying
> practices) comes about as result of sediment remains of historical
> struggles, then how can our discourse apprehend a world in which those
> historical forces are no longer in play? (Sayyid, 2011, pp. 981–2)

James A. Tyner and Stian Rice (2012) approach media's Orientalist framing of the

"Arab Spring" as an "outgrowth of the media's ongoing production of the Arab

World" (Tyner & Rice, 2012, p. 131). What is more they warn against a similar but

insidious discourse in the academia as well (Tyner & Rice, 2012, p. 131). The

problem starts with the name Arab Spring itself.

> While "Arab Spring" helps rationalize complex and seemingly un-
> related events and people, it obfuscates a more thorough geographical
> and historical understanding through the imposition of three key
> limitations: ethnic, temporal, and spatial bounding.(Tyner & Rice,
> 2012, p. 131)

The countries experiencing the "Arab Spring" are not homogenously Arab (p. 131),

the uprisings in the region did not simply start with the self-immolation in Tunisia

and further on not all "Arab" states were affected by the events, what is more the

events had global influence reaching beyond the MENA region (p.131-2).

Magid Shihade (2012) also criticizes the name Arab Spring. "The concept of seasons

is embedded in a long history of Orientalizing the region, as if what happened in the

history of the of Arab world before 2011 did not qualify for an acknowledgment of

the energies, struggles, and fighting for a better life that the Arab people have been

waging against western colonialism, intrusions, and unjust local governments for

over 100 years" (Shihade, 2012, pp. 58–9). Shihade points out how the "Arab

Spring" was judged even by the experts as "something that ended" and not as "something in the making" (Shihade, 2012, p. 60). "Of course, these experts failed to remember that the French Revolution, the most celebrated example of people's power to change history according to the Eurocentric historiography, took years to achieve some of its goals, later on to be hijacked by the dictatorship of Napoleon" (Shihade, 2012, p. 60). A lot of what we read about the "Arab Spring" is embedded in "Western's modernities thought and practice" (Shihade, 2012, p. 64). This is why it is not only media discourses using Orientalist tools to assess the "Arab Spring" events. Federico Caprotti and Eleanor Xin Gao (2012) argue that even much of the scholarly work still perpetuates a geographical imagination of a stagnant region which lead the scholars to be unprepared for the regional eruption of demands (Caprotti & Gao, 2012, p. 511).

One of the most often used Orientalist discursive practices is generalization. Lorella Ventura (2016) shows how both, western and at times even Arab media and scholarly discourses interpret the "Arab Spring" in the Orientalist fashion not acknowledging the particularities and differences between the participating states.

> The idea of the same process involving many different Arab countries governed by "sultanistic" regimes that keep society and economy in utter stagnation, for example, can be ascribed to the Orientalist approach and stereotypes, such as the images of "Arabs" in general, of "Oriental despotism" and, above all, to the idea of the West being the only measure of "modernity" and progress. In this respect it can be argued that, not just individual aspects of the narration of the "Arab Spring", but its whole discourse should be reconsidered, employing a more critical approach. (Ventura, 2016, p. 2)

Reports in the media and academia are based on the generalization of the region as a uniform entity with histories, governments, cultures, religions, etc. completely alike

and with the events currently shaping the region as one consolidated wave of change (Ventura, 2016, p. 4).

Hamid Dabashis's (2012) and Mary Kaldor's (2011) approach to the relationship between the "Arab Spring" and postcoloniality is different – optimistic. They both instead of focusing on the debates about the events turn to the events themselves. Kaldor sees the "Arab Spring" as a verification disproving the assumption of the Arab exceptionalism (2011, p. 488). Dabashi puts forward an idea that the "Arab Spring" when proving every theory of modernization and Westernization wrong brings the post-colonialism to its end (2012). He also acknowledges that the media has been reporting about the events in the Orientalist manner nonetheless, he claims that with the new media the binary has exhausted itself. Western media, Dabashi continues, are no longer the voice of authority because they have met their other in the same global discursive space. In this discursive space all media that talk to the global audience, no matter their origin, are Western media.

The "Arab Spring" has shaken the literature on the post-colonial and Orientalist criticism. The events have simultaneously been understood as a milestone that may change the perception of the region or as yet another affair providing a subject matter for the Orientalist oeuvre.

2.1.3 Recognizing the differences between the "Arab Spring" states

Generalizations about the "Arab Spring" states do not only over-simplify journalistic or academic attempts to understand and explain the events, as doing so they are running a risk "of effacing important cultural and political differences among Tunisians, Yemenis, Jordanians, Egyptians, Libyans, Bahrainis, and Syrians"

(Kashani-Sabet, 2012, p. 156). Most of the scholars (same cannot be claimed for the journalists) included into the here presented literature review were aware of such risks, studying state-based events, being aware of their differences. Lisa Anderson (2011) for example calls attention to the distinct character of local state-based events.

> The profound differences between the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan uprisings are not always apparent in the popular media. The timing of the popular revolts—so sudden and almost simultaneous—suggests that the similarities these autocracies shared, from their aging leaders and corrupt and ineffectual governments to their educated, unemployed, and disaffected youth, were sufficient to explain the wave of revolutions. Yet the authorities that these young protesters confronted were unique in each nation—as will be the difficulties they face in the future. (Anderson, 2011, p. 3)

States participating in the "Arab Spring" reflected "divergent economic grievances and social dynamics—legacies of their diverse encounters with modern Europe and decades under unique regimes", explains Anderson (2011, pp. 2–3). Acknowledging the differences also allows scholars to understand the different outcomes. Sonia L. Alianak (2014) outlines two crucial distinctions affecting how successful were the regimes at riding the wave of change. Monarchies were durable while republics were not, because the first were able to claim Islamic and tribal legitimacy (Alianak, 2014). The reactions of the military were also not standardized. Whether they supported the regime or the people was conditioned by the pre-revolutionary role and the structure of the military and the security forces (2014, p. 159). Nadine Sika (2014) points out several other differences between the states participating in the revolutionary uprisings. The disparate extent of violence and divergent outcomes are a result of the three decisive factors: the nature of state-building, the capacity of the authoritarian regime and the extent of force used against the citizens historically (Sika, 2014). It is because of these three factors that the events in Tunisia and Egypt

pertain. They saw similar patterns in institutional development, state capacity building, regime power, the personalization of different institutions, the rule of law and the state hegemony over the public sphere (2014, p. 95). Furthermore, both regimes used violence but "the military, however, which had been increasingly marginalized by both presidents, decided to abstain from using violence against the protestors" (2014, p. 95). In Syria, on the other hand, with stronger and decentralized institutions, but with increasing sectarianism and brutal repression in response to social discontent, the army sided with the regime to protect the state and the army itself (2014, p. 96).

Clear differences between the states participating in the "Arab Spring" events, the types of authorities and regimes, the forms of economic hardship and injustice, the role and the structure of the military and the extent of the violence used, all affected the development of the initial uprisings and protests. Acknowledging the divergence negates the idea of the regional nature of the "Arab Spring". While the events emerged almost simultaneously across the region, the "Arab Spring" is not a wide unified regional event, but a collection of unique events formed on a region-wide support, encouragement and ramifications.

2.1.4 Violence

The sharp contrast between the non-violent protests and violent reaction towards the groups calling for change got the attention of the wider international public. Although just a few decades ago all commentators agreed that revolutions are violent (Ritter, 2015, p. 3), today's observers praise the non-violent political mobilizations. In the case of the "Arab Spring" "this embracing of non-violent repertoires made the Arab Uprisings more palatable to liberal international actors" (Lawson, 2015, p. 24)

24). And with it is sparked the academic interest in the unarmed revolutions. Ritter (2015) unveils their reasons for success. He argues that unarmed revolutions are successful when a dictatorial regime has established connections with Western governments and adopted "façade democratic" settings with political parties, elections and rhetoric of human rights (2015).

These new unarmed social struggles also lack the hierarchical structure and the leadership of influential figures typically featured in the classical cultures of revolution (Foran 2014, p. 51). Thus John Foran (2014) poses a question. "can these new political cultures of opposition produce—or at least contribute to—some type of global transformation of the sort that is needed to deal with a world in crisis?" (Foran, 2014, p. 67).

> Clearly, it will take time for these open-ended revolutions to blossom and reach their full potential. Important to this process will be the articulation of powerful political cultures based on participatory (not formal, representative, elite-controlled) democracy and on economic alternatives challenging the neo-liberal capitalist globalization that created the conditions for their flowering in the first place. (Foran, 2014, p. 71)

Another question that needs to be addressed is why were some of the "new" forms of struggle met with more violence and others with less. Tunisia and Egypt encountered less violence comparing to Libya and Syria that suffered through a civil war, while Bahrain and Yemen hold back the unrest. Nadine Sika (2014) studies the role violence played in the different outcomes across the region. According to her "the nature of state-building, the capacity of the authoritarian regime, and the extent to which the regimes in power historically used force against their citizens" are the most crucial factors determining the outcomes and the amount of violence used against the activists (2014, p. 94). This is why, claims Sika, in Egypt and Tunisia the

military abstained from using violence while in other states the military followed the orders of the state. When the military is marginalized and weak it is more likely to disregard the orders (2014, p. 96). Furthermore in the "tribal states" the unrests are more likely to turn into civil wars, because of already existing conflicts based on sectarianism. Thus even though the protests started in a similar manner across the region, they developed in diverse directions with a different extent of violence.

2.1.5 Transition to democracy

The democratization paradigm that dominated the studies of the MENA region in the 1980's and 1990's was replaced by the paradigm of authoritarian resilience in the new millennium. With the "Arab Spring" many scholars have rushed to reassess the possibility for democratic development. The latest developments do not simply negate the paradigm of authoritarian resilience while privileging the democratization paradigm, on the contrary "both paradigms need re-visiting in light of the shortcomings that they have demonstrated in explaining Arab politics over the last three decades" (Pace & Cavatorta, 2012, p. 127; Heydemann & Leenders, 2011; Valbjørn, 2012). With the ousting of Ben Ali, Mubarak, Qadhafi, and Saleh the authoritarian buoyancy was put under question. Nonetheless, Pace & Cavatorta (2012) maintain that these events did not make the paradigm of resilience invalid. "For one thing, the mechanisms through which ruling elites attempted to upgrade authoritarian rule still operate successfully in many of the countries in the Arab world" (Pace & Cavatorta, 2012, p. 128). Steven Heydemann and Reinoud Leenders (2011) add to this argument by pointing out "the capacity of some authoritarian regimes in the Middle East to suppress opposition movements [...] by their capacity to learn from and adapt to the rapidly emerging challenges that mass uprisings posed

for regime survival" (Heydemann & Leenders, 2011, p. 648). As the protesters were

observing the events in the neighboring countries creating a predictable pattern of

events (using new media platforms, claiming the key public spaces and rallying

around human tragedies inflicted by the regime), Arab regimes also learned and

adapted by observing the first wave of protests (2011, pp. 648–9).

> This top-down process of authoritarian learning and adaptation is
> currently visible in the way authoritarian incumbents in Algeria,
> Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Syria watched how
> uprisings unfolded in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, took stock of
> international reactions to these events and, in response, developed
> strategies that they perceive whether rightly or wrongly, to maximize
> their probabilities of surviving this wave of popular mobilization and
> living to rule another day. (Heydemann & Leenders, 2011, p. 649)

Even if the overthrow of the old regimes in the region seemingly leads back to the

revival of the democratization paradigm, this neither is a clear-cut solution. Pace &

Cavatorta (2012) offer four reasons why: (1) democracy has not taken hold anywhere

in the "Arab Spring" affected states, (2) many of the expectations of the

democratization literature had not actually materialized for quite some time, (3) the

international context is vastly different from the one of the late 1980s and early

1990s (Liberal democracy per se is in a state of crisis), (4) none of the actors and

preconditions that the democratization paradigm deems indispensable for a transition

are relevant in the Arab Awakening (Pace & Cavatorta, 2012, p. 129). Thus it seems

that democratization studies need to move away from their Eurocentric conceptions,

"to remain true to the emancipatory commitments of its origins, it must move beyond

liberalism and positivism, [but] not the concept of democratic transitions per se"

(Teti, 2012, p. 21). As suggested by Valbjorn (2012) the "Arab Spring" uprisings

were "a re-politicized new Middle East in a 'transition to somewhere' and instead of

returning to the kind of democracy-spotting of the demo-crazy 1990s there is a need of an upgraded post-democratization approach" (p. 27).

Mauricio Rivera Celestino and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch (2013) do just that. With the immense amount of skeptical (Ottaway, 2011) and optimistic (Kaldor, 2011) observations of the "Arab Spring" as a movement towards democracy based on the two obviously outdated paradigms they emphasize the need to assess the role of protest and direct action in destabilizing autocracies before making any such judgments. Their empirical study supports the claim "that nonviolent protests substantially increase the likelihood of transitions to democracy, especially under favorable international environments, while violent direct action is less effective in undermining autocracies overall, and makes transitions to new autocracies relatively more likely" (Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013, p. 385). Thus their analysis provides support for "cautious optimism" regarding Egypt and Tunisia and a higher possibility for new autocracies following the revolutionary events in Syria and Libya (Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013, p. 397). "However, the evidence for emulation and learning across countries in the direct action [...] also suggests that future political change in the region is likely to be highly interconnected" (Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013, p. 397). A large country like Egypt, add Celestino and Gleditsch, may inspire regional changes in the future (Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013, p. 397).

2.1.6 The role of the New Media

One of the early arguments for the reasons behind the "surprising" "Arab" revolutions is that they were enabled by the new media which opened up the very much needed public sphere away from the governments' control. The revolutions were even called the "Twitter Revolution" or the "Facebook Revolution".

Scholars studying the relationship between the new media and the "Arab Spring" do not dispute over this idea, but most of them agree that it is exaggerated (Rane & Salem, 2012). It also was not only the social media that played a role in the events. SMS messages, blogs, images and live video streams also played an important part (Cottle, 2011, p. 651). But not as crucial as many times claimed.

> "Overall, social media's key role in the uprisings was the facilitation of communication and the transfer of information. [...] Social media also enabled protesters to function as citizen journalists by disseminating information about the protests and the responses of police and security forces and transmitting news, photos, and videos to mainstream media for wider dissemination" (Rane & Salem, 2012, p. 103).

Toby Matthiesen's study (2012) placed in Saudi Arabia, for example, shows that new media are good organizational tools, while "personal networks, a semi-autonomous public sphere, and histories of political subversion facilitate a protest movement" (Matthiesen, 2012, p. 628). Even before the new media took over the ways we communicate and inform each other, satellite television revolutionarily transformed the global public sphere, particularly so in the MENA region, where public knowledge and discourses were strictly regulated. TV stations like Al-Jazeera "not only presented alternate information that contradicted official government propaganda, but also acted as a fourth estate, provided citizens across the region with common content, and helped to construct a common consciousness" (Rane & Salem, 2012, p. 102).

When praising the new media as the omnipotent facilitator of revolutions the revolutionaries behind the new media profiles and accounts are deprived of their agency. "Technological tools and the people who use them must together make or break a political uprising" (Howard et al., 2011, p. 46). Equally so "the preceding

social and political forces at work as well as the purposive actions of human beings prepared to confront state intimidation and violence in pursuit of political change" are neglected and undermined (Cottle, 2011, p. 651). Wolfsfeld and others (2013) remind us that "politics come first both analytically and chronologically" (2013, p. 116).

> Politics comes first analytically, because it is a mistake to attempt to understand the role of any media in any political process without thinking about the surrounding political environment. Just as importantly, politics comes first chronologically, in that a rise in the number of extensive protests is more likely to precede changes in the use of social media than to follow it (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013, p. 116).

Rane and Salem (2012) agree when saying that the uprisings are a respond to social, political and economic conditions and that "there is no positive correlation between levels of social media penetration and the emergence of social movements calling for political reform and regime change" (p. 108). Nonetheless the role of the media should not be disregarded. Aday and others (2012) illustrate the actual, still very important, role the new media played in the events. Twitter in particularly functioned "like a megaphone, generating external attention from citizens, news media, and governments outside of the country itself" (Aday et al., 2012, p. 14). Howard and Hussain (2011) add that new information technologies provided for the activists "information networks not easily controlled by the state and coordination tools that are already embedded in trusted networks of family and friends" (Howard & Hussain, 2011, p. 48). The new media "played a critical role especially in light of the absence of an open media and a civil society" (Khondker, 2011, p. 675). They were used to "organizing the protests and disseminating information about them, including publicizing protesters' demands internationally" (Stepanova, 2011, p. 2).

> The Egyptian revolution, therefore, demonstrates the opportunities offered by social media for large-scale mobilization and the organization and implementation of social movements. Additionally, the use of social media helped to draw local and international attention to important activities that otherwise may have been shielded from public view, thereby isolating the participants" (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011, p. 1218).

Besides the new media, more traditional outlets, especially the television also played a very important role (Khondker, 2011, p. 678). According to Gallup (2011) 81% of Egyptians relied on their state television, while another 63% relied on Al Jazeera (Abu Dhabi Gallup Centre 2011 as cited in Rane and Salem). It has to be noted that media convergence, an ability of the "modernized" traditional media to merge different media technologies and forms into one, enabled TV stations and online newspapers to use the material initially posted in social media networks.

As follows what happened in the MENA region starting December 2010 was not caused by the new media. Protesters that are also new media users used the platforms as tools to inform and mobilize. They were able to reach a broad global public and get international support. Most importantly it should not be forgotten that there are activists behind the new media profiles and that their media usage exceeds merely new media technologies.

2.1.7 The role of the Military

If the media took part in the mobilization and preparation process, the reaction of the coercive apparatus played an important role in the development of the events (Bellin, 2012; Sharon Erickson Nepstad, 2011). Eva Bellini (2012) explains how "the coercive apparatus' varying will to repress" proved to be the most important key determining the durability of the authoritarian regimes in the region. The comparison

of the events in Egypt and Tunisia with what happened for example in Bahrain and

Libya, where massive uprisings occurred, brings forward a pattern that can be

applied to other cases as well. The developing molds are based on the question of the

military shooting the protesters or not.

> Faced with this choice, the military in Tunisia and Egypt chose not to
> shoot. Consequently, in both cases, the ruling autocrat, stormed by
> angry crowds demanding his departure, had no choice but to flee. In
> Bahrain, by contrast, the military (bolstered by Saudi assistance) stood
> by the ruling monarch. It repressed civilian demonstrators brutally, and
> the Bahraini monarch survived. In Libya, the military split, some
> refusing to fire on civilians, others willing to shoot in defense of
> Muammar Gaddafi. The result was civil war. (Bellin, 2012, p. 130)

So what are the reasons for the military to shoot at the protesters? Bellini points out a

few: family, ethnic or sectarian ties with the regime (Bellin, 2012, p. 133) – these

create a mutual dependency between the military and the regime, where the fall of

the regime would mean the dissolution of the military. Nepstadt's (2013)

examination of the uprisings in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria, adds other reasons for

military's defiance: whether or not they received any kind of benefits from the

regime, and their perception of the regime's strength (p. 339). In his earlier article

Nepstadt (2011) proposed two theoretical premises regarding the success of non-

violent revolutionary movements: nonviolent revolutionary movement with the

support of the military will most likely achieve the regime change, while the same

movement with no support from the ranks of the military most probably will not be

equally successful (p. 488).

2.1.8 Islamization

Lorella Ventura (2016) argues that "in western interpretations and accounts of the

"Arab Spring", the focus is very rarely on religion and Islamism", because the

narration of the "Arab Spring" is build on the idea of "modernity" (p. 5). Nonetheless some have predicted the development of the region along the lines of the Islamization as seen in Turkey, Iran or in radical, even militant, religious organizations.

Trying to assess the "post-Arab Spring" Middle East, with the Islamist parties winning the polls in Tunisia and Egypt, Juris Pupcenoks (2012) categorizes the Turkish case of "democratic Islamization" as a possible reformation model. Others, on the other hand, claim that the "Arab Spring" is not leading towards Islamization of the region at all. According to al-Rahim (2011) we can dismiss Al-Qaida's pan-Islamist project as a model (Al-Rahim, 2011, p. 13). Even Muslim Brotherhood, notwithstanding their founding ideology seeking to reestablish the caliphate, operates on national basis and not regional (Al-Rahim, 2011, p. 13). Al-Rahim also denies the possibility of the Turkish Model to be adapted to the post-"Arab Spring" successful states, such as Egypt and Tunisia. Another possible model is post revolutionary Iran. This one, claims al-Rahim is not "religiously legitimate or politically viable one for Sunnī Islamists" (Al-Rahim, 2011, p. 19). The final model is post 2003 Iraq, "in terms of competing secular and religious political parties and coalitions", and this is the one al-Rahim finds most possible and fitting in Egypt and Tunisia, the only successful "Arab Spring" participants (Al-Rahim, 2011, p. 19).

Peter Jones' (2012) interviews with over 70 senior officials, think-tank leaders, and academics observing the "Arab Spring" from afar reveals that many dwelt at length on the role of political Islam in the unrest across the region. "It was noted that one of the reasons many in the west missed the Arab Spring was because they were looking in the wrong place for signs of trouble-at political Islam-whereas the role of political

Islam in these events was limited at the outset, and Islamist groups were caught as much by surprise as anyone else" (Jones, 2012, p. 454). Some interviewees were fearing political Islam, while several others expressed skepticism about the idea that the Muslim Brotherhood "will evolve into a group of moderate religious political parties that will be content to compete for power in a pluralistic system of give and take" (Jones, 2012, p. 454).

Even though the immediate fascination with the "Arab Spring" echoed as the aspirations for the modernization and westernization of the region, several observers became reluctant once Islamist parties started winning the polls in Tunisia and Egypt. If the absence of the Islamists at the outset of the "Arab Spring" allowed for optimism because "the idea of "modernity", and religion, in particular Islamism, do not fit" together (Ventura, 2016, p. 5), re-emergence of the Islamist organizations and their participation in the political process, was for many observers once more a reason for concerns and fear.

The vast existing literature covering the "Arab Spring" uses several different types of research to evaluate, measure, predict, and criticize the events and the reaction towards them. Several case studies, comparative studies, theory testing and building approaches, media studies, and critical studies dominate the literature review. This study offers a different angle. By taking a step away from the events, using a conceptual and discursive approach, this study distances itself from the existing literature while it simultaneously encompasses the entire scope of publications debating the events.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO THE STUDIES OF REVOLUTIONS

The conceptual historians studying the concept of revolution agree that *revolution* lacks "conceptual clarity" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 43) and that the tension between the distant meanings left the concept "in a sorry state", also because of the "too vast and heterogeneous a range of experience" (Dunn, 1989, p. 333). Another reason why the concept lacks clarity, continues Dunn, is the fact that it does not have a normative standard.

> In contrast with democracy or justice or equality or liberty, revolution is not in the first place a normative standard which human beings hold up against social and political reality and to which they attempt to induce the latter to conform - to mold it. Rather, revolution is itself in the first place a feature of the real historical world at particular times and places. (Dunn, 1989, p. 333).

This study will show that the concept of revolution needs to be problematized precisely because particular historical events did set a normative standard for what is considered to be a revolutionary event. The knowledge of Western revolutions happening around the time when modern languages were forming is setting a

normative framework used to assess the revolutionary character of the "Arab Spring" in media discourses.

What follows in this chapter is first the historical-conceptual approach to the concept offered by Hatto, Koselleck and Dunn.

3.1 The concept of revolution

The word "revolution" is a part of a modern political vocabulary and even though it is widely used in everyday, as in scientific, context, it still lacks conceptual clarity (Koselleck, 2004, p. 43). Koselleck defines it as a flexible general concept, which fluctuates from country to country and from one political camp to another (Koselleck, 2004, p. 44). That is why the semantic content of the word "revolution" is not univocal. "It ranges from bloody political and social convulsions to decisive scientific innovations; it can signify the whole spectrum, or alternatively, one form to the exclusion of the remainder" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 44).

The concept of revolution was used as early as in the time of first political entities. Political changes, changes in government and political institutions were understood as cyclical phenomena and were named revolutions. Plato's (2000) five regimes of government degenerate from one form into another in a cyclical matter where every change of regime presupposes revolutionary events of some sort. Polybius (cited in Hatto, 1949, p. 498) and Aristotle (Aristotle, 1998) expanded Plato's conceptualization. Polybius turned the sequence of different types of constitutions into a full cycle where the sequence, after reaching its end, starts anew. Aristotle studied causes and results for regime changes, trying to establish which regimes are less liable to revolutions, regimes that are in a way superior because they have

proved to be long-lived. While Greeks coined the concept and the word "revolution", their concept had different meaning than what we know as "classic" revolutions (Hatto, 1949, p. 500). Their cycle of revolutions did not allow for any novelties, it described a set system of predictable changes in the political system. Copernicus used the word revolution in a similar manner when describing the movement of celestial bodies. Thus in the 16th century the word revolution became a "physic-political" concept (Koselleck, 2004, p. 46) implying that revolutions, as stars, run their course independent of men while simultaneously effecting their lives. Contemporary usage, on the other hand, claims Koselleck, does not imply the reoccurrences of political events, stages or forms, indicated by the syllable "re" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 46).

The first time "revolution" was used in the modern sense was in 1355 Siena Italy when an oligarchic regime was ousted and replaced with a popular alternative (Hatto, 1949, p. 502). Still in Italy, but decades even centuries later, the meaning of the word revolution as used returns back to the rotation of the celestial bodies, indicating the "return to the starting point" (Hatto, 1949, p. 502).

Different terminology was used for the bloody struggles in the 16th and 17th century. Koselleck lays out a list of terms used in Europe at the time: uprising, riot, revolt, insurrection, rebellion, internal or civil war (Koselleck, 2004, p. 47). Koselleck concludes that before the beginning of the 18th century the expressions "civil war" and "revolution were not interchangeable, but they were also not mutually exclusive (Koselleck, 2004, p. 47). Civil wars were violent rebellions against the law and the state, while revolutions remained a part of a greater trans-historical system of change. The English Civil War or the Great Rebellion, for example, was called a

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revolution only in retrospect, years after the French revolution (Hatto, 1949, p. 504). "On the other hand the events of 1660 were called a revolution in their own day and even in anticipation" (Hatto, 1949, p. 505) but what the word denoted was again the return to the old order. The word revolution was used with a similar meaning in 1688 (Hatto, 1949, p. 505).

It was with the Enlightenment when the concept of revolution started changing and it was attached to everything conceived in terms of change or upheaval (morals, laws, religion, politics, economy, etc.) (Koselleck, 2004, p. 48). Political revolutions, on the basis of the Glorious Revolution in 1688, were identified in contrast with violent civil wars of the past. A modern revolution was believed to be a product of Enlightenment, where political changes and changes in power are possible without bloodshed. "Should it come to the spilling of blood, then the example of the American independence movement appeared to guarantee a happy conclusion" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 49).

With the French Revolution the concept gets its modern meaning and connotations. Koselleck (2004) outlines the final change of the concept into its modern form. This concept is condensed to a collective singular, it's metahistorical and assumes transcendental significance (Koselleck, 2004, p. 49). With the French Revolution the event revolution as such becomes predefined. Everything is a revolution and revolution is everywhere. The concept also implies acceleration (Koselleck, 2004, p. 50) as one of the qualities of the modern era. Progress, industrialization, and frequent changes in reign are going hand in hand with revolutions (social, political, technological, etc.). Revolutions are sudden and rapid. In this manner literally everything becomes a part of a revolutionary movement. The need to be

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"revolutionary" arises in the public (Koselleck, 2004, p. 50) . Even the state is taking part in this movement. Yet for the state to be able to take part in the revolutionary affairs, a distinction between good and bad revolutions emerges; they are either peaceful or bloody, or set from above or below (Koselleck, 2004, p. 50). Revolutions of modern era resemble each other and can be compared. They become historicophilisophical concepts, which have direction and can be disassembled into stages. This way revolutions become predictable (Koselleck, 2004, p. 51). Finally the concepts starts moving away from the traditional understanding. Revolutions signify evolution, progress, rights and emancipation. Their core is moving out of the political sphere into social. The modern revolution is a social revolution (Koselleck, 2004, pp. 51–52)., aiming at the social emancipation and transformation of social structures.

Today's revolutions are not anymore determined geographically. They intend to be to the advantage of all mankind. Koselleck calls them "world revolutions", events which are permanent, because their influence exceeds time (Koselleck, 2004, pp. 52–3). Revolutions are man-made and demand activism (2004, pp. 53–4). And finally, revolutions become legitimate and can use all means (2004, p. 56). "While revolution was initially induced by its opponents as well as its proponents, once established in its legitimacy, it proceeded to continually reproduce its foe as a means through which it could remain permanent" (2004, p. 56).

Dunn (1989), in his conceptual history of modern revolutions, extracted five ideas which assemble the modern conceptions of revolution: (a) "destruction of old, obsolete political, social and economic orders"; (b) "purposeful political creation of new political, social and economic orders"; (c) "a view of modern world history which renders the collapse of the old regimes desirable and unsurprising"; (d) "value

and importance of human lives contributing to the collapse of the old regime and to the reconstruction of the new" and (e) "longevity or durability of the events" (Dunn, 1989, p. 334). According to Dunn's work on conceptual history of the concept of revolution, a revolution is defined with the ideas of creation and destruction. It creates a new political and social order, new options and possibilities for a change, while destructing an old regime and an order that came with it. He gives great importance to the modern world history, past historical events and their revolutionary success that can open up a momentum of change or long term influence rendering later revolutions possible. Modern revolutions are most of all an achievement of collective action where the results may take a longer time to show. Modern revolutions were not sudden and short-lived events.

The concept of revolution has been changing, emerging in various different texts and discourses for centuries. Its modern and western conceptualization is very well summarized by both Dunn and Koselleck. With the events of the recent years it can also be added that "revolution" seems to be a very popular concept, widely used in the media, as well as in popular, political and academic discourses. Iranian Green Movement in 2009 has been called a revolution; some called it the Twitter Revolution. Even Occupy Wall Street was perceived as a revolution. A columnist in *USA Today* named it the "2nd American revolution". Similar events that followed all around the world were united under the title of "Global revolution".

Revolution, if I might say so, has become a trendy concept in the last few years. Its wide usage poses a lot of questions that need to be examined. While Koselleck (2004, pp. 43–56) outlines evidences of slower yet constant historical changes of the concept that were persistently happening throughout the centuries, the aim of this

study is to look at the static unchangeable character of the concept apparent in the

last few years in media discourses about the "Arab Spring". But before turning to the

"Arab Spring" itself, the following paragraphs will outline existing conceptual

approaches to the concept of revolution.

Arthur Hatto's (1949) enquiry into the usefulness of the term revolution starts with

Schopenhauer's understanding of history as - *Eadem, sed aliter* – the same, but

different. If the revolutionary events we know all share the same skeletons, the

modern concept of revolution should be able to capture the essence of all such

events. Hatto disagrees because such abstractions cannot be globally applicable.

> Is it not a fact that every generalisaton one is tempted to make is
> jeopardised by deeper consideration of the unique circumstances of the
> culture, the genaration, the locality? (1949, p. 516)

Koselleck (2004) too questioned whether the word revolution has not been "reduced

to an empty formula which can be appropriated pragmatically by the most diverse

groups of countries and flogged to death?" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 56). Collingwood

(1945) even suggested to stop using the term altogether. Hatto, aware of the

emptiness of the term, nonetheless saw this as unnecessary and insufficient, because

the brittleness of the words "is seen to inhere in all historical terminology" (Hatto,

1949, p. 516). Thus he proposed letting the word "revolution" point out the events

involving a shift of power and then by studying these events one can learn about their

unique traits (1949, p. 517). Hence historical terminology, or what Koselleck calls

key concepts, lacks the potential to be generally applied on the global scheme. It can

only be used globally if the particularity on any event in question is taken into

account. With that, on a very optimistic note, the concept of revolution starts

possessing "such revolutionary power that it is constantly extending itself to include

every last element on our globe" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 44). While this might be a true observation following a conceptual analysis in the classical sense, as what Koselleck did, this study will refute such claim. A critical examination of the everyday usage of the concept of revolution shows its immutability, at least inside the scope of this research's focus. This study will show how the concept of revolution is normatively defined by particular Western revolutionary events, and how such definition of the concept affected reporting about the "Arab Spring", framing the events as non-revolutionary.

3.1.1 Problematizing the concept of revolution

The political concepts—such as the state, freedom, democracy, empire, etc.—that we use to define and describe current political and social events have been part of European languages since the eighteenth century (Koselleck, 2004). In the period of Enlightenment, when modern European languages were still forming, key concepts took on their modern meaning (Koselleck, 2002). In the time between 1750 and 1850 the premodern usage of language transformed to the usage of today. Şerif Mardin (1971, p. 211) and Elbaki Hermassi (1976, p. 211) both pointed out that our understanding of the concept of revolution has been predominantly shaped by our knowledge of specific revolutionary events. In this time period lasting for more than 100 years, several revolutionary events occurred. This study, by focusing on the concept of revolution, shows how revolutionary events of the eighteenth and nineteenth century played an important role in the way revolutions are defined today. Certain political, social, and historical circumstances have been extracted from these events without any modification and applied over and over again to other "similar" events (Hermassi, 1976, p. 211). Şerif Mardin provides the Turkish Revolution as an

example where the meaning of the concept that grows out of our knowledge of the French Revolution does not suffice when applied to the Turkish case (1971, pp. 197–8). According to Mardin, it is unfruitful to compare these very different yet equally revolutionary events. The Turkish Revolution has 'not unleashed social violence' (1971, p. 198), it 'did not originate in the thrust of the masses' (1971, p. 199) and it did not try to eradicate the role of religion in society (1971, p. 203). Nonetheless, its idiosyncrasy does not make the Turkish events any less revolutionary. What Mardin unintentionally suggests is that the concept of revolution is set within the Eurocentric framework and therefore cannot adequately address events outside of this framework.

Although the aim of this study is to focus on media discourses and their use of the concept of revolution, the following section offers a short overview of the understanding of the concept, its applications and limitations in the field of the study of revolution. It shows how scholarly discourses on revolutions have recognized plurality and were mostly able to reach beyond the normative conception of *revolution*.

> The study of revolution, once a structured discipline, "blossomed into a multifaceted exploration of a panoply of diverse events" (Goldstone, 2001, p. 139).

Goldstone summarizes the tradition and development in the field of revolution studies by introducing four generations of the field. The first generation emerged in the 1920's and 1930's. Scholars of the time were interested in the most famous revolutions of the West (English, American, French and Russian) and their commonalities. Their work proposes a "natural history" of revolutions, a generalization predicting the developments following a revolution, but it cannot

answer the questions about the reasons for revolutions and sources of opposition

(Goldstone, 2003, pp. 2–4). These issues were addressed by the second generation of

theorists in the 1950's and 1960's who tried to form general theories of revolutions.

Scholars like Davies and Gurr were trying to identify the kinds of misery leading to

political disorders. According to their work, changes raising people's expectations

without meeting the same expectations can be destabilizing (cited in Goldstone,

2003, p. 5). Smelser and Johnson, on the other hand, focused on social institutions.

When institutions (economic, educational, political, etc.) grow and change at the

same rate, the state is stable. But if one starts to change independently, the imbalance

may bring the government down (Goldstone, 2003, p. 5). Tilly developed a third

general theory approach, pointing out "that discontent alone is unlikely to lead to

revolution if the discontented remain unorganized and lack resources" (cited in

Goldstone, 2003, p. 5). General theory approaches were more holistic, but they

lacked the ability to answer the questions of why revolutions occur in some countries

but not in others and how will a revolution end. This lead to the third generation of

theories, developing in 1970's, 80's and 90's, which focuses on a comparative

approach. States that have different structures "are thus vulnerable to different kinds

of revolution" (Goldstone, 2003, p. 6). Economic underdevelopment and lack of

progress comparing to the neighboring states, the relationship between the state and

its elite, the loyalty of the army are only a few structural factors that can determine

the type of a revolution and its success. But the revolutionary process needs to be

examined to understand why a revolution occurs at a particular time and why it has

particular characteristics. This is the research interest of the fourth generation

theoreticians – critics of structural theories arguing "for the need to incorporate

leadership, ideology, and processes of identification with revolutionary movements

as key elements in the production" (Goldstone, 2001, p. 139). The study of

revolutions now uses multiple different approaches and techniques to assess the

events that are as diverse as the palette of their exploration.

> A full understanding of revolutions must take account of the plasticity
> of elite and popular alignments, of the processes of revolutionary
> mobilization and leadership, and of the variable goals and outcomes of
> revolutionary actors and events.(Goldstone, 2001, p. 144)

John Foran (1997) is pointing out the diversity of revolutionary events by

emphasizing the role of culture and political culture in particular that add to the

variance of revolutions. Rightfully so "the "cultural" turn within the social sciences

has begun to have an impact on theorizing about revolutions" (Foran, 1997, p. 197).

Iranian revolution in 1979 functioned as a turning point, changing the structuralist

core of the studies of revolution. In *States and Social Revolutions* (1979) Skocpol

agreed with Wendell Phillips' observation "Revolutions are not made; they come"

(Skocpol, 1979, p. 17), arguing for structure over agency. Three years later in *Rentier*

State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution (1982) Skocpol reconsiders her

iconoclastic position by recognizing that "if ever there has been a revolution

deliberately "made" by a mass-based social movement aiming to overthrow the old

order, the Iranian Revolution against the Shah surely is it" (Skocpol, 1982, p.

267).This realization made ground for further debates about the importance of

culture, ideology and ideas in revolutionary processes. The Skocpol-Sewell debate

exchanged opinions about the power of ideology in the making of revolutions.

Sewell indicated that Skocpol dismisses ideology, Skocpol replied by outlining her

own distinction between "ideologies" and "cultural idioms". While cultural idioms

are anonymous, less partisan and long-standing, ideologies are self-conscious political arguments to justify the use of state power (Skocpol, 1985, pp. 91–2).

> By thus separately conceptualizing "cultural idioms" and "ideologies," one can hope to attend to the interplay of the nonintentionalist and intentionalist aspects of ideas in revolutions much as I tried to do in States and Social Revolutions by examining class and state structures in relation to the goals and capacities of acting groups. (Skocpol, 1985, pp. 91–2)

These conceptions allow Skocpol to maintain her structural argument about the central significance of the power struggle. At the same time this debate and the exchange of ideas following the Iranian revolution brought the acknowledgement of culture into the study of revolutions, granting that cultural practices, ideas and cultural specificity in ascribing meaning all contribute to the revolutionary processes (see for example (Farhi, 1988; Foran, 1997). Recent traditions in the field recognize heterogeneous nature, process and outcome of revolutions, and equally important they are aware of the changing modality across time and place (Lawson, 2015, p. 2; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001).

A part of the criticisms voiced by Mardin is that not all revolutions are necessarily conducted from bellow as mass movements and thus not every revolution is necessary violent. Comparativists studying revolutions acknowledge this fact. Elen Kay Trimberger (1978), for example, argued that there are two types of revolutions in one radical change emerges from below in the other from above. She made a step further when arguing that "there can be no general theory of revolution (or of social change) applicable to all societies at all times" (1978, p. 1). Theda Skocpol took a similar approach in 1994 when she updated her arguments about social revolutions.

> If one is to take a social-structural approach toward explaining revolutions, one really must theorise in terms of various specific types of societies, for there is little or nothing of any significance that can be said about the political or socio-economic institutions of all kinds of known human societies lumped together. (Skocpol, 1994, p. 113)

Even though various studies of revolutions recognize heterogeneity of revolutionary events in terms of political, social, cultural and religious specificities, the field is not without its own inadequacies. The "Arab Spring" and the debates about it bring out a few examples. Many have been wondering why was the "Arab Spring" such a surprise for the scholars of the social movement theory. Akder (2013) believes the core of the problem is that "the paradigm rested on theoretical constructs that were not relevant or outdated in the context of Middle East politics" (Akder, 2013, p. 88). Events in the Middle East do not receive as much attention as do contentious politics in Europe and to some extent in Latin America (Akder, 2013, p. 90). Thus, continues Akder, with the broader understanding of the contentious politics, the "Arab Spring" would not have startled its Western observers (Akder, 2013, p. 90). Equally important is her suggestion to "acknowledge that the persistence of Middle Eastern exceptionalism has also played a role in this narrow focus, along with the fact that the regional issues remain under-theorized" (Akder, 2013, p. 90).

> The two Iranian revolutions of the 20th century, the political revolutions in Turkey, previous revolts and rebellions in Palestine and Syria, and the most recent strikes, labor activities in Egypt are all very well known. However these could not prevent the resilience of Middle Eastern exceptionalism, the idea that it is somehow different from the rest of the world when in fact it shared the modern revolts and revolutions with the rest of the global history. Perhaps the reason of its resilience lies not in the lack of evidence countering it, but in the methods of our study of the evidence. (Akder 2013, p. 90)

Ventura raises another, yet similar, criticism. Discourses about the "Arab Spring" are framed trough the idea of "despotic" governments, generalization of a never

changing "Oriental despotism" (2016, p. 5). She uses Goldstone's text on the 2011 revolutions as an example. Goldstone there states that 2011 should be distinguished from 1848 and 1989 because recent events represent a fight against *sultanistic dictatorship.*

> One may ask why it is necessary to refer to the image of the sultan to describe dictators and in particular the rulers of Arab countries – the sultans of the past do not correspond to this abstract image or to the description of Arab rulers in recent times. If it is not historical information, what does the idea of "sultan" add to the description? It can be supposed that it adds a connection to the stereotype of "Oriental despotism", which had been criticized centuries ago for lacking historical reliability (Ventura, 2016, p. 7).

This reference, continues Ventura, entails fear, cruelty and backwardness (2016, p. 8). Stereotypes and what Akder calls "methodological nationalism" (Akder, 2013, p. 90) have to be transcended, so that Middle-Eastern politics can be revisited. Hobsbawm set forward a similar argument discussing definitions of a revolution offered by social sciences. These definitions are unrealistic and they assume one-fit-all criteria for revolutions (Hobsbawm, 1986, p. 8).

But it is not only definitions that are problematic or at least simplified. The way an event is called is also contested. The "Arab Spring" has been referred to "to as the "Arab Spring", Revolution, Revolt, Uprising, Crisis and Awakening, as well as an Arab 1989, a Tunis-ami, an Arabolution and an Arabellion, among other terms" (Valbjørn, 2012, p. 26). Observers' inability to univocally recognize the event as of a certain kind will be discussed further on (in Chapter 5).

Besides, the concept of revolution exists in most of the world languages. Halliday's (1999) etymology starting with Greek *epanastasis*, followed by Arabic *inqilab* and *thaura*, *kesher* in Hebrew and *geming* in Chinese, reminds me of the heated exchange

between Lewis (1982) and Said (1982) on the meaning of thawra, which was also a word most often used in Arabic to define the "Arab Spring" (Dabashi, 2012). Lewis introduces the term first in an edited volume in 1972 saying:

> The root th-w-r in classical Arabic meant to rise up (e.g. of a camel), to be stirred or excited, and hence, especially in Maghribi usage, to rebel. It is often used in the context of establishing a petty, independent sovereignty […] The noun thawra at first means excitement, as in the phrase, cited in the Siháh, a: standard medieval Arabic dictionary, intazir hatta taskun hadhihi 'l-thawra, wait until this excitement dies down—a very apt recommendation. […] Thawra is the term used by Arabic writers in the nineteenth-century for the French Revolution, and by their successors for the approved revolutions, domestic and foreign, of our own time. (Lewis, 2016, p. 193)

Said (1979) interprets this definition of *thawra* as a hint that "the Arab is scarcely more than a neurotic sexual being" for Lewis because "each of the words or phrases he uses to describe revolution is tinged with sexuality: stirred, excited, rising up" (Said, 1979, p. 315). "Instead of revolution there is sedition, setting up a petty sovereignty, and more excitement, which is as much as saying that instead of copulation the Arab can only achieve foreplay, masturbation, coitus interruptus" (Said, 1979, pp. 315–16). In *Orientalism: An Exchange* (1982) Said adds that Lewis's Orientalist account of the word has very little to do with what *thawra* means in contemporary usage. "Arabic lexicography isn't the issue here: the real issue is whether Lewis is right to associate rising camels with the contemporary meaning of the term thawra, and whether anyone using the term in Arabic, i.e., a native speaker, would find the rising camel of any relevance" (Said, 1982).

This heated - even if at times absurd - debate and Ventura's criticism of Goldstone's usage of the notion *sultanistic dictatorship* bring forth an important realization of temporality: contemporary events need to be discussed using contemporary concepts

and their meanings. Disregarding accurate historical and semantic context produces Eurocentric and Orientalist images of the "other".

3.2 Modernity and Eurocentrism

Modernity arose in Europe with the Enlightenment. Breaking with the tradition, it gave birth to the Western identity – individualism, democracy and secularism.

> Modernity is constructed on the principle that human beings, individually and collectively (i.e., societies), make their own history. Up until that time, in Europe and elsewhere, responsibility for history was attributed to God or supernatural forces. From that point on, reason is combined with emancipation under modernity, thus opening the way to democracy (which is modern by definition). The latter implies secularism, the separation of religion and the state, and on that basis, politics is reformed.(Amin, 2009, p. 7)

The period of modernity and the understanding of modernization as a Western accomplishment facilitated the distinction between the West and its other. Enrique Dussel (1993, 2000) establishes a connection between Eurocentrism and modernity based on seven myths. (1) Modern European civilization understands itself as superior. (2) This gives it a sense of the right and obligation to "civilize" the less developed parts of the world. (3) The right path of development is the one taken by Europe. (4) Violence can be used to remove the obstacles of modernization. (5) The violence used to "modernize" is presented as a heroic act of redemptive sacrifice. (6) Modernity is thus the force of emancipation. (7) Which makes the cost of modernization" a necessary sacrifice. The West, as a modern geographical entity, is thus just as much a cultural and political construct as is its counterpart the Other (the Orient). The two constructs are built on binary oppositions and diffused by institutions such as the education and the media.

> This construct [the West], like the analogous Orientalist construct: (1) removes Ancient Greece from the very milieu in which it unfolded and developed—the Orient—in order to annex Hellenism to Europe arbitrarily; (2) retains the mark of racism, the fundamental basis on which European cultural unity was constructed; (3) interprets Christianity, also annexed arbitrarily to Europe, as the principal factor in the maintenance of European cultural unity, conforming to an unscientific vision of religious phenomena; and (4) concurrently constructs a vision of the Near East and the more distant Orients on the same racist foundation, again employing an immutable vision of religion.(Amin, 2009, pp. 165–6)

This construct of the West as modern, progressive, different than the rest, etc. also uses the European model as the ideal – either as "a model for other to follow" or as "a general law that will be inevitably reproduced elsewhere, even if delayed" (Amin, 2009, p. 256). And this is where Eurocentrism starts to be. It uses the construct of a particular type of modernity, development and change as a universal measurement of progress. Social sciences in particular have been under severe attack for their Eurocentric stand (Wallerstein, 1997, p. 94). But to overcome Eurocentrism, we must take a careful look at how it is constituted (Wallerstein, 1997, p. 94). Wallerstein (1997) points out that "social science expresses its Eurocentrism in 1) its historiography, 2) the parochiality of its universalism, 3) its assumptions about (Western) civilization, 4) its Orientalism, and 5) its attempts to impose the theory of progress" (Wallerstein, 1997, p. 94). To crush Eurocentrism there is a need for critical historiography that questions European achievements; universalism based on the European model of progress has to be replaced by particularity; the idea of one civilization should allow multiplicity and variety; the binary view of the world must be abolished; and lastly progress as the underlying explanation of the world and as the foundation for scientific work should be challenged (Wallerstein, 1997, pp. 95–100).

Institutions as education and media are most often criticized for disseminating the ideologies based on Eurocentrism. This research predominantly deals with the latter, focusing on media discourses about the "Arab Spring". At the same time this research establishes a strong link between the two institutions, showing how Eurocentric knowledge of historical events affects media representations of contemporary events. Ella Shohat's and Robert Stam's (2014) approach to Eurocentrism lays out the important contribution to the understanding of Eurocentrism for this work, where "endemic in present-day thought and education, Eurocentrism is naturalized as "common sense"" (Shohat & Stam, 2014, p. 1). Eurocentrism is most of all present in normative models of thinking about progress and modern life style expecting global universality.

> Standard core courses in universities stress the history of "Western" civilization, with the more liberal universities insisting on token study of "other" civilizations. And even "Western" civilization is usually taught without reference to the central role of European colonialism within capitalist modernity. So embedded is Eurocentrism in everyday life, so pervasive, that it often goes unnoticed. The residual traces of centuries of axiomatic European domination inform the general culture, the everyday language, and the media, engendering a fictitious sense of the innate superiority of European-derived cultures and peoples. (Shohat & Stam, 2014, p. 1)

This study, in the chapters that follow, focuses on Eurocentric quality of semantics, the problem and reality of contemporary discourses that has many times less to do with an ideology and Eurocentric believes of a communicator, than it has to do with the relation between power and knowledge in strict Foucauldian terms. Similar as Shohat and Stam (2014), this study does not focus on intentions, but on institutional discourses. It does not criticize the West (or Europe) as a bad or evil, it rather

approaches semantics as historically constructed relations of power, where language
assumes its own agency.

Understanding of Eurocentrism adopted in this study is normative, where a particular
historical experience presents a model for global development. This study also
undertakes Eurocentrism not only as a norm set on European experience, but in lieu
of the distinction between the West and the rest. What is sometimes also termed as
Western-centrism. Here the term Eurocentric does not refer to Europe as a
geographical location with a particular culture and identity. It refers to the discourse
that hegemonizes the West as a norm and the only model for development and
change. This is also a point where colonialist discourse and Eurocentric discourse
intertwine. Nonetheless, Shohat and Stam (2014) stress their distinct emphasis.

> While the former explicitly justifies colonialist practices, the latter
> embeds, takes for granted, and "normalizes" the hierarchical power
> relations generated by colonialism and imperialism, without necessarily
> even thematizing those issues directly. (Shohat & Stam, 2014, p. 2)

The following section will focus on hegemonizing practices that are creating the
divide between the West and the rest of the world. It will discuss how the colonial
and imperial legacy created this divide and most importantly why post-colonial
studies in 21st century still offer an important tool for critical analysis of the relations
of power.

3.3 The Politics of othering

The "Arab Spring", a change of political and social reality in the participating states,
is also turning the mirror toward its observers abroad. Once again it is hard to assess
the representation and discourses of the Arab events in the Western context without

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returning to the classical text of *Orientalism* by Edward Said. Even though this text has been criticized from all sides, it is far from being irrelevant. The above analysis suggests that it would be worth revisiting Said's *Orientalism*, but this time being mindful of its flaws and traps. The perspective of postcolonial criticism should also be brought back into scholarly debates, as it may provide a more useful analytical approach to mass political movements in non-Western contexts. *Orientalism* is in need of criticism from the ranks of scholars who see it as a flawed, yet important, analytical tool. Admitting that much of the criticism is well grounded does not mean that there is no compliance between Orientalism and colonialism or that Western discourses about the so-called Orient are not shaped by the power struggle between the observers and the observed. Said did attach too much importance to literary scholarship, sometimes misinterpreting the satirical and theatrical (as claimed by Daniel Varisco (2012)). His selection of sources lacks coherence and ignores certain sources while favoring others (the criticism employed by Robert Irwin (2007)). Said was also criticized for producing Occidentalism, where he resorts to the language of blame and reinforces the same binary oppositions he criticizes, to define the West (Wang, 1997). The criticism I find most to the point is that Said's *Orientalism* is more interested in the European textual representation than 'what Oriental texts themselves say about a given point in Oriental history' (Ahmad, 2000, p. 292).

In addition, the *Orientalism* Edward Said brought to life in 1978 cannot fully explain the relationship between Islam and the West in the 2010s. A lot has happened since the publication that has dramatically changed the position of Islam in the arena of world politics. Some of the events Samiei lists as the most altering: the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 and the hostage crisis of US diplomats in Tehran; an

increasing Islamic resurgence worldwide; and acts of terror in the name of Islam, particularly noticeable in 9/11 and subsequent terrorist operations in the West and the way the West responded to them (Samiei, 2010, p. 1148). In recent years a few more make the list: the "Arab Spring", especially its outcomes in Libya and Syria; the emergence of the Islamic State; violence against Yazidi and other religious minorities, and the 2015, 2016 and 2017 terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut, Teheran, Kabul, Manchester, London and Ankara, to name just a few; the refugee crisis in Europe; the Charlie Hebdo shooting; and the Boko Haram insurgency with multiple suicide attacks and mass shootings in several African states.

Because of the events listed above, Islam gets a lot of negative media coverage. With that and the growing Islamophobia, there is a grave necessity to bring Orientalism back into the social sciences. Even though there seems to be 'an increasing tendency to think of Orientalism as an ideology which belonged to a period of history that is now behind us', where we have reached the 'post-Orientalism' era (Samiei, 2010, p. 1148), this study shows that the dualism separating the West from the East still operates, at least in media discourses. The location of the events and its specific culture and religion affect the perception of the "Arab Spring". This is nothing new; on the contrary, Islam presented a threat to Christian Europe for centuries (Said, 1979; Sayyid, 2003). Especially in recent years, there is a constantly present fear of Islam lurking in the media and everyday discourses. The reason for this, according to Edward Said, is the Western understanding of Islam as the most important identifying attribute of the Muslim world: Islam being the culprit for the reactionary character of the Orient (Said, 1997, pp. 8–9). Not much has changed in recent years. The media response to September 11 in the US 'framed the whole crisis within the

context of Islam, of cultural conflicts, and of Western civilization threatened by the Other'(Abrahamian, 2003, p. 531). Western media response to the "Arab Spring" is similar: Islam presents a threat to the revolution and diminishes the possibility for change and progress. Thus, perseverance of Orientalism, recently in the supplementary form called Neo-orientalism, should not be disregarded. Neo-orientlist's Islam is still believed to be internally homogeneous, unchanging, violent, backward, incapable of progress, a threat to human emancipation and with it the project of liberation. Neo-orientalism retains the superiority of the 'West', this time 'reworked and linked to the civilizational-clash narrative originally espoused by Bernard Lewis and later popularised by Samuel Huntington in his political project The Clash of Civilizations'(Amin-Khan, 2012). Neo-orientalism still sees the Orient as anti-modern—this time implying 'a monolith "Muslim culture" and a singular conception of modernity' (Amin-Khan, 2012, p. 1598). Neo-orientalism persistently rises out of binary oppositions, as a fight between good and evil, modern and traditional, capable and incapable of change, etc. In the classic Orientalist fashion, Neo-Orientalist discourses on the "Arab Spring" in the media still argue that violence is embedded in the Muslim religion, and those Middle Eastern societies are resistant to democratization (Tuastad, 2003, pp. 594–5). Mass media is without a doubt one of the most powerful Neo-Orientalist tools, which spreads the message of inequality and essential difference between geographies and people (Abrahamian, 2003; Amin-Khan, 2012).

This study will argue that it is this neo-Orientalist approach to the "Arab Spring" in global media discourses that renders the outcome of any revolution with Islam as its participatory force questionable. The study will show how the established body of

knowledge originating from European intellectual traditions, history, and experiences is used as a tool to comprehend the social, political, cultural, and intellectual contexts that are not a part of these same traditions, history, and experiences. The hierarchy of global languages and global news sources produce a bias that takes European and North American historical experience as the only source of knowledge, which is unduly used to judge, measure, and understand what is happening in the world.

3.4 "Arab Spring" in the media or why studying traditional media still matter

The "Arab Spring" as an event itself is considered to have tight bonds with the new media, or more precisely with the social media platforms. It is believed that new media greatly affected the events, in some cases even made them possible. Nonetheless, majority of the studies on the subject claim that the role of the new media has been exaggerated and misinterpreted. It is true, as the research by Howard and others (2011) collecting information from Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, confirms, social media did play a critical role in the "Arab Spring". Their main findings show that "social media played a central role in shaping political debates in the "Arab Spring"", that "a spike in online revolutionary conversations often preceded major events on the ground", and finally that "social media helped spread democratic ideas across international borders" (Howard et al., 2011, p. 23). But it should be noted that the new communicative tools, such as social networks, did not replace the more traditional mass communications. Recent research (Aday et al., 2013; Cottle, 2011; Khondker, 2011; Rinke & Röder, 2011; Russell, 2011; Tawil-Souri, 2012; C. Wilson & Dunn, 2011) points out the dismissive understanding of the new media in the protests. Both, older and newer media technologies were used for communication, planning and organization of the protests (Tawil-Souri, 2012, p.

165). What is more, the use of traditional media dramatically outscored social media, blogs and E-mail (C. Wilson & Dunn, 2011, p. 1252).

The use of the media forms and technologies by the protesters and observers in the times of the "Arab Spring" also reveals the symbiosis of the new and the traditional media. TV stations, like Al Jazeera, and newspapers publishing online, used mobile phone footages taken by the participants in the events. Even more significant is the fact that even on Twitter and other social networks, the work of journalists was reposted and retweeted more frequently than the work of other actors during Tunisia's and Egypt's revolutionary periods (Lotan et al., 2011). This is why Aday and others (2013) are, rightfully so, emphasizing, the difficulty "to cleanly separate old from new media", because of the way the two are incorporated into a new hybrid form (p. 12). "Here is a "new" media format (a blog) on a "new" media platform (a website) run by an otherwise traditional news organization" (Aday et al., 2013, p. 12). Nevertheless the findings by Aday and others suggest that "traditional news organizations remain at the center of the media ecology both within and outside the Arab world (2013, p. 13).

The most significant role of the new media in the "Arab Spring" was mobilization of the crowds and spreading the news about the events, even if that meant reposting and sharing news originally published by the more traditional media outlets. Wilson and Dunn (2011) are pointing out the importance of Facebook for coordination of the events ahead of the protests and during the protests themselves and the importance of Twitter as a key resource for getting information to the outside world (C. Wilson & Dunn, 2011, pp. 1251–52). While the new media took over the role of a mobilizer in the process of democratization, which previously belonged to the traditional media,

the traditional media kept being frequently used by the protesters and observers for informative purposes (C. Wilson & Dunn, 2011, p. 1252). It was above all important for all of the observers from abroad, providing them with daily and weekly overviews of the events happening in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA region). Extensive amount of research argues that it was the traditional, and not the new media, which were central to transmitting the events to a global audience (Aday et al., 2013; Cottle, 2011; Khondker, 2011; Rinke & Röder, 2011; Russell, 2011). Additionally, the global traditional media and the discourses outside of the region had a significant effect on the events in the region. Tawil-Souri (2012) reminds us of a speech broadcasted on Egyptian state television on the eve of Mubarak's last day as a president. In this speech newly appointed Egyptian Prime Minister, Omar Suleiman, told the Egyptians to "get back to work and stop watching foreign satellite television (p. 162). The study done by Aday and others (2013) shows another important aspect of the global mass media outlets. Their findings suggest that not only did the majority of the content about the events in the MENA region came from outside of the region, but also the vast majority of the attention to the content was foreign based (Aday et al., 2013, p. 1).

This study will be set on the above confirmed importance of the traditional global media outlets, because these sources most significantly shaped or framed our understanding of the events. What is more, they were the most important source of information inside and, even more so, outside of the MENA region, comparing to the other news sources. There are at least two reasons for this claim. First of all, as the studies cited above have shown, traditional mainstream media were crucial transmitters of news to the global audience and were also most read sources,

especially if published online. The study of most read links by Aday and others (2013) shows that in the case of the Arab revolutionary events, the most read links were from mainstream news outlets. 71% of all the links included into their study went to traditional news (p. 13). The second reason is the importance media play in our lives and how they construct and represent the knowledge of the events we cannot participate in or observe on our own. Media technologies and discourses they form bring the remote and the foreign into our homes and offices and most importantly they shape an image of these places, events or people for us. Media "define a space that is increasingly mutually referential and reinforcive, and increasingly integrated into the fabric of everyday life" (Silverstone, 2006, p. 6). The importance of media in the events representing a crisis of some sort, whether it is political, economic or social, is particularly sensitive. The way media frame these events constitutes "how we collectively recognize and respond to what happens in the world" (Robertson, 2013, p. 4). This is why this study is set on a premise that the mass media significantly contributes to the conceptualization of any revolutionary events frequently discussed by the media. At least two factors can help us determine which media outlets affect the conceptualization the most; their circulation (or listenership, viewership, audience, or number of subscribers or members), and their status. Some news outlets have gained an "elite" status, not only by their readers, but also in the global media domain. These outlets and sources in them are frequently cited by other media outlets because they are generally perceived as "good" and "reliable" news sources. These "elite" media outlets are thus also intermedia agenda setters (Christensen & Christensen, 2013; Meraz, 2009), that dictate what different forms of media talk about and how they talk about it. When the "elite" media are cited and used as sources, especially if their reports and stories are linked, shared or

reprinted, these outlets also greatly affect how different forms of media contribute to the discourse on the topic.

But before turning to methodology, the section that follows, explains how and why collective action like protests, rebellions and revolutions has a special place in news media.

3.4.1 The spectacle of collective action: the protest paradigm

According to Chan and Lee (1984), traditional news media are quite predictable when reporting on protest activities, because they follow an already existing "protest paradigm", preferring spectacle and drama over facts and reasons for the protest. This paradigm highlights sensational details such as violence, visible drama, and deviant or strange behavior (Gitlin, 1980; Hertog & McLeod, 1995; Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986). McLeod and Hertog added another observation to these findings. News about protest are framed as violent and confrontational, even if the majority of the protesters have been peaceful (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). More specifically, when Western media is reporting about protests in the Arab World, they present them as "irrational" and "aggressive", or as "apathetic" and "dead" (Bayat, 2003). The more recent studies focusing on the "Arab Spring" also confirm the existence of the protest paradigm in the mainstream media (Harlow & Johnson, 2011). An important fact for this study, which is only focusing on the traditional mainstream media, is that the study by Harlow and Johnson (2011) also shows that the protest paradigm determines the news reports in the traditional media outlets more than in new media sources. "When it comes to the protest paradigm, the medium does matter in terms of the use of frames, portrayals of protesters, sources cited, amount of user interaction, and level of author involvement" (Harlow & Johnson, 2011, p. 1367).

According to their study, frames such as violence and drama were used far more than injustice, sympathy, or legitimizing frames in the mainstream media. Which indicates the newsworthy character and higher importance of excitement and turbulence over the underlying cause of the protests or the current situation of the protest itself (2011, p. 1367).

The protest paradigm, because of the power of the media in the opinion formation processes, does not only affect our perception of the events, but also our conceptualization of the events. This study's aim is to establish how was the "Arab Spring" conceptualized as a revolutionary event by the media and how the understanding of the concept affected reporting about the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NAME ARAB SPRING

The first set of research questions set forth in the introduction section addresses the controversy surrounding the name Arab Spring. What were the naming practices used for the events in the Arab and the Western media and how were they reflected in the discourses? This chapter will at first focus on the existing criticisms of the name. The critics maintain that the name needs to be rethought because it was given to the events by the outside observers and because it signifies the seasonal character of the events and their brief momentum. The chapter continues with the media practices and how the name Arab Spring has been used in the global and the local media. A quantitative analysis of naming practices initially confirms that this was the most often used name both in global and local news sources included into the study. It shows how and when the popular character of the name emerged and spread globally. While the global popularity of name might eases the criticism, this study shows how the name with its two defining characteristics, the *Arabness* and the *Springness*, is reflected in the Western media discourses as a whole. This reveals the need to problematize the discourses altogether more than the name-giving. Thus what follows is the assessment of the seasonal and regional character of the name by

highlighting how the ideas of *Arabness* and *Springness* influenced the reporting about the events. With that I am trying to show how the media discourses by implementing the frames of *Arabness* and *Springness* are denying the protesters their agency, sovereignty, nationhood and the ability to revolutionize. The comparison of the global and local media reveals significant differences in framing, further supporting the above mentioned argument.

4.1 Naming practices

The name Arab Spring was used before the end of 2010. "The term Arab Spring was originally used, primarily by U.S. conservative commentators, to refer to a short-lived flowering of Middle Eastern democracy movements in 2005" (Keating, 2011). But, as Abusharif (2014) reminds us, it was used in a different way. The 2005 usage "was indeed trumpeted as a "spring," but only for the benefit of the Bush administration's military strategy, in which martial might was viewed as a democratization stimulant" (2014, p. 10). The reasons for the cheering name at the time were connected with the increasing American assistance in the region, after the 9/11 attacks, that needed the public support. Especially because "by fiscal year 2009, the level of annual U.S. democracy aid in the Middle East was more than the total amount spent from 1991 to 2001" (Hamid, 2001).The next time the Arab Spring was used was in January 6, 2011, almost right after the events commenced, in Foreign Policy article by Marc Lynch (Keating, 2011). After that it soon appeared in more news sources until it became, in a matter of weeks, a globally accepted name by most of the observers. On the other hand, the name was not favored in the Arabic language and by the Arabic sources. The Arabs themselves did not originally refer to the uprisings in their countries as a "spring." Their main phrase of choice was "Arab

Revolutions," or *al-Thawrat al-'Arabiya* (Abusharif, 2014, p. 10). Journalist and

scholar Rami G. Khouri (2011) emphasizes the same acknowledgement after talking

to activists in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen.

> I ask them how they refer to their own political actions. Their answer is
> an almost universal, "Revolution" (or thawra, in Arabic). And when
> they refer to the collective activities of Arabs across the region, they
> often use the plural "revolutions" (or thawrat). (Khouri, 2011)

The difference between the names by Arab and foreign sources is just one of the

critics voiced by some journalists and academics. No matter how widely the name

has been used, some believe it is neither appropriate nor right. Abusharif (2014)

pointed out two streams of criticism. The first one is based on the fear of "Islamism",

claiming that the Arab Spring is "too cheerful of a term to apply to a revolution that

may usher in "Islamist" rule". The second stream of criticism is based on the

knowledge of Orientalism and neo-imperialism, problematizing the name the Arab

Spring as a Western creation, "following an old Orientialist pattern, with disregard

for the real nature of the uprisings and its various parts and motivations"(Abusharif,

2014, p. 17). Both streams advocate that the given name is an attempt to frame the

events outside their reality and true nature. This study will demonstrate the latent

(hidden and often unconscious, but still very much present) Orientalist framing by

pointing out how the "Arab Spring" was imagined with a belief that globalization

should produce a culturally homogenized world. It will show how "global media"

outlets reported on the "Arab Spring" events as a part of a "global culture" debate,

ensuing to fabricate the "Arab Spring" as a misfit in the modern globalized world.

The idea of a "global culture" creates normative standards based on the European

experience. Such standards, as this thesis is trying to show, because they are based on

specific traditions of knowledge, can many times not be translated into a different geographical and temporal context. While this argument starts taking shape in this chapter it fully develops in the following chapter.

Media at first welcomed the "Arab Spring" with the excitement over the possibility of change also marked by the decision proclaiming "The Protester" to be Time's person of the year in 2011. Kurt Andersen, author of the cover story on "The Protester", explained this decision as a celebration of the fact that the protest "came back" (*Why TIME Chose "The Protester" - Person of the Year 2011 - TIME*, 2011). "'Massive and effective street protest' was a global oxymoron until — suddenly, shockingly — starting exactly a year ago, it became the defining trope of our times. And the protester once again became a maker of history" (Andersen, 2011). Time's contract photographer of the protests and protesters told Times that in the 2011 protests everybody united their power "for one common cause, one common expression: to get a better life"(Witty, 2011). Very similar to Time's reception, global media reacted to the revolutionary spark setting off the "Arab Spring" events with the same "romantic" fascination. Believing that one single event ignited the momentum of change affecting the whole region, bringing down one authoritarian regime after the other. Washington Post and Time are just two of the examples defining the revolutions over the region as a reaction ignited by a single emotion-bearing act.

> Revolutions are explosions of frustration and rage that build over time, sometimes over decades. Although their political roots are deep, it is often a single spark that ignites them — an assassination, perhaps, or one selfless act of defiance. (Fisher, 2011)

> No one could have known that when a Tunisian fruit vendor set himself
> on fire in a public square in a town barely on a map, he would spark
> protests that would bring down dictators in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya
> and rattle regimes in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain. (Stengel, 2011)

For at least a few months the Arab revolutionary movement, started by Bouazizi's

self-immolation, was perceived as a regional regime toppling phenomenon. The

Guardian reported about the revolutionary fire that keeps spreading and changing the

political reality of the region.

> The fire of revolt sparked by his [Mohamed Bouazizi's] death in
> Tunisia has raced through the brushwood of Arab autocracy. Each
> revolt provided the cue for the next, passing from Tunisia to Egypt, to
> Libya, to Yemen, to Bahrain. It is smoldering in Jordan, Saudi Arabia,
> Algeria and Morocco. Few leaders in the region have escaped its heat.
> Two of their number have fallen, a third in Yemen could be next.
> (Editorial, 2011)

At first media's alluring and highly optimistic reports presented the events as history

changing and immensely welcomed developments where people on the streets took

the power into their own hands determined to change the political and social order of

the state. They made it appear as if nothing could go wrong and suppress the

"momentum unstoppable". The media's period of excitement did not last too long.

By the end of the year 2011, "the uprisings across the Arab world have been crushed,

hijacked and poisoned" (Milne, 2011), reported The Guardian, eventually subsiding

"romantic" fascination with the events in Western media outlets, turning the "Arab

Spring" into the "Arab Winter". The Western media neglected the fact that

revolutions are messy and they do not follow a straight and predefined path.

The shift from "Spring" to "Winter" poses a question: What does the name Arab

Spring imply and what are the changes the name undergoes in the media during the

first years of the movements in the region. By focusing on the coverage of the "Arab

Spring", this chapter examines naming practices hidden behind the name Arab Spring revealing that there is more to the criticism of the name that the existing literature recognizes. The name Arab Spring, when it was first given to the events very possibly did not intend to connote what the criticisms are accusing it off. It was only when it reached global popularity that some observers started to emphasize the seasonal character of the events and other characteristics the critics are pointing out. Nonetheless, even a fast review of Western media sources displays media discursive practices that do support the criticisms. This is why, in this chapter, I intend to look beyond the naming practices in the media by exposing the more general framing practices. The results of the analysis show how these practices reflect the name of the events and by that they reveal a more significant problem than the name. The study first conducts a short quantitative analysis proving the popularity of the name. It than continues by conducting a media framing analysis using two frames deductively determined following the criticism of the name Arab Spring and the literature on the politics of othering. The two frames I refer to are *Arabness* and *Springness*. With *Arabness* I refer to the idea that the events were "Arab" in their nature, location and specificity. Trough *Springness*, on the other hand, the events were perceived either as seasonal events or as a recreation of the European events in 1848, or in 1968, the Spring of Nations or the Prague Spring respectively. While the results of the MFA support the existing criticism of the name, this thesis is not trying to suggest that the name should not be used or that it needs to be changed. The name itself is only problematic because of the frames *Arabness* and *Springness* used to define the events in Western media discourses. Without such framing, the name the Arab Spring would be just that, a name.

The study presented in this and the following chapter is based on the results of the data analysis of the Western and the Arab media. The New York Times and The Guardian were selected as the representatives for the global media set because of their high readership and elite status. The initial search of articles for the global media set using the database Lexis Nexis comprised 282 articles. These were all the articles published in the three-year period of between 2011 and 2013 with their main topic being identified as the events known as the "Arab Spring". To avoid the articles where the "Arab Spring" was only mentioned in passing, the criterion was set where the clear connection with the "Arab Spring" had to be established in the headline of the article. The main topic of the article was decided through a two-step topic identification process. At first a combination of a noun defining a geographical area in the Middle East and North African region and a noun defining a social movement or collective action had to appear in the headline of an article, as for example *Arab Spring, Egyptian revolution or Yemeni insurgency*. This resulted in 282 initially reviewed articles, out of which 195 (138 from The Guardian, 57 from The New York Times) were deemed relevant after duplicates, letters and blog posts were removed from the set.

The same article selection criteria were used for the local media set. Arab media sources used in this part of the study publish in several languages. The articles used were the ones collected in the BBC Monitoring Library database. The ones that were not originally written in English were translated into English by the database providers. Unlike the Global media sources, Arab sources were not selected by the author. All written media sources publishing for the Arab audience or for the audience living in the MENA region included into the BBC Monitoring Library

database were taken into consideration. The initial search of articles comprised 437 documents. These were all the articles about the "Arab Spring" collected in the section of the database for the MENA region, for the years 2011 – 2013. As in the analysis of the Global media, here again, the criterion was set to sort out the articles whose main topic were the "Arab Spring" events. Thus the clear connection with the "Arab Spring" had to be established in the headline of the article by stating a name of the events, as for example *Arab Spring, Egyptian revolution or Yemeni insurgency.* After that duplicates, reports of TV broadcasting, letters and blog posts were removed from the set. This resulted in 200 relevant articles.

The following pages will examine the naming practices used for the events and the usage of the frames *Arabness* and *Springness* in the global and the local media discourses..

4.2 The name Arab Spring in the Western media

When Western media started to report about the events we today know as the "Arab Spring", the events were referred to by different names: "Arab Revolt", "Arab Awakening", "Arab Uprising", "Arab Revolution" and others. Until eventually, at least most of the outside observers prefer the name the Arab Spring. Analysis presented below shows that 75% of the articles published in The New York Times and The Guardian prefer this name over others (see Figure 1 and Table 2).
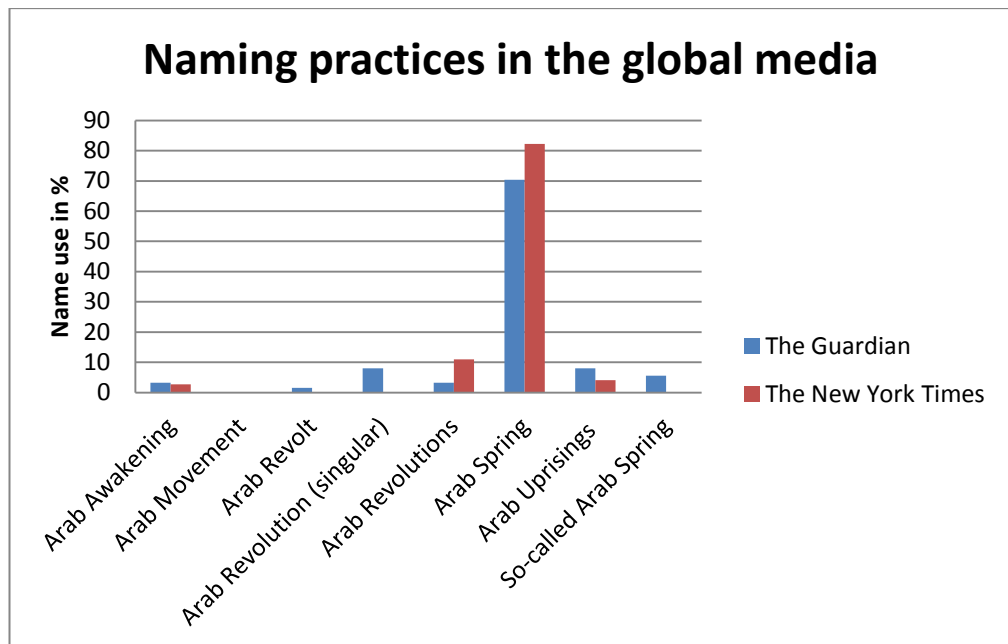
Figure 1: A number of times in percentage a name was used in the global news sources to refer to the Arab Revolutions between the years 2011 and 2013.

Table 2: Names used by global media to refer to the Arab Revolutions between the years 2011 and 2013.

PREFERED NAME USED BY GLOBAL MEDIA	%	N
Arab Awakening	3	6
Arab Movement	0	0
Arab Revolt	1	2
Arab Revolution (singular)	5	10
Arab Revolutions	6	12
Arab Spring	75	148
Arab Uprisings	7	13
So-called Arab Spring	4	7

The data analysis reveals only minor differences between the two news sources included into the study. This is why the results of the two global media sources are further on discussed collectively, referred to as the global media.

"Arab Spring" remained the most often used name even with several criticism and pleas to stop using the term altogether (Alhassen, 2012; Khouri, 2011). Only in 25% of the articles in the global media the events were called by a different name. It is important to note that the name itself strongly reflects the framing practices in the media. As the analysis shows, the media representation of the "Arab Spring" is a manifestation of two dominant ideas behind the name: *Arabness* and *Springness.* While most of the approaches to criticize the use of the name Arab Spring focused on the quality of *Springness* expressed in the naming practices and frames surrounding them, this study is approaching framing practices behind the name as a whole. Analysis of framing through the understanding of seasons is combined with an illumination of another framing category that provides meaning to global media discourses: *Arabness* which offers an understanding of the events through the prism of regional specificities based on geography, culture and religion.

4.2.1 The idea of Arabness

By calling the uprisings "Arab" foretells a particular regional, ethnic, cultural and religious character of the events. The problem arises when by calling the uprisings "Arab" the unique participating states or actors are neglected or left out. Not only that categories like "Arab" reduce a variety of different places, practices and peoples to a manufactured unit, often perceived as "second rate" (Said, 1999), such simplified renditions also distort the actual events by presenting them as one uniform and homogenous affair.

One way to assess the simplification of what actually happened in the area and to establish the importance of *Arabness* as a framing category for the revolutionary events in the MENA region, is to show how prevalent is the idea that these were regional events and not local state-based events. Thus, the articles included into the analysis were separated into two groups. In the first group were the articles published in the two global news sources that talked about the "Arab Spring" in general, as one wide and unified event, or were offering an overview of the events in multiple countries at once, as if they are a connected unit, where parts can only exist in synergy. The rest of the articles focused on the events in one or two countries at most or when talking about several cases the author clearly acknowledged the distinct character, local and state-based peculiarities. This distinction is important because by approaching the events nationally we acknowledge their uniqueness, different causes, directions and outcomes.

Out of all the articles included into this study the reporting about the unrests in the region exceeds the reporting about the nation-based events. More than 40% of the articles published in the three years were about the region or "Arab Spring" as a whole (see Table 2). When the events were perceived locally in the press, the countries discussed most often were Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Syria and Yemen, or in other words, the countries affected most severely by the events. The chart bellow (Figure 2) shows the number of times state-based events were discussed in the media against the number of times the "Arab Spring" was approached as a regional event. The ratio between the two groups of articles is similar in both news sources.
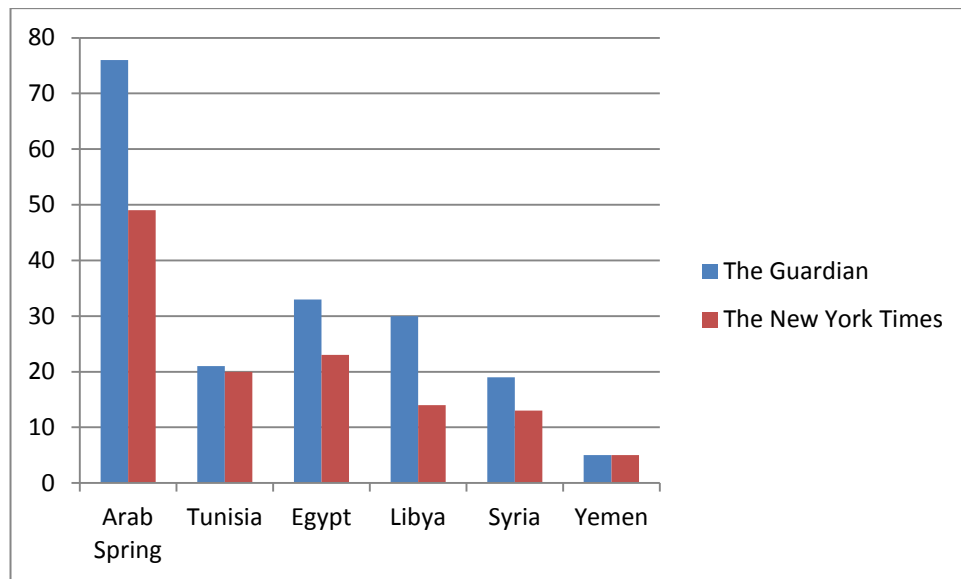
Figure 2: A number of times the two media sources reported in the years 2011- 2013 about the "Arab Spring" as a regional event or about nation-based events in countries involved.

Reports about the regional nature of the events reveal a lot about the understanding of the events: the "Arab Spring" was perceived as an Arab event, which was regional and not national, and equally important, it was observed as a single event and not as a set of national events. Differences in the actual events, especially in their outcomes, show that while the events of the "Arab Spring" are events of the same region and thus they share the regional character as they commenced in a wave-like fashion, these were not one event, but a set of national events in the same region. In media reports, on the other hand, the "Arab Spring" is presented as one event that commenced at once, for similar reasons in all participating states and was developing in the same way throughout the region. Using the notion of *Arabness* as a general regional category is problematic because it denies claims of nationhood, of national – sovereign voice and subjectivity. And because, by overlooking historical, cultural,

religious, and political differences between the participating states, it omits the

contextual unique factors that led to the uprisings.

Table 3: Articles dealing with the events regionally and locally (in percentages)

REGIONAL VS. LOCAL EVENTS IN GLOBAL MEDIA	%
Arab Spring	41
Egypt	18
Libya	14
Tunisia	13
Syria	10
Yemen	3

Anderson (2011) addresses the profound differences between the "Arab Spring"

states that are not apparent in media discourses (Anderson, 2011, p. 3). Kashani-

Sabet (2012) warns about the generalizations running the risk of effacing important

cultural and political differences among the participating states, groups and

individuals (Kashani-Sabet, 2012, p. 156).

> The timing of the popular revolts—so sudden and almost
> simultaneous—suggests that the similarities these autocracies shared,
> from their aging leaders and corrupt and ineffectual governments to
> their educated, unemployed, and disaffected youth, were sufficient to
> explain the wave of revolutions. Yet the authorities that these young
> protesters confronted were unique in each nation—as will be the
> difficulties they face in the future. (Anderson, 2011, p. 3)

The patterns and demographics also vary widely. Anderson (2011, pp. 2–3)

compares Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. The protests in Tunisia started in the rural areas

and later spread toward the cities. In Egypt urban areas were the first to organize. In

Libya, on the other hand, protests started in one of the provinces revealing old tribal

disputes in the whole country. Even in Egypt and Syria, the two states sharing the common urban features, adds Ismail (2013), "important differences emerge" (Ismail, 2013, p. 890).

> Although they [the countries of the Arab Spring] shared a common call for personal dignity and responsive government, the revolutions […] reflected divergent economic grievances and social dynamics—legacies of their diverse encounters with modern Europe and decades under unique regimes. (Anderson, 2011, p. 3)

The *Arabness* in the "Arab Spring" while helping to "rationalize complex and seemingly unrelated events and people, it obfuscates a more thorough geographical and historical understanding through the imposition of three key limitations: ethnic, temporal, and spatial bounding" (Tyner & Rice, 2012, p. 131). To consider the events popularly known as the "Arab Spring" as "one large wave of change", "implies embracing an abstract viewpoint that reduces and neutralizes the real differences between the various Arab countries" (Ventura, 2016, p. 4). When defining the events as Arab, participating states are denied nationhood. The complexity of the region, the multiplicity of states and voices are all boiled down to one simplified inadequate entity. Imprecise and generalizing reporting, with the use of words such as "Muslim world", "Arab world" and "Arab revolution", etc. provides a false sense of unity and correspondence across the region and it represents the region as a union that precedes the state. In the example from The New York Times "the Muslim world" is used as a synthesis of "Muslim" qualities that fabricate the same outset, process and outcome of the events in the region, disregarding any possible differences between the states.

> The violent demonstrations that have spread across the Muslim world in recent weeks have convinced many in the United States and Europe that the Arab revolutions that began in late 2010 are now over and that the democratic project has failed. (Marzouki, 2012)

Even when national events were brought to observers' attention by the media, it was their importance for the "Arab Spring" as a whole that mattered more than national dynamics and processes. Malik (2011), for example, emphasized in his article that Egypt's most important contribution to the "Arab Spring" has been in providing realistic expectations to the events in the region. Important national events, such as election, political debates and policy making decisions were also presented by the media as indicators for the Arab world as a whole.

> In the first national election since the ouster of the strongman Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in January, voters will choose an assembly that will govern the country while writing a new constitution. The vote is a bellwether for the Arab world, and the debate over the role of political spending is a case study of the forces at play here and around the region (Seligson, 2011).

In the same fashion Tunisian elections in 2011 were more than national elections, they represented all the hope for democratic success in the region and at the same time all the fear that the democratic experiment might fail. In several articles elestions in Tunisia were believed to be the "bellwether for the Arab World" (Seligson, 2011). When the journalists did focus on the differences between the events in the region, they focused primarily on different rates of success.(Rustin, 2011; Tisdall, 2011).

> Tunisia will hold its first election in 10 days. Its current foreign minister, Mouldi Kefi, said Tunisia's election would be a bellwether for the region. But it must be sounding more like the bell for the final round of Arab absolute monarchies (Hearst, 2011).

> In Tunisia, the stakes are no less high, because if this experiment fails, a second tier of the old ruling elite would create its own "managed" simulacrum and the Arab spring would whither ("Libya and Tunisia," 2011).

By disregarding the national, the region is represented as a uniform union of cultural, historical, political and social sameness. In The Guardian Milne (2011) writes about the immense similarities between the events, with the "upheavals across the Arab world [being] intimately connected". Even though the "Arab Spring" affected and took part in almost 20 states, where it had a different reach and was utilized differently, media preferred overlooking the unique factors. In the media a selection of a few examples was enough to provide information about what is happening in the whole region. In the article published by The New York Times, violence in Libya, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were used to support the claim that dictators across the region use lethal power to fight the protesters.

> The Arab Spring is not necessarily over, but it has run up against dictators willing to use lethal force to preserve their power. The youth-led momentum for change stalled first in Libya, where Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi unleashed troops on his people, and then in Bahrain, where King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa enlisted Saudi Arabia's help to crush demonstrations (Slackman, 2011).

In the case of the "Arab Spring" national events were unified and presented as parts of a greater whole, all contributing to the success or failure of the "Arab Spring". Developments in one country were affecting developments in the other and characteristics of a singular event were expected to be found in others as well. Media reports also seem to have forgotten about the non-Arab ethnic groups living in the region also playing a role in the events. The Arab world was always, and still is, seen as a unit made with parts that were almost identical, the same as the Arabs or "Orientals were almost everywhere nearly the same" (Said, 1979, p. 38). This is why

the "Arab Spring", no matter the internal differences between the revolutions in different states, ranging from non-violent protests to hundreds of thousands deaths, or from democratic elections to elections that were not recognized by the international community, or even from peaceful state building processes to a excessively violent civil war, remains being seen as a regional event. Even though one could claim that the Arab World is a geographical unit, sharing Islam as a predominant religion and that there is such a thing as an Arab identity, it is important to note that Tunisians, Egyptians, Libyans and others only referred to the events as Arab Revolutions in plural or *al-Thawrat al-'Arabiya* when talking about the collective activities of the Arabs across the region (Abusharif, 2014; Khouri, 2011). Otherwise they referred to their national events with nation defining names: the Tunisian Revolution, the Egyptian Revolution, etc.

The limitation reflecting the name "Arab Spring" in media discourses is not only the implication of the "Arab" character of the events. The notion of "Spring" indicates other qualities of the events that can be disputed.

4.2.2 The Idea of Springness

> Not only is the phrase "Arab Spring" seasonally inaccurate, but as a metaphor to denote a "time of renewal" it is a condescending insinuation that those who courageously labored to successfully oppose decades of entrenched dictatorships just stumbled upon a coming of seasonal change. (Alhassen, 2012)

Why would the events that commenced in winter be called a "Spring"? Assuming the name is not seasonally incorrect; it must denote as, Alhassen (2012) has pointed out, "a time of renewal", development or even a change from a different period possibly understood as "Winter". In the light of the revolutionary character of the events the name "Arab Spring" might also unfold the connection with other historical

revolutionary events that were called a "Spring". Even if the name when first given

to the events was not coined on these assumptions, these connotations affect framing

of the events in the global media. The notion of *Springness* in the news reports about

the "Arab Spring" frames the events either as a repetition of significant European

experiences in 1848 and 1968, as a sudden awakening of the region or as a transitory

period. This again results in disregarding uniqueness of the events and denying the

agency of the participatory states and their citizens.

Let us begin with the connotations of a season. Shihade (2012) calls to mind how

"the concept of season is embedded in a long history of Orientalizing the region", as

if the people of MENA region stood up against an oppressor for the first time

(Shihade, 2012, pp. 58–9).

> From Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, to Palestine, the Arab people have
> been putting up a hard fight for over a century against western colonial,
> and neo colonial capitalist and racist modernity. But this is hardly
> registered in a western-centric mindset and in the dominant discourse,
> neither among many in the Arab world itself. (Shihade, 2012, p. 59)

It is true that this is not a first political event called a "Spring". As it is true that the

same criticisms were not expressed about the Prague Spring or the Spring of Nations.

Nevertheless, the case of the "Arab Spring" needs to be problematized, not because

of the name it was given, but because of the way it was framed as a revolutionary

event in the Western media.

The analysis shows that it was at first framed as an awakening, announcing the new

beginning of the social and political existence, promising changes of the existing

order and new possibilities. The media reported that the "Arab Spring" at the same

time "dismantle[ed] the structures of political despotism", enabled "genuine change

and democratization" (Ghannoushi, 2011) and "a change in consciousness, the intuition that something big is possible; that a great change in the world's priorities is within people's grasp" (Mason, 2013). The political and social awakening of the region was met with surprise. Media defined the events as sudden and unexpected, claiming that the region spoke up after decades of suppression. The New York Times reported about the Arab world "shak[ing] itself out of its lethargy after decades of apparent resignation and silence" (Dalrymple, 2011). The awakening of the Arab people is represented by the media as a sudden first-time occurrence, denying agency to the people before the 2011 arousal of political sensitivities.

At the same time the name Arab Spring also hints at the seasonal character of the events in another way – as a rotation of seasons and their temporality. The period of spring is represented as transitory, where revolution cannot be institutionalized as permanent change. Spring as a season must be followed by other seasons, symbolizing decline and despair. In Western media discourses the events were called or framed as an autumn or a winter, seasons that do not promise renewal.

> After the euphoria of Tunisia and Egypt, the "Arab Spring" had become bleak autumn. Savage repression, foreign intervention, civil war, counter-revolution and the return of the old guard had become the order of the day (Milne, 2011).

> The Arab Spring is now turning into an Arab Winter (Makiya, 2013).

When framing the Arab Revolutions as an autumn or a winter, the events, as framed in the media, were not meant to bring permanent changes. What turned the cycle around, back to the Winter-state, are repression and counter-revolution that crushed popular pressure for democratic rights and social justice, violence against religious minorities and fear of international turmoil and Islamism. The problem is that the

name or a frame "Arab Winter" was not reserved only for particular states participating in the region's revolutions. On the contrary "Arab Winter", as much as "Arab Spring", encompasses the whole region. Thus it seems, that when it comes to the Arab World, there are no winners or losers, no successes or fails, the Arab World is doomed to live in a Winter- state.

Following the debate commenced by Eric Hobsbawm in an interview for BBC *It reminds me of 1848...*(cited in Whitehead, 2011), continued by Kurt Weyland in his article *The Arab Spring: Why the Surprising Similarities with the Revolutionary Wave of 1848?* (Weyland, 2012), another criticism emerged claiming that "the "spring" convention applied to the Arab unrest is drawn from historical precedents and their support terminologies that are exterior to the Arab world" (Abusharif, 2014, p. 2). Global media also tried establishing the connection with the social movements in 1848 and 1968, other two historical events named "Spring": the Spring of Nations and the Prague Spring. Both "Springs" played an important role in the liberalization of the world, yet none of them succeeded in their own historical, social and political reality. When global media took the two significant European experiences to assess the "Arab Spring" they either use them to understand what is happening and to anticipate what will follow, or to precipitately foretell the failure of the events.

> In the Arab world, too, it is not hard to see where the new autocrats will come from to replace the old: the arrival of a socially conservative majority in the Egyptian parliament mirrors almost exactly what happened when the radicalized masses of Paris in 1848 found themselves subjects of a new, democratic assembly dominated by representatives of the Catholic peasantry (Mason, 2012)

By using European experience to asses events happening in a different region of the world in a very different time results in a simplified understanding of the events,

stripping them of their political, historical and cultural uniqueness and possibilities to develop differently from somehow similar events in the past. Moreover, when Mason (2012) in The Guardian compared 2012 with 1848 as a "byword for reaction", the "Arab Spring" became branded as a failed endeavor, trapped in the maze of the European "Spring" experiences.

Thus it seems that when the global Western media approached the revolutions in the Arab world, the "Arab Spring" was not just a name, it became a concept itself - a condensation of political and social contexts that provided the meaning for the name Arab Spring. According to Koselleck concepts are the concentrate of several substantial meanings (Ifversen, 2011, p. 72), and media has played an important role providing these meanings to the observers. Western media distributed the idea of a unifying character of the "Arab Spring". It united different national revolutionary events into a union even when it was clear that not all the events are following the same path of development. Western media has conceptualized the "Arab Spring" as a regional Arab event, a temporary awakening, that can suddenly turn into a suppression of will and progress.

Generalizations, simplifications, devaluation and exaggerations are common attributes when it comes to the observations about the Arab world. "Arab society" a grouping of "over a 100 million people and at least a dozen different societies", cannot and should not be discussed as a single monolith, but when it is, "is therefore a mythification" (Said, 1975, p. 410). While this study exposes the myth of the "Arab Spring" it is also aware of several criticisms pointed at the work of Said. The one I find most accurate is the immense interest in the European or Western traditions of knowledge and representations within these practices as oppose to what is being said

in the region by local observers. Thus, by looking at Western media alone, the criticism expressed above cannot be sustained. By following the methodological argument of the project of comparative political theory, ensuring that scientific undertaking recognizes the problems of living together by studying human and not merely Western dilemmas, demands introducing non-Western perspectives into social sciences and humanities (Euben, 1997, p. 32; Thomas, 2010, p. 653). Scholars of comparative political theory urge their colleges "to attend to texts from outside a "Western" tradition" (Dallmayr, 1996, 1999, 2014, Euben, 1997, 1999; Thomas, 2010, p. 654). Acknowledging the criticism and the method proposed by the comparative political theorists, the following section unfolds how Arab media approached the name Arab Spring.

4.3 The name Arab Spring in the Arab Media

It was argued in the previous section that the name Arab Spring became a contested issue for three reasons: it is loaded with meaning connecting the revolutions with the 1848 events in Europe and 1968 events in Prague; it was given to the events by outside observers; and it can be differently understood trough the symbolism of seasons. The event was not known as the "Arab Spring" from the beginning. It was also called "Arab Revolt", "Arab Awakening", "Arab Uprising" or "Arab Revolution". But at the end of the day, at least most of the outside observers prefer the name the "Arab Spring". The study of printed global media shows that 75% of the articles published in The New York Times and The Guardian prefer this name over others. On the other hand, the name Arab Spring is supposedly not favored in the Arabic language and by the Arabic sources. The Arabs themselves, according to Abusharif (2014) and Khouri (2011), did not originally refer to the uprisings in their

countries as a "spring." Nonetheless, as Abusharif (2014) has noticed as well, Arabic press, on the other hand, did start using the name Arab Spring later on, translating it from its English origins as *al-Rabi' al-Arabiy* (Abusharif, 2014, p. 10). What follows is an analysis of Arab media's usage of the name and the framing practices providing meanings for it. 200 articles from 38 different newspapers from 15 countries in the MENA region were included into this part of the study. Some (21 of them) publish in English, others were translated into English by BBC Monitoring Library.

Table 4: Naming practices in the Arab press 2011-2013

PREFERED NAME USED BY ARAB MEDIA	%	N
Arab Awakening	1	2
Arab Movements	1	1
Arab Revolt	2	3
Arab Revolution (singular)	2	3
Arab Revolutions	23	32
Arab Spring	49	69
Arab Uprising	2	3
So-called Arab Spring	20	29

Similar to the global press, the Arab press publishing adopted the name Arab Spring in the mid 2011, preferring the names as "Arab Uprising", "Arab Awakening" and most of all "Arab Revolutions" in the first half of the year. When the popularity of the "Arab Spring" took over globally, some Arab news articles acknowledged the imposing name by calling the events "Arab Spring" (in quotation marks), "the so-called Arab Spring" or "what is known as the Arab Spring". Yet still name Arab Spring was more often used in the Arab Press between the years 2011 and 2013 than

any other name. Nonetheless, the analysis of Arab media and their usage of the name reveals that the name Arab Spring had different or at least less defining connotations. The quotation from pan-Arab daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat (collected and translated by BBC Monitoring Library) even denies any importance of the name whatsoever. A revolution or a spring, Arab, youths' or other, what started in 2011 and encompassed the region, was new and significant.

> The Arab revolution, the Arab spring, or the youths' revolution, choose the name you want from the names adopted by the Arab media to describe what it staking place in the Arab political street, but you will find out that "something new has taken place," something that attracts attentions, and also that is extremely important. (Shubakshi, 2011)

Even though Khouri (2011) connected the popularity of the "Arab Spring" term across the Western world with subtle Orientalism at work, it now seems, that the name, whether Orientalist in its core or not, became globally accepted and widely used. Thus it seems that the signifier "Arab Spring" has multiple signified concepts, reaching beyond the conceptual limitations provided by the Western context.

Western media conceptualized the name Arab Spring trough two ideas: the idea of *Arabness* and the idea of *Springness*. The event was first of all conceptualized as an Arab event, which was regional and not national, and equally important, it was conceptualized as a single event and not as a set of national events. Another characteristic indicated by the naming practices is the awakening nature of the events, announcing the new beginning of the social and political existence, with changes of the existing order and new possibilities. The name "Spring" also hints at the seasonal character of the events, the rotation of seasons and their temporality, turning one season into another.

Arab media approached the name Arab Spring differently. Instead of the regional focus, Arab media treated the "Arab Spring" as a set of state based events. Only 28% of the articles reported about the "Arab Spring" in general, as a regional phenomenon. The rest approached the events separately, acknowledging the influence of the events in Tunisia and Egypt for the region, yet understanding that these are different state base social movements, with different causes, motivations and expectations. "What took place in Tunisia" writes Aljazeera, "is the introduction to an uprising in the Arab world, and this magnificent mass victory will be followed by others […] capable of toppling dictatorships one after the other (Al-Za'atirah, 2011). In a similar manner, "The Arab Spring, which came as a pleasant surprise for pro-democracy activists in the Arab world, is likely to have broad regional implications too" (Kabalan, 2013). Even with the regional influences, authors were aware that every Arab state faces different challenges and people revolted for different reasons.

> In Egypt, the constitution and its interpretation have become themes of political and popular clashes where blood was shed. In Jordan and Kuwait, the rights, specifically the right to vote, became the subject of clashes with security forces. In Yemen, the state, with all its constitutional, human rights and democracy accessories became topics for clashes before and after Ali Abdallah Salih. (Al-Dakheel, 2012)

Most of all, the local media defined the "Arab Spring" as a sign that the region is ready for a change, not only in the political, but also in the social sphere. The "Arab Spring" resulted as a change in the regional attitude towards the political, social and economic reality, manifesting itself differently in every participating state.

It means that the change of the popular mood and the accompanying change in the political map in the countries of the Spring and beyond, as well as the change of the political culture, will result in a change in the concept of the Arab state itself, which is already changing as we speak. […] What points towards this are new terms being used such as 'rights', 'constitution' and 'democracy', which have become of the most heavily traded terminology. (Al-Dakheel, 2012)

The idea of a new Arab state and new possibilities ascribed to it was acknowledged on different levels of the state as well, write Arab sources. Events in Tunisia and Egypt sparked the incentive for progress and stability.

The overthrow of the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt has rekindled Arab dreams of change. Some forward-thinking leaders in the region have signaled that they are aware of the need to embrace change as a priority for progress and regional stability. These have already started taking real steps towards openness of their political systems and embracing economic and social reform that aims to bring opportunity to an educated yet disenfranchised Arab youth.(Murad, 2011)

Even though the events influenced each other, Arab media recognized their crucial differences and the dangers of basing an analysis of an event on a similar setting that happened across the border earlier on.

Comparing it [the Libyan revolution] with the Tunisian or even the Egyptian revolution, which inspired the Libyan people in order to benefit in this way, is unrealistic and error-ridden and it leads to completely erroneous conclusions including one that victory is near and that the fall of Colonel Mu'ammar Al-Qadhafi is just around the corner. (Nur-al-Din, 2011)

Above all, Arab reporting remained optimistically cautions trough out the years. Recognition of the momentum for change, "the real earthquake that is occurring now inside Arab societies" and the boost in "optimism, confidence, and insistence" (al-Majali, 2011) in the early months did not turn into fear, resentment and a set of impossibilities in the following years. It rather took a turn towards realistic

recognition of the revolutionary setting, the hardships and obstacles ahead. Without

turning the "Arab Spring" into a failure, Arab media reported about the difficulties

the revolutionaries will have to face.

> Do the rest of the peoples of the Arab region "want to overthrow the
> regime" after what they have seen in the countries, whose people have
> succeeded in shaking of overthrowing the regime? Perhaps some of
> them have become fearful, but some others still insist on fulfilling the
> mission, whatever the costs might be, in accordance to the famous
> revolutionary principle: "You cannot make an omelet without breaking
> some eggs." Naturally, we have to admit that the intrinsic, domestic,
> and cultural factors, in addition to the foreign conspiracies will make
> the process of real change in this poor part of the world an extremely
> difficult and bitter process, because of the strategic and petroleum
> importance of the region for the jackals that rule the world. (Al-Qasim,
> 2013)

Arab media approached the events as a possibility of change rather than a

predetermined downfall induced by the locality and temporality of the events. Even

with the very high usage of the name Arab Spring in the Arab media sources,

popularity of the name albeit allowed "Arab Spring" to detach itself from the

contextual framework used in global media reporting. The two qualities "Arabness"

and "Springness" were almost omitted in Arab media. Even though Arab media

preferred the name Arab Spring over others once it has gotten the global reach,

popularity and recognizability, it is important to note that the name was replaced

with other names half of the times. This was not the case in global media (see Chart

3). The acknowledgment that "Arab Spring" might not be the best fitted name also

bears significance. 20% of Arab articles referred to the events as "what became

known as the Arab Spring", "the so-called Arab Spring" or "Arab Spring" (in

quotation marks). Equally substantial is the usage of the name "Arab Revolutions"
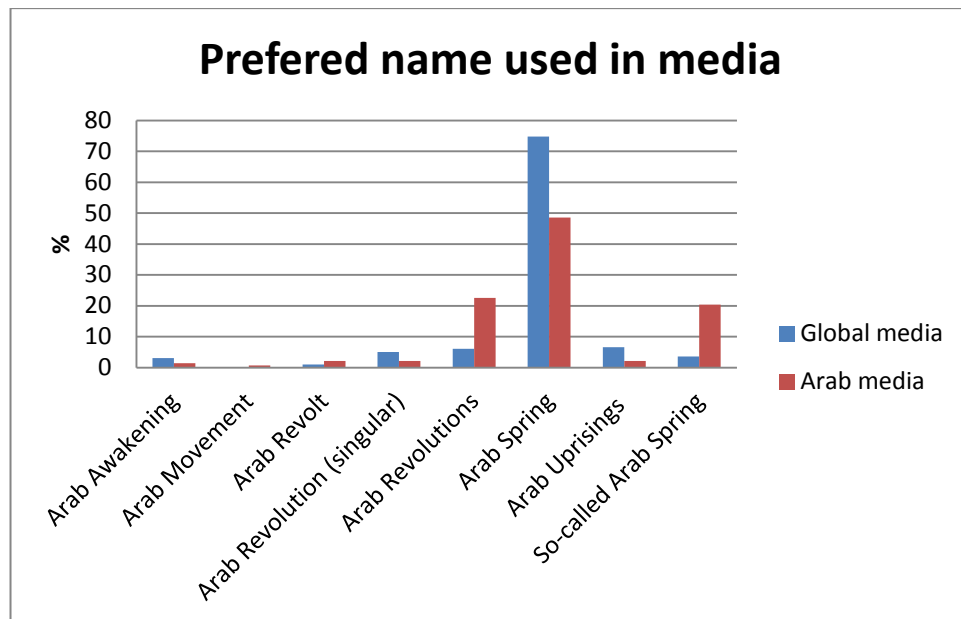
Figure 3: Names used in global and Arab media

(in plural), which was used in 23% of articles, that signifies the antidote for the ideas

of "Arabness" and "Springness". "Revolutions" in plural denotes that the events are a

set of national events bound to a region and not one all-encompassing event. Atwan

in Al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper (2011), for example, clearly distinguishes between

Arab revolutions as a set of events that commenced at the same time and individual

events significantly different from one another. Arab revolutions, as presented in

Arab media, are individual events connected by the region and the time frame.

Nonetheless, locality and temporality do not affect the progress and the outcome of

the events. For example, in Atwan's article for the Al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper

website, the author makes a clear connection and distinction between a national

revolution (in this case Libyan) and other Arab revolutions (in plural), where the

Libyan revolution is an event that can stand on its own and is at the same time a part

of a larger frame.

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> I want to assert that I have supported and still support the Libyan
> revolution right from the beginning, just as I supported and still support
> all Arab revolutions. (Atwan, 2011)

In this understanding of the word "Arab" in the any given name of the events the

"Arab world" is more than a sum of identical parts and similar events. Participating

nation-states are credited with nationhood and sovereignty. And even more so, Arabs

are not necessarily only a group of people but also individuals with agency and

ability to change their own political and social reality. In the excerpt from Al Jazeera

(Al-Za'atirah, 2011) the author distinguishes between national (in this case Tunisian)

and regional events also emphasizing the importance of an individual in this struggle.

> What took place in Tunisia is the introduction to an uprising in the Arab
> world, and this magnificent mass victory will be followed by others, for
> the Arab individual and the live forces will realize that peaceful
> struggle will be capable of toppling dictatorships one after the other.
> (Al-Za'atirah, 2011)

On the other hand, even in the local media sources, the word "Arab" in the name

"Arab Revolutions" does also neglect other ethnicities, but it is the indication of

plurality in the word "revolutions" that connotes a cluster of events that while taken

as a collection must also be considered individually. The plurality of the events often

merged under one name is also demonstrated in a reference to a specific Arab state's

revolutionary events. More than 70% of local articles referred to the events on the

national basis; events in Egypt or Tunisia as oppose to Arab events (see Chart 4).

Global media tended to refer to the events as regional more often (41% of the time).

Although these results reveal that the Arab media approached the events as national

and unique more often than the Western media, there is no significant contrast

between the two. While the reasons for such approach might be in the limited space

provided in the section on foreign or domestic politics, the criticism remains.
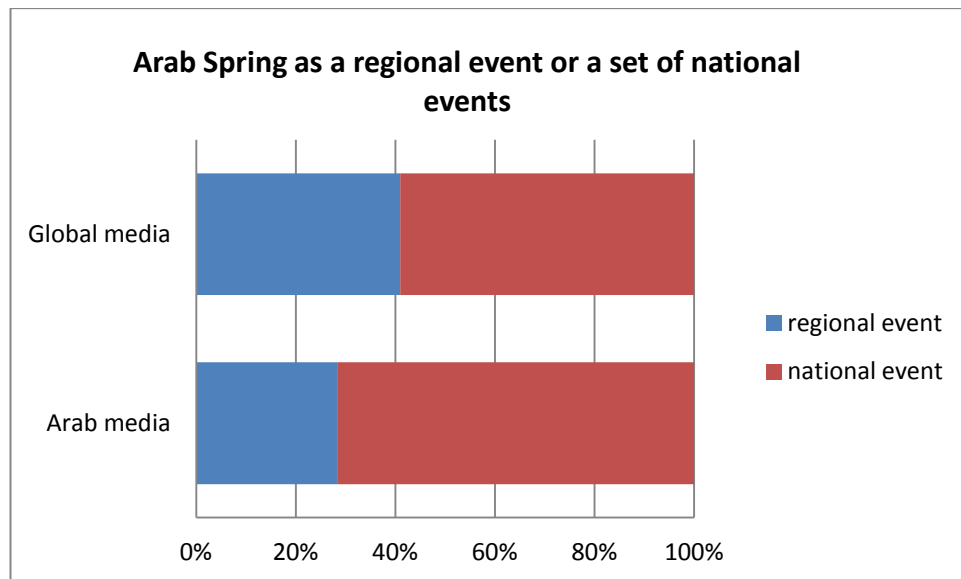
Figure 4: "Arab Spring" as a regional event or a set of national events

The necessity of approaching the events separately emanates from the core principles of journalism, such as accuracy and accountability. Several scholars agree that the events taking part in the Arab Spring, while connected in one region and associated with demands such as "personal dignity" (Anderson, 2011), are also immensely disparate (Almond, 2012; Anderson, 2011; Ismail, 2013; Kashani-Sabet, 2012; Sika, 2014; Ventura, 2016). Ventura (2016) takes a step further, showing how even the qualities many agree on being a common attribute for all the participants are a generalization.

> The only common ground that has been underlined by everyone was the fact that all the Arab countries involved had or were supposed to have a "despotic" government of which they wanted to be rid. This is also the message given by the claims of the protestors. However, because the governments and regimes were not all the same, this idea also seems to be a generalization, linked to a classical "myth" of Orientalism, namely "Oriental despotism". (Ventura, 2016, p. 5)

Ventura (2016) shows how the representation of the events, even if they occurred "in a short period of time, one after another, and that their protagonists used the same slogans (freedom and fall of the "regime") and methods (such as the use of the Internet and smart phones)", is a product of reduction and oversight of actual differences (Ventura, 2016, p. 4). Arab media were aware of this concern more than global media; emphasizing the differences and basing reports on individual cases. In the article published by Al-Sharq al-Awsat daily's website about the Islamist tendencies in a Moroccan party in the connection with similar parties in all "Arab Spring" countries, the interviewee states:

> The Moroccan context is different. Every country has its own special context (Abd-al-Rahman, 2013)

Very similar is a response by yet another interviewee in the daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat, where Irfan Siddiq states the necessity to understand how divers the involved countries are, which results in different approaches and models required addressing the issues to come.

> I think there are big differences in the region. Countries are different from one another. There is not a single model in the region. There are countries that oppress their people, and countries that experience economic difficulties. Some countries are different as far as the nature of the social contract between the governors and the governed is concerned. We cannot forecast the situation of every country. But we can say that the "Arab Spring" wave is facing some obstacles and has achieved some results. […] There is not a single model we can clone and reproduce in all the countries of the region. (al-Suhayl, 2011)

The way Arab media approached the "Arab Spring" as a name defining the events is substantially different than the approach undertaken by the global media. What follows is a discussion of the findings, commonalities of the two datasets and their crucial differences.

4.4 Naming practices in global and Arab media compared

The name Arab Spring was first used in Western discourses, first by scholars and experts, soon followed by the media. Arab media on the other hand, adopted the name because of its global popularity. It substituted "Arab Revolution", a wave of state-based revolutionary movements that sparked at the same time but lead to different developments across the region.

The framing analysis shows that the "Arab Spring" as an event is defined in global media by the words "Arab" presuming a specific identity and "spring" as a form of a social movement. By defining the events as "Arab" implies impossibility of deep and permanent changes, because the Arab world is stagnant, passive, fanatic, despotic, incapable of democracy and thus incapable of any "real" revolutionary changes (Said, 1979, 1997). The Arab Spring was defined by its Arabness: the region, religion, culture and political regimes. The "Arab Spring" was conceptualized as one region-wide event which might again be understood as a result of Orientalism. The Arab world was always seen as a unit made with parts that were almost identical, the same as the Arabs or "Orientals were almost everywhere nearly the same"(Said, 1979, p. 38). This is why the "Arab Spring", no matter the internal differences between the revolutions in different states, ranging from non-violent protests to hundreds of thousands deaths, or from democratic elections to elections that were not recognized by the international community, or even from peaceful state building processes to a excessively violent civil war, remains being seen as one regional event and not a set of national events connected by a region. Even though one could claim that the Arab World is a geographical unit, sharing Islam as a predominant religion and that there is such a thing as an Arab identity, Tunisians, Egyptians, Libyans and

others only referred to the events as *Arab Revolutions* in plural when talking about the collective activities of the Arabs across the region (Khouri, 2011). Otherwise they referred to their national events with nation defining names: the Tunisian Revolution, the Egyptian Revolution, etc. Arab media followed the trend. Even when the name Arab Spring reached global popularity, significant number of articles acknowledged the misfit and equally significant number preferred the name "Arab Revolutions".

In the global media the word "Spring" was often used to signify temporality. Even though the name itself could also signify awakening and change, the vents were framed to connote transience. Secondly, the events were framed based on preexisting expectations of the events, found on the knowledge of the 1848 revolutions in Europe and 1968 events in Prague.

Framing the "Arab Spring" events as other seasons (autumn or winter) was used whenever the "Arab Spring" seemed to develop in "the wrong direction", with escalating violence and Islamist parties winning the polls. Then the event as a whole was renamed by Western media into "Winter". Arab media similarly concerned, rejected the idea of a lost momentum. The "Arab Spring", explains Larbi Sadiki for Aljazeera, "is the first time since Nasser that has reclaimed unity of purpose and direction in a single term, a term that is the Arabs' own in form and substance."(Sadiki, 2011) Thus, the "Arab Spring" will not lose its revolutionary character, "even if its detractors will keep dreaming of it being supervened into an "Arab Winter"."(Sadiki, 2011) Indeed when no predictions about the future were possible, local media indicated that the "Arab Spring" "opened the door" of change, "break[ing] down the wall of fear and become a concern for regimes after decades of

silence"("The Arab Spring is Crawling," 2011). The "Arab Spring", according to the local media, was not a momentum that lost its charge. It was a transformation that took shape as soon as the people massively took the streets with their demands, even if they were not able to change political realities of the involved states. The transformation occurred and with that a revolution commenced.

The above stated differences between global and local media sources are based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis and the dominant ideas and frames in media discourse. To disclose the dominant trait unfortunately also means neglecting or overseeing the other voices in the media that do not follow the prevalent trends in journalism. To minimize the generalizations, this research acknowledges plurality of views and expressions. Examples and recognition of good journalistic practices in global media and bad practices in Arab media should not be neglected.

Global media sometimes, though very rarely, made clear that every country participating in the "Arab Spring" was a case in itself. By specifying regional differences events were defined as a sum of events where "some "Arab Spring" countries are coping better than others with the impact of this year's region-wide unrest and its unpredictable consequences" (Abdul-Ahad, Shenker, Ali, Chulov, & Black, 2011).

Global media also reported on the Western-centric involvement with the events. Criticizing how when the events in the Middle East were escalating in violence, the West was preoccupied with their own security and defense, rather than with the lives lost to the repressive regimes and the post-revolutionary violence (Tisdall, 2011). The same media sources also published criticisms of the Western-centrism, calling it

defensive and ignorant. In the article by Abdul-Ahad and others we have read that Europe responded inadequately when it did not seize the opportunity to bolster a historic democratic movement, based on the exaggerated fear of Islamism (Abdul-Ahad et al., 2011).

Arab media, on the other hand, also at times focused on the events as regional phenomena without specifying the differences between national events. And some instances of simplification and generalization lead to news reporting very similar to the Orientalist tendencies in the global media. In the example bellow Sharbil (2013) implies how Arabs are incapable of change, and how their culture was shaped by the centuries of "dark ages".

> Did they forget that the problem was more cultural than political, that the opening of ballot boxes was not enough to turn over a new page, and that centuries of darkness led to the confiscation and blockage of the Arab mind and rendered the Arabs unable to work the keys that lead to the future? (Sharbil, 2013)

Even though this study shows, that the reports media offer are not homogenous and that there is an abundance of voices, expertise and opinions available to us every day, the noteworthy amount of Orientalist approaches in the global media to conceptualize revolutions in the Arab World needs to be accounted for. As Said already pointed out, "we do not live at the mercy of a centralized propaganda apparatus"(Said, 1997, p. 48), which results in numerous definitions, conceptualizations and name giving practices available in the press. This is why, claiming that the conceptualization of the "Arab Spring" is in its nature Orientalist, immensely simplifies the heterogeneity of news. But despite this extraordinary variety of representations in the media, continues Said, "there is a qualitative and quantitative tendency to favor certain views and certain representations of reality

over others"(Said, 1997, p. 49). This study shows just that. The framing practices reflecting the name Arab Spring reveal the multiplicity of voices and opinions in the media. Nonetheless, when it comes to the global media, there is a voice which appears more often than others. This voice is influenced by the Orientalist bias. Here the quantity matters, because the amount and frequency of frames affect public's perception of the events. Thus, the usage of the frames *Arabness* and *Springness* in the media shows that the global news sources still maintain the Orientalist bias when discussing events in more foreign and remote regions of the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE "ARAB SPRING" AND THE CONCEPT OF REVOLUTION

In this chapter I first extract six attributes used to define Western revolutionary events - violence, public support, economic inequality, fundamental changes, new governments, and destruction of long-standing principles – and then show how they alter media coverage of the "Arab Spring". The "Arab Spring" was enthusiastically received as long as it seemed to be following this preset idea of a revolution. When the events diverged from this definition and it became clear that the "Arab Spring" had its own character and identity, the media characterized it as an "unsuccessful" undertaking. This chapter assesses the common conception of revolution in Western media and argues that this conception is informed by the historical knowledge of European and North American revolutions, but it excludes the wider view of the world's history. After the analysis of the global media, the use of the concept of revolution is approached in Arab media discourses, highlighting important differences between the media sources.

The main argument of this chapter is that key political concepts are not universal, and they can diminish and misrepresent the character of the event to which they

relate. Because of the regional, cultural, and political peculiarities of the "Arab Spring", the concept of revolution used by the global media failed to explain the events: first, because the concept is defined by its own Western identity; second, because it is defined with its own understanding of modernization and progress that is specific to the European context. The concept of revolution as used in the media is problematic, because it reinforces the imbalanced power relations between the observing Western media sources and the observed Arab states, and it leads readers to the faulty conclusion that the "Arab Spring" was a non-revolutionary event. This shortcoming reveals how principles of othering persistently work through the language and the use of concepts set in the Western traditions of knowledge, even after scholarly discourses on revolutions have recognized a need to reach beyond such conceptions.

As already mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, it is not my aim to suggest that the concept of revolution should not be used when referring to the non-Western events or that the concept requires changes in the conceptualization. This study is also not trying to argue either that the "Arab Spring" was or was not a revolution. This study's only intention is to problematize Western media discursive practices, their use of the concept of revolution, and the way they generalized and simplified the "Arab Spring", which rendered all the events participating in the "Arab Spring" as non-revolutionary.

The analysis of Arab media confirms the Eurocentric and problematic use of the concept of revolution in the Global media. Extensive and decisive differences between the two media groups show how the events were perceived discordantly with qualitative and quantitative disparity.

What follows is an attempt to answer the following questions: How does the concept of revolution as used in the global media affect reporting about the "Arab Spring"? First, by extracting common attributes of the concept of revolution through a conceptual historical approach. Second, by using these attributes as frames in media framing analysis (MFA). Finally the chapter will focus on Arab media and how the concept of revolution was represented in local discourses differently.

5.1 On the Concept of Revolution

The political concepts—such as the state, freedom, democracy, empire, etc.—that we use to define and describe current political and social events have been part of European languages since the eighteenth century (Koselleck, 2004). In the period of Enlightenment, when modern European languages were still forming, key concepts took on their modern meaning (Koselleck, 2002). In the time between 1750 and 1850 the pre-modern usage of language transformed to the usage of today. This study, by focusing on the concept of revolution, shows how revolutionary events of the eighteenth and nineteenth century played an important role in the way revolutions are defined today. The concept of revolution used in global media discourses is, as a result of its origin, loaded with meanings informed by the Western understanding of modernity and progress. Therefore, the term falls short of comprehending the events in different contexts. Şerif Mardin (Mardin, 1971, p. 211) and Elbaki Hermassi (Hermassi, 1976, p. 211) both pointed out that our understanding of the concept of revolution has been predominantly shaped by our knowledge of specific revolutionary events. Certain political, social, and historical circumstances have been extracted from these events without any modification and applied over and over again to other "similar" events (Hermassi, 1976, p. 211). This study shows that the

observers of revolutions in Western media still use the historical knowledge of famed revolutions as a point of reference.

What follows is first a brief outline of the Glorious, the American, the French and the 1848 revolutions followed by a short overview of the conceptual history of "revolution" in primary texts on the four above mentioned events. In this overview six main attributes primarily assigned to the concept of revolution are extracted and later used in the news framing analysis. These examples of revolutions were chosen because they took place in the time the modern languages were forming. Thus the texts included into the study are only the primary texts written by the observers of the events, the contemporaries of the Glorious, the American, the French and the 1848 revolutions. The aim is to show how these historical events still affect the concept of revolution as used in the media discourses about the revolutionary events in the 21st century.

The texts included into the conceptual-historical analysis for the period between the second half of the 17th century and second half of the 19th century are John Locke's, Edmund Burke's and Thomas Paine's discussion of The Glorious Revolution, Thomas Paine's account of the American Revolution, John Locke's and Thomas Paine's work on the French Revolution and Karl Marx's, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's and Alexis de Tocqueville's texts regarding the 1848 revolutions. The rationale behind this selection is that these are the authors who lived in the time these revolutions took place, which also means in the time the concept of revolution was given its modern political meaning.

The reading of these texts reveals six dominant ideas defining the concept of revolution. Observers contemporary to the four revolutions in Europe and North America agreed that any successful revolution would bring or at least aim to *substantial changes* (Paine, 1995; Tocqueville, 2011) and "shake off a power" (Locke, 1988, sec. 196). It would change state affairs and regimes and tear down other long-standing principles. "Revolution was henceforth defined as a progressive and irreversible change in the institutions and values that provided the basis of political authority" (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 53). According to Thomas Paine a revolution starts when a nation changes its opinion and habits of thinking. This is the time when the way a nation is governed has to adapt to the new paradigm of thought, because the use of force would only cause a rebellion against the ruling elite, which might lead to a revolution. The Revolution in France might have appeared sudden, "but it is no more than the consequence of a mental revolution priory existing in France. The mind of the nation had changed beforehand, and the new order of things has naturally followed the new order of thoughts" (Paine, 1995, p. 144). Successful revolutions had to be thorough, because new ideas demand a new society and a new government.

> When it becomes necessary to do anything, the whole heart and soul
> should go into the measure or not attempt it.(Paine, 1995, p. 97)

Tocqueville believed that a revolution was supposed to be marked by fundamental changes, similar to the ones he observed in 1848 in France. A revolution could challenge the political, the social, or the religious dimension of the state, or as it happened in France, all three (Tocqueville, 2011). Tocqueville also remarked that a revolution could remain purely political, assume a political and social dimension, or

a simultaneous political, social and religious dimension. By social dimension Tocqueville refers to the economy, production and distribution of resources. By political dimension he refers to the displacement of an old elite. And by religion dimension Tocqueville points out that religion, when understood or used as a total ideology, can be challenged by a revolution.

For Burke too, the intent of change was one of the most important qualities of revolutions. Even though he distinguishes between revolutions that are good, welcomed and necessary and others which are bad, destructive and unnecessary, he calls all events aiming for change in the state affairs "revolutions". Since the French Revolution was still in progress when his Reflections were published, it is clear that for Burke a revolution is an event that may or may not be successful. A revolution for Burke is an event with an intention to overthrow the government or the social order, most of all revolutions are set out with a goal to alter the current reality of the state.

Another attribute defining the concept of revolution is *strong public support*. A revolution is defined as a massive social movement. Marx's concept of a "modern" or proletarian revolution, for example, embraces a massive yet sudden event that becomes fortified by repression, and where the working class plays the most important role (Engels & Marx, 1896). Paine also placed a lot of trust in the common people (and much less so in the government, the throne and the aristocracy). At it is in the time of a revolution that people can change the fortune of a nation. Revolutions may differ in size, length, severity of conflict, amount violence, they can fight a foreign or a domestic enemy, but they all need to be based on reason and common interest of the people in order to succeed (Paine, 1995, p. 318).

Revolutions are also a possible outcome in the times of economic crises. Marx pointed out that since the commencement of the eighteenth century there has been no serious revolutions in Europe which were not preceded by commercial and financial crises(Marx, 2009).Thus the concept is also a result of struggle based on *economic inequality*. For Marxist and socialist traditions alike, revolutions are an outcome in times of economic crises. Or as Marx pointed out, since the start of the eighteenth century, there had been no serious revolutions in Europe that were not preceded by commercial and financial crises (Marx, 2009). Marx's concept of a "modern" or proletarian revolution embraces a massive yet a sudden event that becomes fortified by repression and where the working class plays the most important role.

> Movements of February and March, 1848, were not the work of single individuals, but spontaneous, irresistible manifestations of national wants and necessities, more or less clearly understood, but very distinctly felt by numerous classes in every country. (Engels & Marx, 1896, p. 2)

Marx believed that successful revolutions had to be class based, however in the case where revolution occurs as a union of different classes, the victory over the common enemy ends with the victors turning against each other (Engels & Marx, 1896, p. 20). A French thinker Pierre-Joseph Proudhon also saw reasons for class based social differences, similar to Marx, in materialism and the possession of property. Thus for him a successful revolution is supposed to tear down long-standing principles, such as property (Proudhon, 1966, p. 22).

The last attribute commonly ascribed to revolutions is *violence*. While conservatives felt horrified by the extent of violence that occurred in revolutions (Burke, 1890), liberals and socialists believed that a revolution might need to use violence to safeguard liberty and to enable the ultimate change in state affairs (Tocqueville,

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2011). For Marx revolutions ought to be fought as wars, because "he who attacks is in the advantage" (Engels & Marx, 1896, p. 48). Finally, a more conservative understanding of revolutions views them as a sometimes necessary means to maximize stability and order (Burke, 1890).

The six attributes used to define and explain the concept of revolution as used in the texts written in the 200 years between the Glorious Revolution and the Spring of Nations are: violence, public support, economic inequality, fundamental changes, new governments, and destruction of long-standing principles.

More current studies of revolutions, especially in the field of comparative politics, have expanded the concept. While still treating the above-mentioned attributes as important, they are now less encompassing. Comparative studies reveal that violence does not define all revolutions and that not every revolution leads to the permanent transformation of institutions and values. Not all revolutions are necessarily successful and prosperous. Brinton's (1965) study shows that revolutions might "change some institutions, some laws, even some human habits"; these changes could come immediately or in the long run, and they could be extensive or limited (Brinton, 1965, pp. 242–250). Revolutions are not necessarily massive social movements, nor are they always a result of a class struggle. They can be commenced and carried out by the state elite, as happened in Japan in 1868, Turkey in 1923, Egypt in 1952, and Peru in 1968 (Trimberger, 1978). While many revolutions occurred through intense socio-political conflict, not all revolutions are necessarily violent. Both Huntington's study (Huntington, 1976) of revolutions in developing countries and Skocpol's analysis (Skocpol, 1979) of social revolutions in France, Russia, and China focused on popular uprisings and violence against authorities as

defining factors of revolutions. Nepstad's study (Sharon Erickson Nepstad, 2011), on the other hand, offers a comparative approach to nonviolent revolutions of the twentieth century: for example, the Philippines Revolution of 1986, the ousting of the General Pinochet in Chile with a referendum in 1988, and the collapse of the state of East Germany in 1989. Comparative studies also show that not all revolutions result in more efficient and centralized governments. Although Brinton's (Brinton, 1965, p. 239) analysis of the English, American, French, and Russian revolutions establishes post-revolutionary efficiency as an outcome of these revolutions, Stinchcombe (Stinchcombe, 1999) points out that such changes do not happen overnight. In recent years, scholars of revolutions have also pointed out the necessity of future theories of revolution to "feature separate models for the conditions of state failure, the conditions of particular kinds and magnitudes of mobilization, and the determinants of various ranges of revolutionary outcomes, each of which may be the result of contingent outcomes of prior stages in the revolution's unfolding" (Goldstone, 2001, p. 174).

Nonetheless, these more recent discoveries are not included in the conceptualization of "revolution" in media discourses. As this study shows, media discourses conceptualize revolutions closer to the notion presented in the primary sources on the great revolutions, where a revolution means substantial irreversible changes in the name of progress, democratization, and modernization. This excerpt from a column in The Guardian is just one of the examples:

> [The Arab Revolutions are supposed to be] dismantling the structures of political despotism, and embarking on the arduous journey towards genuine change and democratization. (Ghannoushi, 2011)

Despite the fact that recent studies of revolution have shown the diversity of revolutionary events (Foran, 1997, 2005; Goldstone, 2001; Goodwin & Skocpol, 1989; Lawson, 2005; Selbin, 2010; Skocpol, 1979), mainstream media continue to cling onto a limited conceptualization of revolution based mainly on early European and North American histories—what this study will call a Eurocentric conceptualization of revolution defined by 6 attributes: violence, public support, economic inequality, fundamental changes (in politics, society and religion), new governments, and destruction of long-standing principles. The study will Eurocentrism in this study is understood as unquestioned and absolute traditions of knowledge reproduced by various social institutions. Borrowing from Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (Shohat & Stam, 2014, p. 1), Eurocentrism can be defined as knowledge of European history, philosophy, and literature that becomes naturalized as "common sense" because it is so embedded in everyday life that it often goes unnoticed (Shohat & Stam, 2014, p. 1). This study critically approaches the universal, "commonsensical," "one-size-fits-all" usage of the concept of revolution in Western media.

5.2 Framing the "Arab Spring" in Global media

In order to access the ways in which the concept of revolution is used in Western mainstream media coverage, this study conducts MFA focused on The Guardian and The New York Times between the years 2011 and 2013. These two sources were chosen for three reasons. First, they are recognized as the most-read broadsheet newspapers published online. According to ComScore (2012), an IT company that measures global online activity, The New York Times has 48.7 million and The Guardian 39 million monthly readers accessing their content worldwide. Second,

they occupy an "elite" status in the global media domain. "Elite" sources are frequently cited by other media outlets because they are perceived as "good" and "reliable" news sources. They function as intermedia agenda setters that dictate what different forms of media talk about and how they talk about it (Christensen & Christensen, 2013; Meraz, 2009). Third, they are acknowledged to have a stronger effect on political elites and decision makers (Kepplinger, 2007).

By using MFA, this study attempts to understand how conceptual practices are carried out by Western media. The analytical technique of framing refers to tracing "a process whereby communicators, consciously or unconsciously, act to construct a point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be interpreted by others in a particular manner" (Kuypers, 2006, p. 8). Frames used in communication make some information more salient than others, affecting how the audience perceives an issue that is communicated to them (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). It is important to note that frames are socially shared and persistent over time (Reese, 2001, p. 11) because they are a reflection of culture. When it comes to media discourses, culturally embedded frames are "appealing for journalists, because they are ready for use"(Van Gorp, 2010, p. 87). Culturally embedded frames carry connotations the intended audience can easily grasp. "Because such frames make an appeal to ideas the receiver is already familiar with, their use appears to be natural to those who are members of a particular culture or society" (Van Gorp, 2010, p. 87). This study shows how the understanding of particular events in media discourses reflects still present taken-for-granted beliefs about the world by examining how the concept of revolution, as used in the media, affects reporting about the "Arab Spring".

The frames used in this study were formed following a review of literature that indicated the tendency to conceptualize contemporary revolutions based on the knowledge of past revolutions (Hermassi, 1976; Mardin, 1971). This resulted in six aforementioned frames. Before presenting the analysis, the processes of obtaining data and sampling will be discussed.

The following analysis is done on 195 articles collected from The Guardian and The New York Times. Every article was treated as a unit of analysis acknowledging the possibility of a single article using more than one frame. Fifty-nine percent of all the 195 articles included into the analysis reported about the "Arab Spring" while using at least one of the six frames defined above, demonstrating a tendency to report about revolutionary events using an outdated conceptualization of "revolution".

In the codebook prepared for the analysis the six frames were defined as follows: (1) Violence: established connection between the revolutionary events and violence, either by describing violent events and their outcomes or by stating the number of victims and causalities. (2) Public support: expressed local (regional or national) support for the events. The support can be expressed by an individual or a group. (3) Economic inequality: when implied that reasons for the events were economic or class based. (4) Fundamental changes: when stated that the "Arab Spring" inflicted changes in the social, cultural, religious and political order of a state or region by introducing a certain fundamental novelty, as for example gender equality or multi-party elections. (5) Destruction of long-standing regimes and principles: acknowledging the correlation between the events and their outcomes resulting in the destruction of the old power structures and ideologies. (6) New governments: reports

about the changes in the governmental institutions brought about by elections and appointments of representatives.

Table 5: Frames as used in the global media sources

FRAMES IN GLOBAL MEDIA	N	% OF 195 ARTICLES
Violence	91	47
Social support	56	29
Economic inequality	45	23
Creation of new state affairs and regimes, new social reality	36	18
New government	16	8
Destruction of old standing principle (political, social, religious)	7	4

The framing analysis reveals *violence* as the most common attribute of the "Arab Spring" (for framing analysis results see Table 1). The two media outlets reported on killings, tortures, kidnappings, injuries, and violent events in almost every country participating in the "Arab Spring" (Kingsley, 2013; Neild, 2011; Taylor & Siddique, 2011). While violence fits into the preset revolutionary criteria, violence as it was discussed in the articles on the "Arab Spring" was predominantly associated with the regime. The media have distinguished between the violence caused by the regimes and the violence caused by the protesters and activists. Thirty-six percent of the frames of violence indicated it was the regime that was violent, and only 14% said it was the protesters and activists (the other 50% did not make a clear distinction between the two). In addition, violence, especially when attributed to the work of repressive regimes, was reported as excessive, horrifying, brutal, and unnecessary:

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peaceful protesters were beaten, shot, and taken away; the numbers of dead civilians were growing; and the civilians opposing the regimes were tortured, killed, or detained without trial (El-naggar & Slackman, 2011; Kanter & Gladstone, 2013; Milne, 2011). The media often emphasized the distinction between non-violent civilians and violent regimes. As one article states, "Balaclava-wearing riot police armed with batons, teargas launchers and dogs squared up against a small crowd of demonstrators who had gathered to express a sentiment widely felt in the city" (Abdul-Ahad et al., 2011). Violence in the hands of repressive regimes, as reported by the media, was robbing the "Arab Spring" of its revolutionary character.

The frames of *public support* and *economic inequality* represent the "Arab Spring" as an event supported by the masses. According to The Guardian, millions of Arabs stood united for "a new history," "for dignity and freedom after decades of shame and oppression" (Al-Bassam, 2011). While there was no consensus about who was the driving force of the revolution, whether this was the working class (Mishra, 2011) or the youth (Fahim, 2011; Shadid, 2011; Shenker, 2011; Slackman, 2011), many articles emphasized the economic circumstances, harsh neoliberal politics and capitalism, besides repressive politics, as the main reason for the revolt. At the heart of the 2011 protests is "the graduate with no future" (Mason, 2013), "fueling anger at the repressive politics and economic stagnation that deprived the region's youth of opportunity and freedom" (Slackman, 2011). Poverty and unemployment were at least two common factors uniting the "Arab Spring" events (Black, 2011; Chrisafis, 2011; Marzouki, 2012).

The frames of *fundamental changes* and *new governments* frames were, at first, very optimistic. In the beginning of 2011, when the "Arab Spring" became the event of

the year, it was called a revolution because it was believed to be able to topple existing regimes, end autocracy and tyranny, and demolish the old political culture and bring in the new. "The unwinding revolutions of the year, writes *The Guardian*, "from Tunis to Cairo and Tripoli, and on to Damascus—make the Middle East a cockpit of change. They rattle the cages of all those, including Iran's ayatollahs, who cling to the old nostrums" ("Saudi Arabia and the Arab spring," 2011). The "Arab Spring" was expected to be the power "dismantling the structures of political despotism, and embarking on the arduous journey toward genuine change and democratization" (Ghannoushi, 2011), because it unleashed "a change in consciousness, the intuition that something big is possible; that a great change in the world's priorities is within people's grasp" (Mason, 2013).

Later in the progress of the events newly created regimes and governments started being framed as a revolutionary failure. According to the media, the "Arab Spring" with its inefficient new government was unable to completely destroy the old regime. The awakening of the Arab region turned into a decline, an incomplete revolutionary process that was unable to sustain the changing momentum. Events such as "savage repression, foreign intervention, civil war, counter-revolution and the return of the old guard" (Milne, 2011) filled the international press and other observers with pessimism and disbelief in "genuine democratic transformation" (Milne, 2011). In 2013, even the events in Tunisia, the more successful "Arab Spring" participant, were framed by the media as incapable of revolution, because they were unsuccessful (Shabi, 2013). Several articles made clear that these events should not be called a revolution.

> I don't know who dared call the uprising the Jasmine revolution. It's not over yet, and in the time of Martyrs and wounded, you cannot talk about (a beautiful flower-like) Jasmine. But anyway jasmine smells nice, but it wilts very quickly. (Mark, 2013)

In the cases of Libya and Syria, where the revolutionary developments were slower and there was more violence, the accounts were even more pessimistic. The Libyan revolution "failed to deliver on its promises" (Stephen, 2013), and the Syrian revolution provided no change at all (Beaumont, 2011). As soon as it became clear that democratic change would not happen right away, that violence could not be avoided, and that it wouldn't be clear whether the events were going to change for better or worse, the accounts of the revolution became extremely pessimistic. Not only did media discourses attack the violence and call for peaceful transition, they also expressed disbelief that the "Arab Spring" could have any good outcome. The revolution, the newspapers reported, took an ugly turn.

> The images streaming from Cairo's streets last month were not as horrifying as those of the capture and brutal death of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, but they were savage all the same. They were a sobering reminder that popular movements in some parts of the world, however euphorically they begin, can take disquieting and ugly turns. (Nasr, 2011)

The notion of revolution as an act of change that included the *destruction of long-standing regimes and principles* was also questioned in the news reports. The media perceived the "Arab Spring" as being more successful at creating the new than at destroying the old. The articles talk about the progress and reforms that were brought about with the revolution: for example, reforms granting women more rights, free elections, democratic reforms, and, equally important, a change in consciousness and awareness of possibilities. While these processes were in action, the media outlets reported, almost paradoxically, that the old order wasn't destroyed. Only 3% of the

articles framed the "Arab Spring" as destroying the old structures of power. The "Arab Spring" was instead framed as incomplete, especially when dealing with the pre-revolutionary regimes. As El-naggar and Slackman put it: "The revolution has so far managed to get rid of the dictator, but the dictatorship still exists" (El-naggar & Slackman, 2011). One of the fears expressed was what would happen to the revolution if a moderate Islamist party, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or Ennahda in Tunisia, won the election polls. Another set of fearful news discussed the possibility of more radical Islamist influences, such as Al Qaeda. The "Arab Spring" was no longer a revolution; it became a failure, incapable of inflicting change, and as such "a real boon to jihadists" (Worth, 2013).

The "Arab Spring" was most of all framed as violent, not because of violent protesters and activists, but because of the autocratic regimes it was fighting against. Because of the lack of democracy and human rights, the whole region was presented as violent, a harsh environment for a revolution to succeed. The revolution was capable of influencing some changes but incapable of completely overthrowing the deeply rooted regimes. The location and its specific culture and religion were intervening with the revolutionary progress. While the new order was being introduced in steps, the old structures of power were neither destroyed nor removed from the political or the social. According to the discourses in Western media outlets, the "Arab Spring" was at first believed to be a revolution. It was perceived as a necessary act, based on the idea of change and progress emerging from the public, criticizing neo-liberal politics, determined to end poverty and tyranny, even if that meant to bear violence or to use violence for the revolutionary cause. It was only later, when the events started to skew away from the preset norm, that the discourses

became critical and worrisome, turning the "Arab Spring" into the "Arab Winter".

The "Arab Spring" was enthusiastically welcomed as long as it seemed to be

following the preset idea of a revolution. But as soon as the events diverged from this

definition, the media characterized it as something other than a revolution, an

unsuccessful undertaking that had turned the possible "awakening" of the Arab

World into a decline.

> For many the "Arab spring" has long since turned into an Arab winter,
> as savage repression and counter-revolution crushed, hijacked or
> diverted popular pressure for democratic rights and social justice.
> (Milne, 2012)

5.3 The doubly shadowed "Arab Spring"

The above accounts demonstrate that Western mainstream media draws heavily upon

the knowledge of great modern revolutions to assess and understand contemporary

revolutionary events. The "Arab Spring" was defined as a non-revolutionary event

when it failed to satisfy the preset historically based criteria: because it was too

violent and cruel; it did not destroy old political and religious principles; and the new

governments, when set in place, were not more efficient than their predecessors.

Such conclusions are inevitable when the concept of revolution is derived from a few

models of revolutions provided by European and North American history. With this

limited knowledge, "unless a dramatic, large-scale change has swept away all

existing institutions and resulted in a recasting of the social order from top to bottom,

a given historical experience fails to qualify as a revolution" (Hermassi, 1976, p.

211). Mardin's (Mardin, 1971) contribution to this topic also suggests that when the

concept of revolution is set within a Eurocentric framework, it cannot adequately

address events outside of this framework. A critical reassessment of media's

understanding of "revolution" indicates that the Eurocentric framework requires particular locality and temporality. The study contends that the "Arab Spring" in media discourses is therefore doubly shadowed by the Western identity and temporality of the European Enlightenment, modernity, and progress.

The "Arab Spring" is deemed non-Western because Islam is the predominant religion in the region. Even before the world press started debating the threats of the Islamic State in 2014, fear of Islamists and Jihadists contributed to the debates about the "Arab Spring". One of the fears expressed was what would happen to the revolution if a moderate Islamist party, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or Ennahda in Tunisia, won the election polls. The observers of the events were afraid of the "Arab Spring" taking a "wrong," Islamic turn. When the Islamist parties started winning the polls, the media renamed the "Arab Spring" the Arab Winter (Dalrymple, 2011; Makiya, 2013; "Saudi Arabia and the Arab spring," 2011), stripping it of its revolutionary character. The media implied, if the "Arab Spring" was no longer capable of creating a Western type of democratic society, because it was hanging onto traditional religious values, it could not have been a revolution. There is an expressed fear of sectarianism destroying the Arab state (Makiya, 2013), the revival of the Islamists (Dalrymple, 2011) supported by the Islamist militants' claims that the uprisings make room for them to seize power (Weiser & Shane, 2011), coming to a conclusion that "against these kinds of forces, unfortunately, the young revolutionaries of the Arab Spring are helpless" (Makiya, 2013).

The attempt to compare the European experience, the disestablishment of the Catholic Church by the French revolutionaries, with the role of Islam in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary Muslim societies is misleading. That is mainly

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because "Islam has a more direct relation to the content of social structure than many other religions" (Mardin, 1971, p. 203). Islam presents a link between the rulers and the ruled, an alternative to the polity, when religious establishments perform services usually provided by the state, and the core of a process of socialization (Mardin, 1971, pp. 204–6). Mardin argues that Islam plays a very different role in Muslim societies than did Christianity in Europe in the time of Enlightenment. Islam's role is more bureaucratic and popular. It has a central importance for the functioning society. Thus, the role of the two religions in the revolutionary processes cannot be compared. Nonetheless, this study shows that the location of the events and the specific culture and religion affect the perception of the "Arab Spring". Islam as the most important identifying attribute of the region is still the culprit for the reactionary character of the events presented in the media (Said, 1997, pp. 8–9).

Furthermore, the concept of revolution is not only defined by where it happens but also by when it happens. Qualifiers that were normal repercussions of modern European revolutions, even in the twentieth century, are defined as non-revolutionary or anti-revolutionary in the beginning of the twenty-first century. While violence seemed to be a normal companion of many European revolutions, either on the side of the revolutionaries or the regime, it is precisely this violent and repressive feature of the "Arab Spring" that renders the revolution impotent, and according to the media sources, it strips it of its revolutionary character. "Experts estimate that over 100,000 people died in the civil wars of the English Revolutions, that 1.3 million . . . died in 1789–1815 in the civic and Napoleonic wars, that over 2 million . . . died in the course of the Mexican Revolution, and that . . . in Russia and China, war and dislocations in agriculture led to tens of millions of deaths" (Goldstone, 2003, p. 85).

But when it comes to the "Arab Spring", violence was characterized as non-revolutionary and not as concurrent fallout. Similarly, the "Arab Spring"'s revolutionary character was questioned by media outlets because the events did not replace the old political elites with a new power of authority. But then again, the American Revolution also did not end with switching elites, and "it was [nonetheless] as radical and as social as any revolution in history" (Wood, 1993, p. 5).

The "Arab Spring" was also perceived as non-revolutionary because it was not able to present efficient new governments; even more, it turned back to repressive and conservative regimes. Repression and conservatism are not new post-revolutionary occurrences. Under the rule of Napoleon III, France underwent similar circumstances after the 1848 Revolution. Additionally, efficient new governments demand time to build. As expressed by Stinchcombe (1999), "Revolutions in the past seldom ended in a way naturally described as a transition, as if one knew where one was headed" (p. 51). Most of the immediate post-revolutionary governments are met with difficulties, because "all aspects of [post-revolutionary] government tend to be unsettled and difficult to manage" (Stinchcombe, 1999, p. 52). In the past, it took revolutions years, even decades, to establish efficient new governing bodies and institutions. Why, then, is not the "Arab Spring" treated with the same courtesy?

According to Nilüfer Göle (1999, pp. 46–49), this is because of the dual understanding of time and modernity. When it comes to the conceptualization of modernity inside and outside of the West, time is not perceived as coeval (Göle, 1999, pp. 46–49). "There is this implicit non-contemporaneous time attribution to the non-Western, as not sharing the same time with 'us'; 'us' being defined as the

moderns, Westerns and seculars in opposition to those perceived as traditionalists, religious, backward" (Göle, 1999, p. 47). The duality of time in the case of the "Arab Spring" manifests itself in the idea that violence, repression, religion, and tradition belong to the past and that the "Arab Spring" does not share the same time and experience with Western events of similar magnitude. In other words, what was treated as a normal or even necessary part of a revolution in the nineteenth century or earlier is uncivilized and backward in the twenty-first century, because it is delayed. "Those who are distant to the center of Western modernity, and located at the 'periphery' of the system are also those who 'lag behind,' are 'backward,' delayed in terms of time" (Göle, 1999, p. 46). This shows how the perception of Western modernity disables the concept of revolution as used in the media to successfully refer to events following different temporal trajectories or the same trajectories at a different speed. Thus, this article argues that the concept of revolution as used in the media included into this study cannot explain the "Arab Spring" events, because it is Eurocentric, defined by its own time (modernity) and place (the West), hence having limited reach and applicability.

The analysis of how Arab media framed the events as revolutionary also supports the argument that global media approached the "Arab Spring" Eurocentrically. The following section addresses the most significant differences between the global and the Arab media reporting about the "Arab Spring".

5.4 Framing the "Arab Spring" in the Arab media

200 articles were included into the local media set. The criteria for their selection was discussed in the previous chapter. Using MFA as a method again, the study

approaches the ways in which the concept of revolution is used in Arab media coverage. 38 news providers, either publishing in print, online or both were included into this part of the analysis (for the list of the Arab media sources see Table 1 in Chapter 2). As in the section on the Global media, the entire discourse and all contributors were considered relevant, thus no distinctions were made between the articles. Every article was treated as a unit of analysis acknowledging the possibility of a single article using more than one frame. The way Arab media framed the events is immediately very different from the framing in the Global media. Here only twenty-five percent of altogether 200 articles included into the analysis reported about the "Arab Spring" while using at least one of the six frames defined above. In Global media the number was significantly higher, reaching fifty-nine percent. But as the analysis results show it is not only the quantity that is different. Out of the six frames the two groups of media also had different preferences. The following paragraphs will first focus on the Arab media and their framing practices and then on the comparison of the Global and Arab outlets.

Out of the six frames common in Global media discourses "Creation of novelty" was most used frame in the Arab media. They defined a revolution as an activity towards a political and social change and readiness for novelty even if that meant going through periods of instability and violence. Arab media conceptualized revolution as an attempt to change the existing social reality trough the destruction of the old and the creation of the new. The revolution was possible, writes Al-Watan, even when its implications remained unknown, because "it has opened the door wide for the world's peoples to express themselves. It has also completely broken down the wall of fear and become a concern for regimes after decades of silence."("The Arab

Spring is Crawling," 2011). The "Arab Spring" in the Arab news was framed as the

winds of change, rendering, as noted in the Jordanian daily, "change and reform" in

the region "inescapable" (AlShawbaki, 2012). Arabic international newspaper

Asharq al-Awsat furthers the metaphor of the wind.

> The fresh breeze of dignity, the wind of hope, and gusts of pride have
> started to blow; this has strengthened the enthusiasm and courage of the
> youths, and broke the walls of anxiety and fear within them.
> (Shubakshi, 2011)

Arab media enthusiastically reported about every movement towards alterations and

improvements, acknowledging the importance of the process and gradual changes.

> Some forward-thinking leaders in the region have signaled that they are
> aware of the need to embrace change as a priority for progress and
> regional stability. These have already started taking real steps towards
> openness of their political systems and embracing economic and social
> reform that aims to bring opportunity to an educated yet
> disenfranchised Arab youth.(Murad, 2011)

Changes were to come moderately but steadily, finally enabling allencompassing

change.

> I trust we will eventually see the emergence of vibrant and engaged
> civil societies, more pluralism, democracy, justice and equality in the
> Arab world("Arab Spring has passed point of no return," 2012)

Table 6: Frames used to define the "Arab Spring" in the Arab media

FRAMES IN ARAB MEDIA	N	% OF 200 ARTICLES
Creation of new state affairs and regimes, new social reality	24	12
Destruction of old standing principle (political, social, religious)	14	7
Violence	11	5,5
Economic inequality	4	2
Social support	4	2
New governments	1	0,5

Revolutionary changes often necessitate destructing old, either political, social or religious principles, and substituting them with a new order. While such framing of the "Arab Spring" was present in the Arab media discourses, it was not substantial. Often expressed was the notion and idea of agency and with it the destruction of "all the ready-made clichés" (El Horri, 2011) about the Arab people and their passivity and submission to the authority. On the other hand, while the society was undergoing changes and overwriting the social reality, there is a repeatedly expressed fear of the revolutions "just bringing other oppressive regimes to power" ("Arab Spring Has Given Hope to the Suppressed," 2011) and post-revolutionary elections returning "many of the old faces" (Al Sharif, 2013).

When violence is addressed in the Arab news, two storylines emerge: the violent and oppressive regimes versus non-violent protesters. Violence killing thousands of people (Fayiz, 2011; Mahmud, 2011; "Victims of the Syrian Revolution," 2011, "Revolutions producing anarchy," 2011) "whose only weapon was willpower,

determination and insistence on changing conditions" ("Southern Sudan paper,"

2011). In some instances the authors expressed extreme criticism towards the

violence and the regimes behind it.

> These regimes release their henchmen, thugs, and security forces to crush anyone who even thinks about raising his voice or protest against ongoing events peacefully .("The Arab Spring is Crawling," 2011)

Other times they pointed out how great numbers of casualties could be avoided.

> Had the Al-Qadhafi regime respected the right of the Libyan people, […][there would be no need to protect them] from the mercenaries of Al-Qadhafi, who took up the profession of killing innocent people, destroying life, and turning Libyan cities into scorched earth.("Emerging from," 2011)

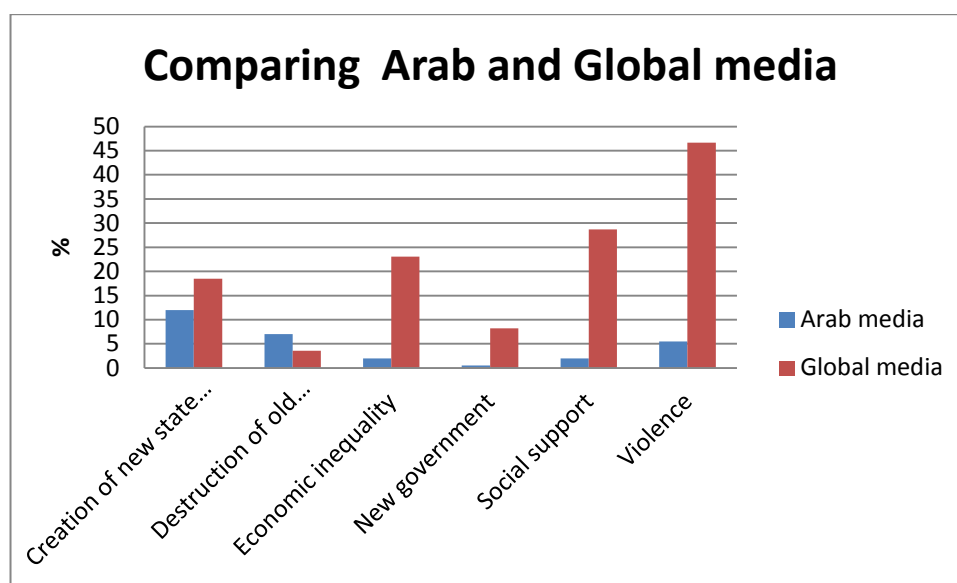**Figure 5:** Comparing the framing practices in the global and the local media

Frames *Economic inequality*, *Social support* and *New governments* were almost

completely omitted from the Arab reportings. All three together appeared in less than

5% of all the Arab articles included into the study. The absence of the two frames

based on the idea that revolutionary events are mass movements with extensive

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social support and that they emerge in the times of economic crises and harsh inequality, as opposed to their prevalence in Global media, demonstrates the immense difference between the framing practices in the two media groups. For this reason the following section aims at highlighting these differences and discussing how the concept of revolution affects reporting about the "Arab Spring".

5.5 Revolution and its conceptualizations

In the first part of this chapter it has been established that Western mainstream media draws heavily upon the knowledge of great modern revolutions when reporting about the "Arab Spring" as a revolutionary event. I have pointed out how the locality and the temporality affected the reporting of the events, finally framing them as a non-revolutionary events. Such framing was Eurocentric and set in the Orientalist traditions of knowledge. Adding the results of the MFA of the Arab media additionally supports these claims by showing how the two groups of media differently approached the same set of events.

It should not be overlooked that global and local media approached the "Arab Spring" with a few similarities. Very much like the Western media, local news sources also emphasized the difference between the peaceful protesters and violent regimes. When the old regimes stopped fighting back and the new governments were elected in Tunisia and Egypt, local media also reacted in the accordance with the global news sources. Firstly, they questioned the true novelty of the new governments. An article published by the Gulf News reported that the new governments returned "many of the old faces"(Al Sharif, 2013) backed by the old political elites. Secondly, local media also expressed doubt in the success of the

revolutions, "where the gains of revolutions were reversed due to internal conflicts between political elites or simply seized through military takeover" (Baroud, 2013). Thirdly, they were aware of the risk "of older authoritarian regimes reemerging under different names"(Zeynalov, 2011).

Nonetheless, a few crucial differences between the two media discourses, created a gap between the local and the global conceptualization of revolution. Arab media's conceptualization is different, it used the frames that dominated Global media reporting only rarely and when it did it preferred different frames than Global media. Analysis of Global media also revealed a change in the understanding of the events: a shift from enthusiasm to fear and disbelief, framing the "Arab Spring" as a non-revolutionary event. This shift is not evident in the Arab media, understanding of the events as revolutionary did not change during the years Arab revolutions took shape. Unlike the Western media's, Arab media's conceptualization did not have a Marxist undertone. While for Western media *Social support* and *Economic inequality* were two more important revolutionary attributes, Arab media almost completely omitted them. For them *Creation of new state affairs and regimes* and *Destruction of old standing principles* were the defining qualities of a revolution. Arab media framed *violence* as an unwelcomed yet necessary component of the events. Violence, according to the local news sources, is a part of a revolution and does not affect the revolutionary character of the events. While Western media emphasized the economic factor and the significance of the masses as defining attributes of the "Arab Spring", Arab media focused on the creation of the new; a revolution was a collective fight for freedom, justice and change of political and social orders. Aljazeera's author Yasir Al-Za'atirah was aware of the two different

conceptualizations, approaching them with a clarification stating that if the economic

heading was the prominent reason for revolutions, it is only because it is in its

essence a manifestation of other predicaments such as the absence of freedoms, real

pluralism, and corruption (Al-Za'atirah, 2011). An article in Gulf News adds that "the

upcoming battle in the Arab world is the battle of freedom of expression"(Alrumaihi,

2013).

Another clear distinction between the two approaches to the events is their usage and

understanding of religion as a component of the events. When the fear of political

Islam winning the first elections in the region overwhelmed the Western discourses,

local observers believed the elections to be a possibility for "their own way of

democracy" and Islam was not a necessary threat to progress and change. Sadiki

(2011) writes that even if the detractors of the "Arab Spring" will "keep dreaming of

it being supervened into an "Arab Winter"", it "is the first time since Nasser that has

reclaimed unity of purpose and direction in a single term, a term that is the Arabs'

own in form and substance". Sadiki (2011) continues in a realistic manner by

pointing out the need for the "Arab Spring" states to "critically think about whether

Islam is the solution now or in the future, and whether Islam is a solution for all

matters or some matters". In the Arab news sources people were entrusted with the

agency and the ability to make the right decisions.

El-Khabar's guest said the pleasure experienced by Islamists in Tunisia would cease

as soon as they assume power because they would face objective data and real

problems that would be beyond their perception and they would deal with them like

any secular current, which would deprive them of the support of the masses. (Bekadi,

2011)

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Islamism was perceived as an unknown factor of the revolution, whose prospects are hard to predict. As one of the many "fears about the future, such as instability and ethnic conflicts"(al-Suhayl, 2011). Nonetheless, these fears should not stand in the way of revolutions, because with the revolution "the capabilities and opportunities for the future are much better" (al-Suhayl, 2011).

When finally in 2013 Western media gave up on the "Arab Spring" as revolutionary, local media and local observers acknowledged that the durability of such events makes the future predictions very hard. The change in the region was perceived as ongoing no matter the long process and the problems the events were facing (Jumblatt, 2011). At the same time, it is the endurance of the revolutions that restores and rebuilds states and societies.

> Will these revolutions lead to genuine freedom and prosperity that peoples are seeking? I think that no one can safely say yes or no. Demolition and revolution could happen in a matter of days, as happened in Egypt within 17 days, while building a modern state could take several decades.(al-Qahtani, 2013)

The differences between Global and Local media show that the perception of the events was not universal and that the conception of revolution affected the reporting and the understanding of the events as revolutionary. The common conception of revolution in Western media is informed by the historical knowledge of Western revolutions, omitting the other similar, but geographically distant, events. It also neglects the wider view of the world's history and the more recent knowledge and understanding of the events in question and studies of revolutions in general. Thus I have argued throughout this chapter that political concepts, like the one of revolution, are not universal, and they can belittle and distort the events they refer to. The "Arab Spring" is not accurately portrayed in the Global media because it does

not satisfy the preset criteria for revolutions, which is outdated and Eurocentric. The concept of revolution as used in the Global media is defined by its own Western identity and with its own understanding of modernization and progress that is specific to the European context. The "Arab Spring" was understood as a misfit because of its locality and temporality – because it is geographically, culturally and politically distinct and hence it cannot be explained with the conceptualization used by the Western media sources used in the analysis.

Such concept of revolution is problematic for two reasons: it fortifies the superior position of the West with respect to the Arab nations and it offers its audience the erroneous image of the "Arab Spring" as a non-revolutionary event. The "Arab Spring" was defined as a non-revolutionary event because of the excessive use of force and the high number of victims, because it was not able to get rid of the old political and religious foundations, and also because the new governments lacked efficiency, trustworthiness and a sufficient amount of novelty. The framing of the events as non-revolutionary is imminent when the concept of revolution is based on the obsolete knowledge and understanding of a few European and North American revolutionary events.

The aim of this study was to reveal how principles of othering persistently work through the language and the use of concepts set in the Western traditions of knowledge. This acknowledgment holds high importance today because in the recent years, there seems to be an increasing tendency to think of the dualism separating the West from the East as an ideology which belongs to the past, when in fact, it is persistently hiding deep in the structures of language. As such the politics of othering not only manifest themselves as an isolated set of neo-conservative beliefs behind

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foreign policies, on the contrary, the politics of othering are still very much present in everyday communications. Approaching the dualism through the study of concepts reaches behind the facade of political correctness, unveiling a Eurocentric presence in basic key concepts, as in the case of this study in the concept of revolution.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The "Arab Spring" commenced at the end of the year 2010 and in a few months it became a phenomenon that surprised and amazed the globe. The events took over the region and had influenced demonstrations all over the world. Even though more than 20 countries took part in the regional developments, it is important to note, that these were nonetheless national events with their own particularities and local significances even if they influenced similar events in the region. Demonstrations were voicing different demands, were met with different responses from the regimes, were answered more or less violently and have achieved different stages of success. Some ousted the long-lasting authoritarian regimes and chose the new representation in elections, others achieved major, other minor constitutional changes, and some demonstrations and expressions of frustration were suppressed very early on.

The "Arab Spring" fascinated the media and the academic audiences of global political events. Several hundred scientific publications followed the commencement of the events in just a few years. Social scientists representing different fields were interested in the reasons for revolutions, their possible outcomes, the implications for

the region and for the world as a whole. They approached the events in the form of case studies, comparative studies, theory building approaches and critical theoretical approaches.

This study is different than the existing studies of the "Arab Spring" because it is interested in its discursive creation in the media and how the concept of revolution, its understanding, conceptualization and usage, affected reporting about the events. This is not a study about the "Arab Spring". On the contrary this is a study about the discursive relations of power between the Arab states and the observing Western media. And most of all, the aim of this study is to problematize the Western, Eurocentric traditions of knowledge which made it impossible for the media, and subsequently for the media audiences, to grasp the real gravity and value of the "Arab Spring", especially after it became clear that these events won't lead to the sudden democratization of the region.

Thus, the aim of this research is to add to the wide range of the literature on the "Arab Spring" and the literature in the field of the studies of revolutions, by proposing a critical stand towards the key political concepts used when defining remote political events, more precisely events outside of the so called West. I suggest questioning the traditions of knowledge used to assess the events. The concept of revolution is burdened with the outdated and sometimes irrelevant defining categories that render the "Arab Spring" a non-revolutionary event. This study supports this claim by revealing how the discursive creation of the events occurred trough the naming practices and trough the definition of the events as revolutionary. The contribution of this analysis additionally reaches beyond the flawed usage of the concept. Its other objective is to expose the politics of othering in conceptual

practices by directing the academic focus to the concepts and their usage in the different types of discourses. This would reveal the latent, enduring and deep-seated principles of othering and the limits of a language.

The semantic content of the word "revolution" is not absolute. The word is used for a range of events. In the period of Enlightenment it became a synonym for change and upheaval, either political, social or religious. The revolutionary events of the period greatly shaped the concept and its meaning and connotations. Mardin and Hermassi both indicated that the concept of revolution has been predominantly shaped by our knowledge of specific revolutionary events. This study develops their argument further by showing how the concept of revolution is normatively defined by the knowledge of Western revolutions. Such definition of the concept influenced media discourses about the "Arab Spring", presenting the Arab revolutions as non-revolutionary.

Aforementioned normative knowledge is Eurocentric because it takes a specific historical occurrence and uses it as a base to evaluate similar events globally. It hegemonizes Western events as a norm for revolutions. This normative distinction, favoring Western historical experiences, is a reason why this study revisiting Said's *Orientalism*. I argue that the "Arab Spring" was framed as a non-revolutionary event because it was approached in the Neo-Orientalist fashion. The results of this study support the argument that the body of knowledge originating from European intellectual traditions creates hierarchy and generates bias.

The study is trying to establish the normative nature of the concept of revolution by answering two sets of research questions. It fist focuses on the naming practices of

the events and the difference between the global and the local media. Later it examines the usage of the concept of revolution and how the normative nature of the concept affected reporting in the global and local media. Two global news sources (The Guardian and The New York Times) and 38 local Arab sources (collected in the database BBC Monitoring library) were examined for the articles about the "Arab Spring". The two global sources were selected because of their extensive global readership and their important intermedia agenda setting role. For Arab sources on the other hand, BBC Monitoring library offers English translations of the non-English media. As the only such database that is currently existent, reliable and available to the public, it was included into the study without other considerations. The final analysis covers 195 articles from the global media outlets and 200 articles from the local media outlets.

Media framing analysis was chosen for this study as the most appropriate method because it bridges the method of traditional conceptual studies with the more unconventional approach, exposing conceptual practices in the media discourses. Traditional conceptual studies are methodologically not very different from what media studies try to accomplish when using framing as a method. If the conceptual studies search for the leading ideas, framing identifies ideas that provide meaning. Both tools fulfill the same goal but are used for different kinds of texts. While scholars of conceptual history have already recognized the need to study a variety of discourses, this study exposes the necessity for the other areas of studies dealing with the discursive realities to attend to concepts. As this study shows, concepts and their usage in discursive practices can reveal the latent linguistic forms of othering. The study's intention is to bring academic focus to the conceptual practices in media and

everyday discourses. Such an approach might expose the invisible Western character of several political concepts which have yet to be questioned.

Using the framing techniques the study first approaches the Arab media's discursive construct of the "Arab Spring" by showing how the popular name of the events is reflected in the framing of the events. 75% of the articles published in The New York Times and The Guardian prefer this name over others. The analysis shows that the events, called also a "Spring", are presented as being seasonal short and temporary. This is based on the belief that the Arab world or at least some of the Arab states are not capable to change and develop according to the standards set by the European experience of modernization and progress. The events are also defined by their "Arab" character. Following the long-lasting Orientals it approach to this particular region, once again the events were framed as regional, where the whole Arab World is made of parts that are almost identical, thus the revolutionary events taking over the region were also understood as a set of identical events or even as a one event. More than 40% of the articles published in the three years approached the events regionally. I have argued that the events were framed with the frames of *Arabness* and *Springness,* defined and at the same time disabled by nature, location and specificity of the events. Using the notion of *Arabness* as a general regional category is problematic because it denies claims of nationhood, of national −sovereign voice and subjectivity. And because, by overlooking historical, cultural, religious, and political differences between the participating states, it omits the contextual unique factors that led to the uprisings. The notion of *Springness* frames the events either as a repetition of significant European experiences in 1848 the Spring of Nations and 1968 the Prague Spring, as a sudden awakening of the region or as a transitory

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period. This again results in disregarding uniqueness of the events and denying the agency of the participatory states and their citizens.

While it is true that one could claim that nothing is wrong with calling the events the "Arab Spring", since they did occur in the Arab World, a geographical unit that to a certain extant shares the religion, the language and the identity. It is also true that other European events were called a "Spring", not necessarily implying that as a "Spring" they will be unsuccessful. This study is not trying to read into the naming practices or to argue that the name "Arab Spring" by itself is politically incorrect. By showing how the name is reflected in the frames used by the media when reporting about the events, this study shows that the problem is not simply the name. What the study problematizes are the framing practices, approaching the events, consciously or not, in an Orientalist manner, by simplifying and generalizing the implications of the events. The names like that of the "Arab Spring" in any other context could be just names without any devalorizing connotations. But in the case of the "Arab Spring", as this study shows, by pointing out how the events were framed, and not only named, the name became a concept - a condensation of political and social contexts that provided the meaning for the events.

It should also not be overlooked that the participants in the events referred to the political situation differently and that the comparison of the global and local news sources demonstrates crucial differences in the naming practices and more importantly in the way the events were framed by both media groups. The Arab press publishing did adopt the name "Arab Spring" in the mid 2011, preferring others in the first half of the year. The local media also treated the events as national and not regional. Only 28% of the articles reported about the "Arab Spring", as a regional

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phenomenon. The two qualities "Arabness" and "Springness" were almost omitted in the Arab media.

Second, the analysis focuses on the normative and generalizing conception of revolution that global media included into the research uses when referring to the "Arab Spring". Six frames based on the literature discussing early Western revolutions were used to determine the Eurocentric character of the media reports. Violence, public support, economic inequality, fundamental changes (in politics, society and religion), new governments, and the destruction of long-standing principles are attributes assigned to the revolutionary events in the time of Enlightenment in the texts contemporary to the events. The study shows that the majority of Western sources used these frames to refer to the "Arab Spring". I argue that the way global media use the concept of revolution is loaded with meanings informed by the Western understanding of modernity and progress. Therefore, the term falls short of comprehending the events in non-Western contexts. Even though the more current studies of revolutions, especially in the field of comparative politics, have expanded the concept because of the diversity of the revolutionary events, their discoveries are not included in the conceptualization of "revolution" in media discourses. Western mainstream media prefers a limited conceptualization of revolution based mainly on European and North American experiences. This resulted in the representation of the "Arab Spring" as a non-revolutionary event. It was constructed as such because it failed to satisfy the preset historically based criteria. It was too violent and because it was not able to immediately replace the old systems of knowledge, power and governance with the new. I have argued that such conclusions are inevitable when the concept of revolution is derived from a few models of

revolutions provided by the European and North American history. A critical reassessment of media's understanding of "revolution" indicates that the Eurocentric framework requires particular locality and temporality, defined by the Western identity, modernity and progress. Thus the events placed outside of the Western geography and outside of the "right" timeframe, for example the time when the revolutions were allowed or supposed to be violent, when assessed according to the pre-set criteria, fail to be fitted it. This results in them being defined as non-revolutionary.

An important finding based on the comparison of the global and local media show that the perception of the events was not universal. Local media reported about the events as revolutionary very differently. I have argued that the common conception of revolution in western media is informed by the historical knowledge of Western revolutions, omitting the other similar, but geographically distant, events. Thus I have argued throughout this thesis that political concepts, like the one of revolution, are not universal, and they can belittle and distort the events they refer to.

I want to emphasize again that by arguing this I do not intend to say that the "Arab Spring" should or should not be called a revolution or that Western concepts should not be used when referring to the non-Western events. One of this study's intentions was to problematize the possible misleading conceptualizations, as the ones used by the global media in the case of the "Arab Spring". I also aimed at revealing the Orientalist practices in media discourses which generalized and simplified the various causes, origins and outcomes of the events into one regional occurrence. Throughout the thesis I have claimed that the "Arab Spring" was understood as an Arab event defined and forestalled by its *Arabness* and *Springness* because it was a

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locally and temporally misfitted. Such understanding and construction of the events is problematic because it strengthens the relations of power and superiority between the observing West and the observed others.

While this research utilized global journals read by almost 87 million readers monthly and a compelling number of Arab media all together reaching a significant readership, this study is still limited to only two global news sources with a similar ideological affiliation and one Western language. At the same time when analyzing the Arab media I had to rely on the translations, which is not ideal, even when the source of the translations is as reliable as the BBC Monitoring Library. The research is also somewhat limited with the time-line of three years 2011-2013. With the escalation of violence following the Syrian civil war and with the self-declaration of the Islamic State in 2014 media reports in both media groups, local and global, have probably turned pessimistic or even more pessimistic (in the case of the global media) about the nature of the Arab Spring. Despite these limitations, the findings present important implications for media practices and for the future research in the areas interested in concepts, revolutions and media as a technology of discursive construction. This study contributes to the literature by offering a new methodological approach, when studying the concepts using the media framing analysis and when reaching beyond the academic discourses to study the concept of revolution. And most importantly, this study reveals how the politics of othering persistently work trough the structures of language. To end by paraphrasing the quote by Koselleck used in the very beginning of this dissertation: It is in the politics of everyday life, in the daily discourses, in the pop culture and in the many other

ordinary situations, where words and their usage can be used as silent weapons of control and power.

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