AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTs) IN THE ARAB UPRISINGS: THE CASE OF EGYPT AND TUNISIA 2010-2014

BY

HUMFREY MUTAMANGIRA

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES

FACULTY OF SOCIAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

MARCH 2015
Abstract

This research focuses on the role the Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) played in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Emphasis is placed on the case studies of Tunisia and Egypt as they are seen as the sparks that started the fire that engulfed the (MENA) in the form of revolutions that aimed at dethroning regimes viewed as despotic and undemocratic. The study also gives an evolution of ICTs as they are viewed as the main causal factors of the uprisings and marked a defining moment in the evolution of ICTs. In ascertaining the role played by ICTs, this research employed qualitative research methods with particular emphasis on in-depth interviews as well as documentary search. Using the above mentioned research methods the research found out that ICTs were indeed instrumental in the uprisings that happened in the MENA albeit as catalysts since the Middle Eastern body politic was riddled with a wide range of fault lines that were widening by each passing year. In as much as ICTS were instrumental in the uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia it is also worth noting that there was a wide array of other external factors that resulted in the raging fire of revolution in the Middle East although it is an undeniable fact that the precipice of the revolution was as a result of the enabling effect of ICTs. It was therefore concluded that ICTs were a decisive factor in the uprisings of Middle East and North Africa. It was therefore recommended that governments should be wary of the content that their people consume over the internet for the purposes of national security. It was also recommended that states take heed of the plight of their people because with the ubiquitous availability of ICTs, it is easier for people to rally around a common cause which may result in uprisings as those witnessed in Tunisia and Egypt.
Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements go to my supervisor Professor Manyeruke whose wisdom, patience and intelligence was indispensable in the completion of this dissertation, I thank you.

Lastly, many thanks to everyone who contributed to my studies, your contributions are well appreciated.
Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents who have always been there for me during good and bad times. Their commitment to my education has taken me this far and they are appreciated. Furthermore, heartfelt gratitude goes to my wife who has also been a pillar of strength when the going got tough.
3.4 ICTs and National security: Intelligence perspective ....................................................29
3.4.1 Conversations with Central Intelligence Operatives (CIO) of Zimbabwe ....................31
3.4 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................33

CHAPTER 4: THE CASE OF TUNISIA ........................................................................34
4.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................34
4.2 Tunisian revolution: Pro-democracy or otherwise....................................................38
4.3 ICTs and the Tunisian Revolution ........................................................................38
4.4 Tunisian: The spark plug of the Arab Spring ............................................................41
4.4.1 ICTs and global consciousness to the revolution in Tunisia .................................43
4.5 ICTs circumventing censorship by mainstream media in Tunisia ..........................44
4.6 Conclusion ..............................................................................................................48

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..................................50

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................................................................57

APPENDIX 1: Interview guide used in in-depth interviews with key informants ..........62
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIO</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>Cable News Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DARPA</td>
<td>Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTs</td>
<td>Information Communication Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>National Defence College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UZ</td>
<td>University of Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOiP</td>
<td>Voice Over internet Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWW</td>
<td>World Wide Web</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - In-Depth Interview Guide
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the problem

The two Arab nations of Tunisia and Egypt experienced uprisings against governing regimes around 2011 and 2012. These uprisings had various causes which were among others the alienation of the masses by the elite, deteriorating standards of living and inhuman treatment by public officials as well as the increasingly autocratic nature of Zine El Abidin Ben Ali’s regime in the case of Tunisia. The Tunisians were therefore driven by the desire to institute a liberal democracy in their country which was influenced by their proximity to Spain, Greece and Italy which are all stable democracies, (Kuznetsov, 2014). In the case of Egypt there was growing disapproval of Mubarak’s regime, so dethroning Mubarak formed the core of the causes of the uprising in Egypt.

It is worth noting however that these causes of the uprisings in these two countries have always been in existence and the two governments have successfully thwarted any sort of dissent to fester to a large scale in successive years. This brings to the fore the question of what was really the driving force behind these uprisings. One would find out that it is the advent of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) that resulted in the creation of political mobilisation techniques that made it easier for the spread of the message of dissent which led to the successful overthrow of Zine El Abidin Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak in Tunisia and Egypt respectively.

To understand how ICTs played a key role in the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, it is of importance to make a characterisation of what ICTs are. Rouse (2014) therefore defines ICTs as “an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as video conferencing and distance learning”. From this definition it is clear that ICTs have a key capability which is of making it possible to
transmit information from one point to the other instantly. For example in Tunisia the protests were triggered by the incident of self-immolation that was done by a young man called Mohamed Bouazizi who set himself on fire in front of the administrative building in the city of Sidi Bouzid. The images of this burning man were transmitted via the internet through social media such as Facebook, youtube, twitter and on satellite television. In Egypt groups were formed on social media and messages were sent encouraging everyone to revolt. This role played by ICTs led to great levels of political consciousness in the two countries and abroad, leading to the revolutions in the two countries.

ICTs also helped in the sense that the Tunisian and Egyptian problems became international issues because of the globalising effect of ICTs. For example the American government which used to pump billions of dollars in aid to the Egyptian military became reluctant since the Egyptian government was viewed as violating key tenants of democracy of protecting civil liberties and it has always been an American position that it does not fund repressive regimes.

In unpacking the role ICTs played in the two uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia, it is also worth exploring the concept of the Iron Cage of Liberalism which develops as a result of close associations by dictatorial regimes with liberal democracies. These associations may help to offer legitimacy to the regimes but may become a burden when local opposition groups begin to highlight these discrepancies, (Ritter and Trechsel, 2011). This is what happened especially in Egypt which had closer associations with America but had two different political systems, a discrepancy that formed the basis of the revolution. The Americans on one hand also became reluctant to continue funding the Egyptian army because of the perception that the military capability that would ensue would be used for repression. All this background to the revolution would have been nothing had it not been highlighted and broadcast through ICTs.

As the protests gathered momentum, repression in the two countries was also increased. This increased repression was also put onto the international airwaves because of ICTs. This is why one can concur with Downing in Ritter and Trechsel (2011) when he states that “a
movement that is not reported does not take place”. Essentially Mubarak and Ben Ali may have just pummelled their people into submission without anyone in the international body politic knowing and it would not have been an issue until today. But for the fact that all what was transpiring in the two countries was shared worldwide meant that it became an international issue. The internationalising agent in all the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia can be cited as ICTs clearly showing how they were central in highlighting the problems in the two countries before the uprisings as well as being a critical factor in mobilisation during the uprisings and finally creating solidarity among the peoples of Egypt and Tunisia with the effect of successfully removing the long serving regimes of Mubarak and Ben Ali.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the past non-violent resistance has always existed in the international body politic but such protests have never been published widely like in contemporary times as happened in Egypt and Tunisia. International attention brought about by the capacity of ICTs to spread information on events in the two countries meant that the two countries were hamstrung in their endeavours to quell the rebellions in a violent manner due to the indispensible need to be viewed as governments that respects civil liberties by other developed and democratic nations in the international system. Besides ICTs’ capacity to beam events internationally, they also created virtual rallies where millions of people discussed and shared ideas on how to proceed with protests that ultimately overthrew the two regimes. The virtual groupings also involved those in the diaspora who also participated in sharing ideas leading to the creation of a huge opposition force that the two governments could not locate for the purposes of disrupting their activities.

1.3 Justification of the study

The events in Egypt and Tunisia that led to the overthrow of the two regimes shook the world and had ripple effects throughout the Arab World. This does not mean to say there were new grievances but the emergence of a new tool for mass mobilisation in the form ICTs made the protests easier to organise. In this case the grievances were as a result of the quest for democratisation which led to the uprising that toppled the two regimes. It was
therefore the purpose of this research to unpack the real role of ICTs in the uprisings of Tunisia and Egypt. Since these mass uprisings for the purposes of democratisation are fairly a recent phenomenon in the Arab world, this research aimed to generate literature on the nexus between pervasive use of ICTs and the execution of the protests in the two countries. The literature that this research generated will also be useful in various governments’ policy making in as far as ICTs are concerned that is to better manage and control their use for state security purposes.

1.4 Research hypothesis
ICTs were largely responsible for the successful execution of uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in particular and the Arab World in general.

1.5 Research objectives
- To investigate the role played by ICTs in the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings
- To examine whether ICTs facilitated the international pressure that mounted against the two regimes during the popular uprisings
- To ascertain the nexus between democratisation and ICTs and recommend possible ways that ICTs can be embraced for democracy to flourish

1.6 Research questions
- What role did ICTs play in the uprisings of Tunisia and Egypt?
- Did ICTs contribute to the international pressure that mounted against the regimes of Egypt and Tunisia during the popular uprisings of 2011 and 2012?
- What is the nexus between ICTs and democratisation and what are the mechanisms that can be put in place for ICTs to aid the realisation of democracy?

1.7 Theoretical Framework
This paper suggests and brings into discussion the theory of technological determinism as a framework for analysis. Marx and Smith (1994:1) who are among the major proponents of determinism assert that technological determinism is a situation whereby human life is affected in a profound way by various technological advancements. Marx and Smith clearly put across the argument for the determining nature of technology in human life in when they
intimate that “a sense of technology’s power as a crucial agent of change has a prominent place in the culture of modernity”

Another key proponent of technological determinism is Adler (2006:2) who argues that determinism is opposed to other social science philosophical constructions of “free will”. Adler (2006:2) also asserts that the theory of determinism is contrary to constructions that assume that the society and technology develop simultaneously in a way that cannot be foreseen. Adler gives this characterisation of determinism in a bid to unravel how technology becomes determinist in contemporary human existence. As indicated above human beings do not have free will as far as technology is concerned and their actions are determined by the various technologies that come into existence.

It is important however to note that technological determinism is a broad term and this study’s focus was mainly on ICTs. This research is based on the assumption that ICTs were a determining factor in the uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia and the emergence of such technologies such as the internet which brought about social media, e-mail, satellite radio and television were the defining features in the uprisings. Using this analogy or framework of analysis it became plausible to use technological determinism in this research. Arguments are however abound as to whether the advent of ICT components was the determining factor in the uprisings in the two countries or the demands and quest for democratisation was the driving force

Of importance to note as well is the fact that determinism may have influenced the people in these two countries because they found themselves in possession of ICT instruments of unimaginable capabilities in the form of the internet which enabled the functioning of social media, satellite radio and television among others. What is curious however is what technology determined the people in the two countries to do. This therefore brings into dialogue the concept of democracy

The conceptualisation of democracy that this paper therefore endeavored to use is of Rousseau in the Website Memo, (2015:1) which alludes to the fact that democracy is “a form of government or administration in which ‘all the people or most of the people’ takes
care itself of the execution of the laws that it promulgated as a legislator”. What Rousseau meant essentially in his definition is that the generality of the people in a polity possess the power to determine their destiny. Dahl, (1998:37) also asserts that for a polity to pass as democratic it should meet the following conditions: “effective participation”, “voting equality”, “enlightened understanding”, “control of the agenda” and “inclusion of adults”. Dahl’s assertion indicates that a society can only be democratic if the above criterion is met and concurs with Rousseau’s earlier assertion that the people are the defining character as far as democracy is concerned.

From the discussion above the concept of democratisation seem to be at variance with the core arguments of technological determinism so it was the purpose of this research to determine whether the technologies that became available to the Tunisians and Egyptians were the driving forces for the revolutions to take place or the underlying quest for democratisation was the main grievance.

In discussing with the various key informants that this researcher selected, the framework which was used during these conversations was the angle of having ICTs as a deterministic force on the uprisings in Tunisia. This determinist thought was superimposed with the concept of democratisation which may also be relevant in interpreting the events in the two countries.

1.8 Literature review
In writing a well informed and balanced paper on the role of ICTs in the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings, it is of importance to explore works on the same subject that have been done by other scholars. In analysing these works this researcher will also endeavour to express his own opinion on the subject as well as identifying gaps if any on the existing literature.

Stepanova (2011:1) asserts that in the Middle East two repressive governments in the form of Egypt and Tunisia were deposed as a result of the mobilisation effect of internet based networking sites and subsequently led to agitation based on economic and political issues in other countries in the region. This admission by the above mentioned author on the key role
social media as a key component of ICTs in the revolts in Egypt and Tunisia played makes it abundantly clear that in as much as there were underlying causes to the uprisings ICTs played an a key role in accelerating the demise of the two regimes. Although ICTs played a key role to the accelerated demise of the two regimes it would be academically naïve to cast it in stone that ICTS were the main drivers. In as much as Stepanova (ibid: 1) opines that social media played a key role in the uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia, she also concurs with the notion that a lot of underlying causes were present especially in Egypt were social media became more of a facilitator. In this concurrence she asserts that in Egypt the chasm that separated the rich and powerful from the poor was at an alarming and precarious level to such an extent that an upheaval became inevitable. It is to this end that this author’s arguments depict ICTS through social media as more of a facilitator than a cause for the uprisings especially in Egypt.

In as much as Stepanova’s arguments are oriented mainly to the notion that ICTs were merely tools for the uprisings to consummate, Shirky in Ritter and Trechsel (2011:1) contends that the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia were triggered by online activists who were ably aided by the internet for them to succeed. This contention above has a supposition that activism that occurred over the intent through various means were the ones responsible for the Tunisian and Egyptian peoples’ revolutionary awareness. However this notion has the unintended effect of proving that the internet only gave a platform for the activism to take place probably because that was the only way to dodge bullets from the repressive regimes of Egypt and Tunisia for dissenting voices which were simply highlighting the ills of the ruling elites. Furthermore, internet activism in a political entity without problems would not have produced the same outcome as that of Tunisia and Egypt.

Based on the above arguments, advanced by the respective authors it can be deduced that in as much as some authors are of the view that the internet or social media was responsible for the uprisings in the two countries one thing that is unmistaken is that ICTS through the internet were more of facilitators than instigators of the uprisings.
This author is also of the view that the key role social media as one of the important cogs of ICTs was of fanning the flames of rebellion in the two countries because in a stable democracy it is easy for a people to voice its concerns to a legitimate government and rights to assembly and expression are not curtailed. However in the Tunisian and Egyptian scenarios, it was difficult to assemble as well as express oneself in a manner that does to please the powers that be. ICTs therefore gave this platform to the suppressed voices and the international community became alive to their cries. All states that are more democratic especially those of the West were made to be aware of the concerns of the people of Egypt and Tunisia through ICT platforms like satellite television, internet news broadcasts, YouTube video streaming, twitter, Facebook and so on. Because of the contemporary international system’s emphasis on cooperation it became difficult for countries like Britain and America to cooperate with such repressive regimes leading to mounting pressure on the incumbents to give in to the demands of the popular uprising.

Storck (2011:3) has tried to give a more clear illustration of the role of ICTs in political mobilisation through the assertion that “we use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world.” This assertion is loaded in the sense that Facebook as an ICT tool is used mainly for information dissemination purposes on the various protest activities scheduled. This information dissemination is critical in the sense that it transcends international frontiers and the whole world is alerted of any impending protest activity. Twitter on the other hand is then used to coordinate the activities by following tweets from the respective organisers and then You Tube can be used for live streaming of the protests as they take place and the whole world access the events in real time. This clearly shows how ICTs were instrumental in the uprisings because they eliminated the need for people to converge at one place physically, a scenario that might have put their lives at risk. The creation of this virtual community which needed not to know each other personally but came up with one goal is one such fact that may have ultimately led to the demise of the two regimes.
Storck (2011:3) also points to a famous quotation that several academics, politicians and journalists often utter which is “democracy is just a tweet away” and she also quotes the Egyptian Google executive Wael Ghonim who also often opine that “If you want to liberate a society, just give them the Internet.” The common denominator in these assertions is that ICTs now occupy a very important part in the struggle for the emancipation of the downtrodden in many parts of the world. Access to ICTs has also meant that the whole world has become more connected and what happens in one part of the world has a bearing in another part of the world and thanks to ICTS for the prevalence of this scenario.

The review of various works above has shown that most of them on the Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings have resonated with each other in respect to the role played by ICTs in the uprisings of the aforementioned countries. The role of this research was therefore of establishing if this concurrence is based on fact or its just euphoria that has been generated by the technology age. If the concurrence is actually a matter of fact this paper will endeavour to strengthen the argument that ICTs have played a key role in the two uprisings and also fill in gaps on the existing literature and finally contributing to the board of knowledge.

1.9 Methodology

1.9.1 Research design
This research employed qualitative data collection methods which include in depth interviews, case studies as well as documentary search. On interviews the researcher used key informants drawn from the Egyptian embassy, Information Technology experts at the National Defence College (NDC), intelligence experts in the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and academics from the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). An interview guide was used in carrying out the interviews and on documentary search the researcher will focused on books, journals, conference papers and policy papers relevant to the subject.
1.9.2 Data analysis
In an endeavour to transform raw data into information this research employed thematic and content analysis. This will assisted the researcher in determining recurrent themes that helped the researcher to come up with generalisations.

1.10 Limitations
Finding respondents for interviews who were part of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions was a challenge because of the distance between these two counties and where the researcher is situated. This however was mitigated by interviewing official representatives of these countries who are in Zimbabwe who had a representative view on the research questions. With the recent proposals to outlaw protests in Egypt was a challenge to get respondents who are forth coming in their role in the past protests for fear of reprisals. Assurances where however made to all respondents who took part in the research that the information collected was purely for academic purposes and anonymity was guaranteed wherever required.

1.11 Delimitation
This research was primarily based on analysing the role played by ICTs in the uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia as the two case studies. The time frame of this research was from 2010 to 2014. This four year period encompasses the time the flames of resistance were being stoked until the uprisings consummated up to the installation of new governments in the two countries. This research also focused on the extent to which ICTs were a factor in the two uprisings as well as the extent of ICTSs impact in drawing the international community into the events obtaining in the two countries.


CHAPTER 2: EVOLUTION ON USE OF ICTS INTERNATIONALLY

2.1 Introduction

The relationship between the state and the citizenry has always been one where the state has a monopoly over the flow of information. This monopoly has been justified over time to be solely motivated by national security interests. However this control of information is inextricably tied to the control of power. Webber’s definition of the state as a corporate entity that acquires a monopoly over force in a given territory may also be extended to include the use of this force to control the flow of information which in turn strengthens the states legitimacy over the use of violence. The advent of ICTs has however challenged this dominance of the state and inherently challenged the states monopoly over violence and maintaining social order and the status quo of power relations within a given polity. As such ICTs have served to diffuse the power of the state through diffusing the control and flow of information to different actors within the state. This chapter seeks to explore and analyse the evolution of ICTs to the present day and examine the impact they have had on the security of the state and its very existence.

The subject and purpose of this research is to investigate if the phenomenon of ICTs had any bearing on the outcomes of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. It is however of paramount importance to trace the origins of ICTs, how they have evolved over the years and how they now have such a profound effect on contemporary human existence in private life, business as well as the political sphere and the international relations arena. This chapter will therefore endeavour to examine how ICTs came into being, how they permeated personal, social and political life and how they have become a key tool of mobilisation in contemporary political discourse. Emphasis will be placed on how ICTs have diffused the states control of information to include private actors, a paradigm which has threatened regime stability.

2.2 Evolution of Information Communication Technologies

According to Bradey and Elkner (2011) ICTs’ existence back dates to ancient times and are as old as human existence itself. To illustrate this supposition Bradey and Elkner proposes a four phased approach to understanding the genesis of ICTs that is pre mechanical,
mechanical, electromechanical and electronic. In elaboration of the four phases the two authors asserts that the pre mechanical phase of the use of ICTS refers to the period between “3000B.C. and 1450A.D” were “humans first started communicating” and “they would try to use language or simple picture drawings known as petroglyphs which were usually carved in rock”. This supposition indicates that during the very first phases of human existence it was instinctively discovered that there was a need to transmit messages from one person to another. During this rather ancient phase the transmitter of information would carve it on rock and the intended receiver decodes the information from the rock.

It is evident that this ancient mode of communication was very slow and cannot be compared to the contemporary modes of mass communication that reaches millions of people around the globe in a few seconds. If one is to refer to the subject of this study it clear that had this mode of communication been utilised in the conflicts of Egypt and Tunisia the outcome could have been definitely different. The speed and far reaching capability of contemporary modes of communication like internet and television has brought about huge benefits to those in business as well as personal communication but has inevitably given headaches to politicians and security practitioners as discovered in Tunisia and Egypt. In ancient times it was not easy to achieve such feats in mass communication showing how important the evolution of ICTs is important to this study.

Bradey and Elkner (ibid) further notes that after the pre mechanical phase in the evolution of information technology came the mechanical phase were a lot of innovations flared including the manufacture of the first “analogue computer used for adding and subtracting numbers.” This shows the chronology that took place from the time people first noted the need to communicate until the time machines began to be invented to aid this intrinsic desire to share information and it can therefore be argued that the so called digital age that humanity finds itself in is born from inherent traits in human beings that are the desire to share feelings from one person to the other which is now the main problem oppressive regimes are facing in light with events of Tunisia and Egypt.
The progression in information communication technology evolved further in the electro mechanical phase which Bradey and Elkner (2011) asserts that it’s the period from “1840 to 1940” were key inventions like the telegraph, telephone, and the mark 1 computer from Harvard University were invented. One can therefore argue that these key inventions form the back bone of the current digital age that subsists today. The electronic phase that Bradey and Elkner (ibid) also alludes to gives a clear picture of how the aforementioned technologies have become of profound importance in the digital age. Bradey and Elkner (2011) further alludes to the fact that the electronic age is the time between 1940 and the present day and it involves “digital computing” that was pioneered by the United States army. This technology was later adopted by civilian companies to such an extent that no sphere of present human existence today can function properly without the use of the internet.

It is in this vein that the most powerful mode of communication has been the internet and the various hardware and software applications that support its use. The internet is the fastest and easiest way to transmit virtually all kinds of information inexistence now. The internet also incidentally was the ICT tool used in the two revolutionary movements under study. According to Howe (2012), “The Internet was the result of some visionary thinking by people in the early 1960s that saw great potential value in allowing computers to share information on research and development in scientific and military fields. J.C.R. Licklider of MIT first proposed a global network of computers in 1962, and moved over to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in late 1962 to head the work to develop it.” Initially the internet’s sole purpose was to maintain operational command and control of the U.S nuclear arsenal in the event of a nuclear attack by transferring and diffusing access of launch control to different locations via a network of computers. Though initially it was a governmental initiative to manage and control sensitive information, this technology however evolved to have civilian applications and morphed into the World Wide Web (WWW) or the internet. Leiner et al (2012:1) notes that, the WWW has transformed interconnectivity around the globe to an unimaginable level. To elaborate on this it is also further argued that the World Wide Web has brought together and made possible the
transmission of information around the globe as well as sharing of information among individuals, friends and relatives. All this has been made possible without the need for people to be in close proximity. It can therefore be argued that the internet is the single most important ICT tool in existence. This is because most communications systems are now internet based.

The above discussion has traced the quest of human beings to communicate since the times the humans themselves have existed. Era after era has also defined a new way of communication but it is very clear that no era had a profound effect on politics and international relations like the electronic era. The defining characteristic of this era is however the emergence of the internet which later led to the birth of a diverse range of internet based companies like Face book, Twitter You Tube, My Space and so on. These mentioned companies and other are the inevitable flag bearers of the internet age. Them being flag a bearer was obviously because of their capacities to spread information across the globe in seconds, a phenomenon which was instrumental in the revolutions of Egypt and Tunisia.

2.3 The internet as the flag bearer of the ICT revolution
Allagui and Kuebler (2011:3) assert that the use of the World Wide Web has become pervasive between connections of friends and associates rather than conventional media. After the internet took off as an invaluable tool for connecting the world, it took over virtually all existing and developing technologies and almost everything became interconnected via the web. Various technologies like voice over internet protocol (VoIP), instant messaging, video conferencing, live streaming and broadcasting now depend on the internet to function. The internet not only makes it cheaper to transmit information, but does so to a previously unimaginable and unreachable audience. The internet truly made the world globalised and information of what is going on in one part of the world can easily be transmitted to other parts of the world. It is curious to note however that the internet is nothing but a vast interconnected network of computers all over the world. This network is open to anyone with access to a computer and an internet connection. The widespread nature of the use of computers and the development of cell phones and other mobile devices with
the ability to connect and interact with other hardware components on the internet has changed the socio political landscape in terms of how the flow of information is regulated. ICTs have largely liberated how information is accessed and transmitted.

Internet based services and technologies have been the major drivers of social and political change in the Middle East’s Arab Spring. Howard (2011:20) notes, the state’s monopoly over information no longer exists and this power of controlling information has shifted to media networks. Cohen (2011) defines social media as, “technology and platforms that enable the interactive web’s content creation, collaboration and exchange by participants and the public.” Social media platform like Facebook and Twitter allow the sharing of pictures, videos, audio files and the establishment of linkages between people who share the same interests. Allagui and Kuebler (2011:2) add that, social media platforms that spread the information did not operate in isolation but were assisted by news organisations and internet “blogs”. This represents a coalescence of the “blogosphere” to unite, organize and mount a credible opposition capable of toppling a government. This stands as the prime demonstration of the power of information and why its control was a mainstay of the Westphalia state before the dawn of the digital age. Another pertinent point to note is that as information communication technology was evolving the state was at the centre of development and control like the United States Army was during the early stages of internet development. However as ICTs’ development and use began to be civilianized leading to internet access to virtually everyone with a smart phone having access to the internet. This capacity of the internet to be so pervasive in its use is what causes problem for states with a huge population that is largely disgruntled as then can easily mobilise themselves like what happened in Tunisia and Egypt.

The control of information has long been a vestige of state control. The flow and control of information allowed the ruling elites to keep a firm grip on the ruled for centuries since the formation of the state itself. The monopoly of the control of information to maintain the status quo can be best exemplified by the Catholic Church’s persecution of the enlightenment advocators and Protestants who advocated more open access to religious text
and learning and questioned the authority of Rome. Wilson and Corey (2012:343) point out that, “Martin Luther’s critique of the church in 1517 started with the public display of grievances on the door of a church. The ideas were spread quickly by use of the then new invention of the printing press with moveable type. Gutenberg’s technology facilitated the spread of ideas and enabled dissent four hundred years ago.” This is the classical example of how information if transmitted and exchanged in an uncontrolled manner has the potential to disrupt the prevailing socio political order in any given polity.

Wilson and Corey (2012:343) note that, “Access to a range of ICTs brings with it new opportunities for information exchange and communication, but they also can be seen as a technological and generational challenge to the hierarchical social order of many Middle East North African (MENA) societies. The growth of social networking, such as the 2009 introduction of Facebook in Arabic, confronts governments trying to restrict networking activities and their use for organizing opposition.” The introduction of these internet based services to Tunisia made it increasingly difficult to monitor or censor political discussions in both Tunisia and Egypt. This is despite the fact that both these countries had well established and entrenched censorship mechanisms put in place by decades of autocratic rule. Allagui and Kuebler (2011:2) note that, the Ben Ali regime had a taskforce of cyber detectives who would block a lot of internet platforms like Facebook, Twitter and You Tube so that the people of Tunisia do not get access to pictures and other material related to the revolution. Web platforms of international media were also blocked this however was not effective as Reporters Without Borders (2011) in Allgui and Kuebler (2011:2) observed that, nameless groups launched cyber-attacks on the Tunisian regime’s websites and published subversive material on these websites as well as instituting technical mechanisms that would bypass government control of information. This internet activism made possible by ICTs allowed actors within and outside of the geographical entities of Tunisia and Egypt to mount a credible and effective challenge to the status quo in these countries. In essence this internationalized the internal political struggles taking place within Tunisia and Egypt because it now had a global audience and the rest of the networked world was helping in spreading information through circumventing censorship mechanism from outside the two.
countries. The governments of these countries could not do anything to stop the spread of information about the coordination of mass protests and the repression their governments were accused of.

Allagui and Kuebler (2011:3) add that, the young generation in the Arab world were the catalysts of internet mobilisation for a long time which was a direct confrontation with government filtering of information online. An example is also given of Zouhair Yahiaoui an internet based agitator who was charged and sent to jail for two years in 2001 for challenging the regime. This use of state apparatus to try and silence dissent and opposition represents a shift by the state in trying to limit the power that ICTs gave freelance actors within the political sphere. The prosecution of online activists also serves as an indicator of how the free flow of information that was spawned by ICTs exists as a threat to the dominance of the state. It also serves as an example of how the state in this instance tacitly accepts that it no longer has control over the amount, form, nature or character of the information its citizens may have access to or disseminate themselves. The boundaries of accessing information are no longer limited by spatial or temporal constraints.

This discussion has largely alluded to the various capacities of the internet as the defining component of the ICT revolution and how it became a problem in the revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt. It is however important to note that among the key attributes of the internet social media is one of the components of the ICT evolution that deserve to be focused on due to its capacity to bring together groups of people who cannot physically have a meeting as a result of legal restrictions or otherwise. It is in this vein that the following section will focus on social media as a key component of the evolution of ICTs.

2.4 Social Media and the ICT revolution in relation to the state

Allagui and Kuebler (2011:2) note that, connections created by social media offers the people with platforms for sharing and exchanging feelings in a two way manner that the participants are likely to be honest with each other. The uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa were as result of that two way connection and sharing of information made possible by internet based social networks. These internet based connections made possible
by social networks led to participants in these circles to share subversive content that led to the people to rise against their governments en mass. Satellite television channels like Al Jazeera also connected with these social networks and became instrumental in helping in re-broadcasting the subversive material to others who had no internet but could access the Al Jazeera signal. The proliferation of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter and blogging has posed a serious challenge to the state capacity to control information. This is largely because of the nature in which these sites operate. Social media is almost impossible to effectively monitor or control what kind of information is accessed or controlled. Lubua and Maharaj (2013:1) note that, “Generally, government institutions want to classify information to be accessed and disseminated for public use. This weighs up state interests against transparency and freedom of expression; on the other hand citizens who are (democratically) the owners of the government demand the right to access the information that impacts their lives more openly without constraints.” Social media has bridged this gap in favour of the private citizen. Governments cannot control the content that is uploaded on these sites neither can they limit the impact and reach of such content when it is uploaded. This gives private actors an unlimited audience in scenarios where they want to organize mass support or simply challenge state excesses.

The London School of Economics (2012) notes that, the majority of Egyptians had adopted the use of social media and it became instrumental in the mobilisation of Egyptians at Tahrir Square. The authorities then responded by instituting a blockade on the internet which did little to extinguish the flames of rebellion due to the decisive nature of the contribution of social media to the revolution. The desperate move by the Mubarak regime to shut down the internet also points to the futile attempt by the state to lay claim to a non-existent and extinct control over the plethora of social and interactive news media. The use of ICTs to exercise the right to free speech and or to challenge autocratic governments is not a new phenomenon, neither is it only limited to the Middle East or other undemocratic and undeveloped areas of the world but even in the developed world. Wilson and Corey (2012:343) note that, “regimes have sought to limit access to, and use of, information technologies as a way to limit the flow of ideas and spread of dissent.” ICTs make it easy for
consensus formation about discontent and disaffection with incumbent regimes. ICTs also give the potential to reach the wider international community which can mount diplomatic pressure on repressive governments. This in turn makes it even easier to organize mass action to express this discontent. As such it is in the best interests of any government to limit the access to potentially damaging information or the ability of opposing elements to coalesce and effectively organize themselves to mount a challenge against the ruling elites. ICTs have however made this task increasingly difficult for the state.

Manrique and Mikail (2011:3) note that, “In the Philippines, during the 2001 impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada, loyalists in the Congress voted to set aside key evidence against him. Angry crowds reacted by calling for a mobilization via text messages. Over seven million messages mobilized around one million people to protest in Manila. As a result, Estrada stepped aside.” The overthrow of this government was possible through the organizational capacity provided for by ICTs. Disgruntled citizens were able to use the mobile network platform to build consensus and form a single united front that forced the president out of power. Other examples include the use of pictures and video to spread awareness about the Chinese government’s brutal crackdown on demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in 1987.

Manrique and Mikail (2011:3) point out that, “During the 2004 ‘Orange Revolution’ in Ukraine, ICTs played an important role” in the consummation of the conflict. Online media, mailing lists, online forums and mobile phones were used by activists to maintain constant contact and update each other on what was going on. This greatly impacted on their ability to organize themselves and counter government initiatives to crackdown on them. This shows an increasing trend towards the use of ICTs in popular uprisings against repressive governments. Chaisukkosol (2010) observed that, “Antigovernment protests in Thailand in 2005-6 used internet, satellite and local broadcast media to organize and promote ideas counter to the government.” Wilson and Corey (2012:343), however argue that, “the Thai government relied upon legal measures to try to limit the flow of information, although efforts were thwarted by routing information outside the country and then returning it. The
allagui and Kuebler (2011) sum it up by saying that, ICTs uplifted citizens in terms of information distribution and the majority of the citizens utilised these technologies not in a predetermined and coordinated manner but by instinct just because they had them in their possession.

2.5 Conclusion
This chapter has traced the development and evolution of ICTs from the early times that mankind has first attempted to pass on messages from one person to the other. The phases as indicated above are the pre mechanical, mechanical, electro mechanical and electronic age. It has also been noted that the electronic age is the one that we are currently in and comprises of a wide plethora of ICTs with information dissemination capabilities that were unimaginable hundred years ago. It was also noted that the most defining era in the evolution of ICTS has been the electronic age which gave birth to the internet, satellite television, and social media. These current technologies have also been linked by the subject of this research which is to determine how ICTS as they are today have contributed to the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. It was also noted that the evolution of ICTs culminated into epic developments like the internet and social media which stands out in all innovations that human kind has come up with in ICTs. Several case studies have been mentioned above to indicate how ICTs have evolved and how states have responded. The next chapter will then focus on how ICTs contributed to the uprising in Tunisia.
CHAPTER 3: THE CASE OF EGYPT

3.1 Introduction
The previous chapters have endeavoured to give a background of the revolutions that took place in Egypt and Tunisia. It also has to be noted that this research aims to establish the centrality of ICTs in the revolutions in the two countries but for the purposes of this chapter focus is on the centrality of ICTs in the revolution in Egypt. Another angle to be focused on in this chapter is the centrality of the demands for democratisation, to ascertain whether they formed the core of the revolution or whether the determinist nature of ICTs as alluded to in the theoretical framework was responsible for the uprising in Egypt. The preceding chapter also focused on the evolution of ICTs and the outstanding development that has had a profound impact to contemporary human existence is the internet and its associated services like social media in the form of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other instant messaging services. The following chapter has therefore been split into three sections that is: Egypt, a face book revolution, state security under siege the military perspective and ICTs and national security, Intelligence perspectives.

3.2 Egypt – “The Facebook Revolution”
It is a rather bold proposition to claim that the revolution that took place in Egypt was indeed a Facebook revolution. It is however the purpose of this research to ascertain whether Face book was the main driver of the revolution as an enabling tool under ICTs. To be able to clearly unpack the role of Facebook and other associated social media it is important to understand the background of the Egyptian system that led to the people to embrace technology to such an extent that it led to the removal of two presidents in a space of three to four years yet the country had been under dictatorial rule for several decades.

To understand this background this paper proposes and brings into dialogue the arguments put forward by General Waqar of the Pakistan Military who is stationed at the National Defence College of Zimbabwe. General Waqar was of the view that to better understand the role played by ICTs in Egypt it is of importance to understand the fault lines that existed in the Egyptian body politic. Waqar is of the view that a huge fault line existed in the Egyptian body politic between the military elite controlled by Mubarak and the commoners. Waqar’s
view is shared by Eltantawy and Wiest, (2011:4) when they posits that despite the fundamental contribution of social networks a lot of other problems permeated the Arab World resulting in the upheaval that consummated. In Egypt the people were not happy because of they believed the government of the day was illegitimate due to successive years of electoral fraud. On the wellbeing of the Egyptians as well, the people felt suffocated by the living conditions as well as their economic conditions and were also unhappy about the lack of accountability of the Mubarak regime. It is also noted that the Egyptian body politic was on high security alert from 1967 to the time the revolution started, a situation that allowed the regime to act in an arbitrary manner all in the name of protecting the sanctity of national security.

The above illustration serves to emphasise the fault lines that existed in the Egyptian body politic which created suitable conditions for the revolution to take place. Directing focus back to face book one can argue that Facebook was more of a tool that was used for the revolution to take place. To further shed light on the background to the revolution one may highlight the points raised above of lack of transparency in elections, stifling of protest opportunities, as well as the institution of a constant state of emergency in the country. These grievances can be argued to have weighed down heavily on the Mubarak regime giving the people enough motivation to protest against the government.

The preceding discussion has a concurrence that the Egyptian body politic was ravaged by fault lines or that the people had a huge dissatisfaction with the government. However some agree with the determinist nature of technology and in this case of Facebook being the architect of the revolution. According to Vargas, (2012) the Egyptian revolution happened mainly because of technology especially Facebook. He argues that the Facebook revolution was sparked by a Google marketing executive Wael Ghonim who was browsing the internet and came across a picture of an Egyptian man who was severely beaten by the Egyptian police named “Khaled Mohamed Saeed”. Vargas, (2012 further asserts that Ghonim shared this image on Face book with the caption “If I don’t act for his sake, tomorrow they will kill me.”
Vargas goes on to posit that “An accidental activist, Ghonim tapped into a shared frustration that became immediately evident online. Two minutes after he started his Facebook page, 300 people had joined it. Three months later, that number had grown to more than 250,000. What bubbled up online inevitably spilled onto the streets, starting with a series of “Silent Stands” that culminated in a massive and historic rally at Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo. “We Are All Khaled Saeed”, the Face book page helped ignite an uprising that led to the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak and the dissolution of the ruling National Democratic Party. In turn, Ghonim — who was arrested during the height of the protests — reluctantly became one of the leading voices of the Arab Spring.” Vargas’ argument is that Ghonim was the chief architect of the Egyptian revolution and the Arab spring in general. The numbers involved in his Face book revolution also signifies the galvanising effect of social media in mobilisation and rallying the people around a common cause.

In further epitomising the role of Facebook in the Egyptian revolution Vargas, (2012) notes that given the problems and anxieties that dominated the Egyptian body politic face book was a forum for expressing those worries and anxieties. He further argues that the most critical role that social media in general and Facebook in particular played in the revolution in Egypt was its capacity to transform the ordinary man who has no means to revolt against his government due to his appalling conditions into an active protester. This argument resonates with perceptions of experts interviewed during the course of this research namely Colonel Yu and General Waqar who were unanimous in their view that ICTs through social media were the main facilitators of the revolution as shall be discussed below.

Further evidence of the Egyptian revolution being a Face book revolution is contained in Ghonim’s assertions elaborated by Vargas, (2012) that Ghonim “polled the page’s users and sought ideas from others, like how best to publicize a rally — through printed fliers and mass text messaging, it turned out. (“Reaching working-class Egyptians was not going to happen through the Internet and Facebook,” he notes.) He tried to be as inclusive as possible, as when he changed the name of the page’s biggest scheduled rally from
“Celebrating Egyptian Police Day — January 25” to “January 25: Revolution Against Torture, Poverty, Corruption and Unemployment.” “We needed to have everyone join forces: workers, human rights activists, government employees and others who had grown tired of the regime’s policies,” he writes. “If the invitation to take to the streets had been based solely on human rights, then only a certain segment of Egyptian society would have participated.”

This elaborately gives a clear impression that as Ghonim was administering his page he had in mind all classes of people in the Egyptian body politic and profiled their aspirations in such a way that his mobilising efforts became appealing to everyone in Egypt. Every aggrieved person in the Egyptian system was represented by the rallying cry that was broadcast on face book and a majority of the downtrodden poured into the streets to voice their concerns to the Mubarak regime first and later the regime of Morsi. What Face book symbolised in Egypt was an escape route from the pervasive state surveillance on all gatherings thought to be stoking the flames of rebellion against the system or harbouring subversive intent. To escape this surveillance and control the people did their gatherings on the virtual world made possible by the internet which forms the key cog in the machine called ICT. Using this understanding the Egyptian revolution can therefore be referred to as the Facebook revolution without any doubt. To refer it to as the Facebook revolution does not however have the intension to negate the role played by other ICT tools like radio, satellite television, e mails ,instant messaging platforms like Twitter, My Space as well as video sharing platforms like You Tube.

In revelations made by respondents in the ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe who preferred anonymity Facebook was also instrumental in the sense that a lot of activists managed to evade government scrutiny by creating fake Facebook pages which were used to mobilise the people of Egypt. One of the respondents even made a bold statement that Tahrir Square was made on Facebook. The respondent also argued that when the government tried to censor the youths they simply opened new pages with different pseudo names that were difficult to track. The aspect that one can assume any identity online especially on Facebook
serves to authenticate the claim that the Egyptian revolution was a Facebook revolution. Considering the fact that more prominent activists like Wael Ghonim were complimented by other thousands of pages who created networks among friends and relatives shows how Facebook was very critical in the mobilisation aspect of the Egyptian revolution.

In magnifying the Egyptian revolution as A Facebook revolution this paper is also of the view that the Egyptians in the diaspora also played a role of galvanising the resistance of other Egyptians back home by participating on the various Facebook pages that were created for the purposes of the revolution. The fact that Facebook is a virtual world where one judges his popularity using the number of likes on his page it would create an impression that huge numbers are supporting the cause, a virtual reality that may be divorced from the real situation on the ground. This false impression of a huge majority supporting the same cause was the one responsible for driving masses of people to the rallies in Tahrir Square with everyone anticipating a bumper crowed. However a huge number of those who liked and participated in the debates on line were the diaspora which was also disenchanted by the way the government of Mubarak ran the country.

In a broader sense the hole of ICT tools were very instrumental in the revolution in Egypt but this section dedicated focus to Face book due to its contribution that overwhelmed the other tools as discussed above. Other ICT tools were active though but the preceding discussion indicated that the revolution of Egypt was born on Facebook and metamorphosed into the streets through the mobilisation capability of Facebook.

3.2.1 Encounter with an Egyptian official from the Egyptian embassy in Zimbabwe
The official from the embassy who requested anonymity was of the view that ICTs through Facebook had a profound effect on the revolution in his country. To magnify his beliefs he was of the view that the because of high usage of Facebook in Egypt it made it possible for internet activists such as Ghonim mentioned above to reach out to a greater audience. The official was also of the view that as far as the usage of Facebook in numbers Egypt follows closely behind the United States of America (USA) hence the profound effect it had on the revolution.
The official also gave a chronology of how the revolution took place and concurred with Vargas (2012) that the revolution started on Facebook. He however opined that that on 28 January 2011 the Egyptian government under Mubarak took a decision to shut down the internet as a way of countering the revolution that was festering on social media. In response to this heavy handed approach he argued that the Egyptian people countered the move by pouring into the streets Cairo.

He however concurred with General Waqar’s view in an interview conducted on him at the NDC on 28 January 2015 on Egypt having fault lines in its body politic but he preferred to be a bit moderate in his assertions that during the formative stages of the revolution it was never about removing Mubarak from office but rather a quest for good standards of living meaning the Egyptian people wanted Mubarak to be more sensitive to their needs. He further argued that the internet was the main source of news and interaction and as people canvassed more for better living conditions the government became uneasy and blocked the internet. As indicated above this angered the people and they responded by going into the streets and changed their mantra of demanding better living conditions into calls for the government to leave office. The Egyptian official however agreed that all this activism was called for through the internet and specifically through Facebook. Another highlight worth noting from the conversations with the official is a bold statement he made that ICTs were mainly responsible for the revolution in his country and the revolution could not have happened even with the fault lines that existed in the Egyptian body politic. This bold pronouncement from someone who is closer to the phenomenon under study gives credence to the technological determinism theory alluded to in the theoretical framework and also helps to answer the research questions that aim to interrogate the role played by ICTs in the revolution of Egypt.

On democratisation the official was of the view that democratisation was never one of the objectives in the first revolution that ousted Hosni Mubarak. He was of the view that the first revolution was mainly about demanding better standards of living and the second one that removed Morsi was the one which was demanding democratisation. This he argued was
as a result of Morsi’s neglect of the people and his obsession with propping up the Muslim Brotherhood (MB).

One important revelation that this Egyptian official makes is that social media and ICTs in general were responsible for the uprising in his country. A telling revelation that he made is that even with Egypt’s problems no revolution was going to take place had ICTs not been in existence. This perception tallies with the hypothetical conjecture that ICTs were largely responsible for the uprising in Egypt and also help to fulfil the research objective of aiming to ascertain the role of ICTs in the Egyptian uprising.

3.3 State security under siege: The military perspective
The purpose of this section is to examine various military arguments as far as the revolution in Egypt is concerned. The idea of having to examine the military perspective is because in Egypt the military was heavily involved in various acts to suppress the uprising. It is in this vein that some military experts like General Waqar of the Pakistan military and Senior Colonel Yao Zhen Yu of the Chinese Military were engaged who are also experts on strategic ICTs in their profession.

Senior Colonel Yao Zhen Yu was of the view that the Egyptian revolution was not caused by ICTs per se but by internal and external factors independent from the influence of ICTs. On internal factors he was of the view that in Egypt there was a general dissatisfaction of the people to their government and the Egyptian government chose to ignore sorting out these issues. This view is shared by Rastegari,(2012:2) who posits that “When the Egyptian government was unwilling or unable to make reforms, the Egyptian people turned to uprising to obtain their wishes, which had been seemingly ignored by Mubarak administration”. This view is further elaborated by Senior Colonel Yu when he asserts that ICTs were a mere tool that was used for the consummation of the revolution.

Senior colonel Yu was also of the view that the Egyptian military was supposed to advise the government on how to resolve the fault lines alluded to above by General Waqar to avoid the heavy handed reactions that it ended up engaging in. If that had been done the sanctity of national security was to be guaranteed. This view of security is rather in the
Senior Colonel Yu also had a great conviction that ideological factors also played an important role in the consummation of the uprising in Egypt. He elaborated this point through his assertions that western ideology of liberal democracy imported to Egypt through ICTs also led to the stoking of the flames of the revolution in Egypt. He further argued that Egypt had a way of political organisation that was unique to itself but the Westerners imposed their own ideology leading to the people revolting against their government.

Senior Colonel Yu furthermore preferred to give a true characterisation of ICTs. His view was that to discuss the influence of ICTs in a broad sense on the Egyptian revolution is not proper since ICTs are very broad. He dissected ICTS into strategic ICTs used by the military and ICTs for civilian consumption and that’s where he located satellite television, radio and social media. In discussing ICTs that had a profound effect on the revolution in Egypt he therefore pointed at those ICTs for civilian consumption.

On a military strategic view, Senior Colonel Yu was of the view that the Egyptian government erred in ignoring the demands of the people. He was also of the view that militarily it is possible for the government to shut down the internet and deprive the people of the negative information that the generality of the people were being fed over the internet. He however admitted that in as much as it is possible at a tactical level to shut down the internet it is a decision that is next to impossible to implement due to negative reactions that may take place which has the capacity to even worsen the problem at hand like what happened in Egypt when the government took that decision. This he said was highlighted by the fact that the Mubarak regime actually shut down the internet but this made the people angrier and made the situation worse.
Another error that the government of Egypt committed that Colonel Yu highlighted was the fact that the security forces including the military were caught unaware by the waves of protest that engulfed the country under Mubarak as well as under Morsi. This revelation that the government was caught unaware serves to highlight the fact that in this contemporary era of pervasive use of ICTS security forces should stay on guard on possible problems like those of Egypt. However to say that security forces should stay on guard does not mean that they should be ready to perpetrate repression on ordinary people seeking their rights but rather find a way of advising the government on proper policies aimed at uplifting the people to avoid the predicament that Egypt found itself in.

The military experts interviewed however concurred that it is not the duty of the military to be called upon to handle the public since it is not their domain. However in a volatile environment like Egypt whereby the country has been under decades of military rule, it was important to get views from military experts on ICTs.

3.4 ICTs and National security: Intelligence perspective
This paper is of the view that writing about the role of ICTs in the revolution in Egypt is not complete without having to look at the perspective of what a national intelligence agency is supposed to do in the face of such mayhem. In this case this paper is of the view that what happened in Egypt constitute an epic intelligence failure. This is because an intelligence agency is responsible for national security and threats to national security that were present in the Egyptian system were supposed to be nipped from the bud. For starters this paper is of the view that the Egyptian intelligence was supposed to understand the activities of the virtual world that were created by the internet which constituted national security threats.

Although this paper is of the view that Egypt’s intelligence service did not do enough to curtail the national security threat that was posed by ICTs through social media it is worth noting that they had an idea of what was going on. A case in point is the assertion by Halevi, (2012) who makes reference to a leaked intelligence document that made reference to the Muslim Brotherhood planning to take advantage of the discontent that people of Egypt had
and hatched a plan to capitalise on this scenario through effective use of social media to further worsen the unrest in the country.

Whether this intelligence perspective on the goings on during the revolution is accurate or not cannot be ascertained but the fact that remains present in the Egyptian body politic was that fault lines were evident that were capitalised on by The Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian intelligence in this case was more inclined to blaming the Muslim brotherhood but the overarching point to consider is that the intelligence service was admitting that the Muslim brotherhood took advantage of the protest and encouraged its younger members to through social media to join the protests and exacerbate the dissent among the Egyptian people. This admission that social media was the main driver resonates well with earlier assertions by other experts on ICTs discussed above showing how ICTs were critical in the uprising that took place in Egypt. The intelligence failure in this respect was its inability to nip this cyber threat in the bud and advise the government accordingly.

The above discussion has largely blamed the Egyptian army for failing to contain the uprisings especially its channels of mobilisation over the internet but it has to be admitted that such controls need to be done carefully since knowledge of such controls may be misconstrued as repression of the people through stifling their rights to freedom of expression. Senior Colonel Yu also concurred with this view that the internet must be free so that the government does not antagonise its people but at the same time he opined that it would be naïve for a national security agency to believe that the common man will have a better understanding of a diverse range of material that is posted on social media every day. To this end he was of the view that national security establishments should have teams of operatives who are supposed to be monitoring the cyberspace and make thorough analysis of the content that the people are consuming. The government may not necessarily block the internet but will engage in some cyber programs aimed at managing the perception of the people on their government so that they are not overcome by emotion to such an extent that they revolt against their government.
3.4.1 Conversations with Central Intelligence Operatives (CIO) of Zimbabwe

To understand the role played by ICTs in the revolution of Egypt this researcher took a bold step to engage some officials in the CIO or the department of the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe. The enquiry took this route because like in Egypt the intelligence agency is the custodian of the cyberspace and acts as advisers to the president or the government on any possible threats to national security originating from the cyberspace.

One official from the CIO was of the view that it is a mammoth task for an intelligence agency to successfully control the information flow on the cyberspace. He buttressed this view by his assertions that various modes of communication that exist in the contemporary world like social media exist outside the control of the government and owned by private companies that are largely foreign although network service providers are local. Because of this and the prevailing environment in the international body politic where rights of the individual have become sacrosanct it is a challenge to control what information the people consume. He was however optimistic about the technological era arguing that for intelligence services to better serve their countries they should adapt to the changing environment and direct focus to advise their respective governments on how to improve the livelihoods of their people so that intelligence officials put their energy into generating strategies for economic survival rather that controlling the public.

 Asked on how ICTs were influential in the uprisings in Egypt he was of the view that the ICTs were very influential in the uprisings since they presented the Egyptian people with a virtual world where they could congregate and commiserate with each other on their suffering. This he argued that made it very difficult for the huge security apparatus of Egypt to control because physically no one could be apprehended since the majority of the activism happened in the comfort of people’s homes initially and later spilled into the streets.

Asked on whether the revolution in Tunisia could have happened had ICTs been unavailable another CIO operative who requested anonymity indicated that the fact that ICTs were simply a tool that facilitated the revolution means that even if the uprisings did not happen
they were still going to erupt at some point in time. This, he argued was as a result of the various grievances that the Egyptians had on their government so a breaking point was inevitably going to be reached in Egypt. His views serve to validate assertions by Senior Colonel Yu that the fault lines in the Egyptian system were the decisive factors and ICTs only served as the tools to achieve the revolution.

Asked on which social media platforms had a huge impact on the revolution of Egypt another operative was of the view that Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were the key drivers of the revolution validating earlier assertions that the Egyptian revolution was indeed a Facebook revolution. What these responses are pointing at is mainly that the Egyptian system was dominated by fault lines which were capitalised on by dissenting voices through social media.

Another operative preferred to focus on the role of ICTs not only in facilitating the revolution but also in bringing what was going on in Egypt to the attention of the international community. He was of the view that when the revolution started the protesters who had mobilised themselves through social media were met with heavy handed tactics and this resulted in an aggressive social media campaign by those who were involved in the uprisings. He also opined that major news networks like Al Jazeera, Cable News Network (CNN), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and others also dissented on the Egyptian shores and began beaming the events in that country live to the world twenty four hours a day. This he argued resulted in international pressure on the Egyptian regime leading to the resignation of Mubarak after just eighteen (18) days of protest.

The last operative to be interviewed was asked to give his views on the role of ICTs in the phenomenon of democratisation. He was of the view that instead of leaving the people to use ICTs in a negative manner governments should set up internet based communication channels that the people can utilise and make input in the decision making process. Apart from contributing online in decision making processes he was also of the view that the state should subsidise internet tariffs to encourage free communication between themselves and their citizens and make available online much needed information like national statistics.
voters rolls and so on. This he argued would create rapport between the government and its people that will increase accountability and better understanding between the people and their government.

Traditionally intelligence agencies have been used to stifle people’s voices but the responses given above intelligence officers show a shift in their operations and an understanding of the herculean tasks governments in general face in controlling information flow on the internet in general and social media in particular. It also serves to highlight the fact that even though Egypt had well-oiled intelligence machinery the battle was of meeting the needs of the people and failure to do so will lead them to voice their dissent through social made.

3.4 Conclusion
As indicated in the introduction this chapter aimed to discuss of the revolution in Egypt as a Facebook revolution and this section appeared at the beginning of the chapter. Military perspectives were also discussed in the chapter as well as intelligence perspectives. On intelligence perspectives one however has to note that a significant chunk of time was taken in conversations with intelligence operatives of the Zimbabwean security establishment. This was to establish if the state was truly able to control the avalanche of protest messages that swept across social media and these discussions indeed confirmed that in this contemporary world it is very difficult for the state to monopolise the information sphere. Military experts also concurred with this perspective that the government was supposed to be focused mainly on the fault lines or problems that were in the country and not being caught unaware and subsequently act in a reactionary manner. From the discussion above it can be deciphered that even though the technological determinist argument makes a lot of sense, the determining factor in the revolution of Egypt was the underlying problems which were going to reach a tipping point with or without ICTs. However all key informants that were interviewed and as evidenced by works referenced above ICTs in the form of social media accelerated the revolution thereby authenticating the hypothetical conjecture that ICTs were largely responsible in the revolution of Egypt albeit as a catalyst.
CHAPTER 4: THE CASE OF TUNISIA

4.1 Introduction
The preceding chapter was focused on the case study of Egypt and how ICTs were influential in the revolution in that country. Perspectives from the military and the intelligence were discussed as well as the view that the Egyptian revolution was a Facebook revolution. Findings from respondents interacted with also indicated that ICTs through the internet based social networks were influential in the uprising. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to dwell more on how ICTs had an influence in the revolution in Tunisia that led to the ousting of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. Because of a lack of representation of Tunisia in Zimbabwe questions concerning the revolution in that country were also posed to the Egyptian officials in Zimbabwe who have a better understanding of the events in Tunisia due to Egypt’s geographical proximity to Tunisia and the homogeneity of the two countries’ experiences as far as the revolution was concerned. The military and intelligence experts interviewed on Egypt also took time to discuss the Tunisian experiences as far as the impact of ICTs to the revolution in that country is concerned. This paper has divided the Tunisian case study into three sections the first being, Tunisian Revolution: Pro-democracy or otherwise, the second one being ICTs and the revolution in Tunisia and finally Tunisia the spark of the Arab revolution or not.

4.2 Tunisian revolution: Pro-democracy or otherwise.
The Tunisian revolution was somewhat of a shock to the world due the wide spread belief that the Arab dictatorships could not be removed from office. To understand the revolution in Tunisia and whether it was a pro-democracy revolution or not it is important to understand various contexts in which the state of Tunisia found itself in. for instance Syed, (2014:58) identifies the international context that the Tunisian regime found itself in on the eve and during the revolution. Goldstone in Syed, (2014:58) posits that “The international context is important for a revolution to succeed. The international powers can refuse to support the government. Another way international powers can influence is by restricting the government to use force against the revolutionary forces”. This assertion by Goldstone is of importance in understanding the conditions prevailing in the Arab world prior to the
revolution. This is especially because of Syed (2014:58)’s arguments that for long the governments from the West backed authoritarian regimes because of the benefits they got and some chose to wait and see hoping that the forces of “globalisation” and advancements in technologies would help democracy spread to the region. Syed,(2014:58) also opines that the west was hoping that the democratisation movements that happened in Eastern Europe especially the Orange Revolution in Ukraine would have a spill over effect on the Arab world and the region would democratise. According to the topic of this research the supposition is that ICTs were instrumental in the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia. Of interest to note however is the hope by the Western countries that democracy would come in to the Middle East as a result of advancements in technology as indicated above? The importance of this international context is that the Western countries although they supported some of the regimes in the Middle East they hoped that the region would somehow democratise. If focus is put on the behaviour of Zine el Abidine Ben Ali in the middle of the revolution in his country one can discern the fact that he chose to run away because he could no fathom the international backlash that would ensue had he chose to be brutal in his response to the Tunisian people. The international community’s envisaged response could be the reason why Ben Ali chose to run away.

Syed, (2014:58) is also of the view that to argue that the revolution in Tunisia just happened spontaneously would be academically naïve. She brings out this point clearly through the assertion that “President George W. Bush launched his freedom agenda for the Middle East region insisting on regime change, people’s rights and freedoms” during his tenure. “The invasion of Iraq was based on pretext of democratizing the region. Hence, many believe that these revolutions could not have come without the support of the West. Mass protests and uprisings were the chosen tools for removing the despots by the West”. This argument by Syed has the importance of bringing out clearly the fact that the revolutions that took place in the Arab World and for the purposes of this chapter in Tunisia were a product of long term planning by the West who had at first attempted to democratise the middle East through military means by invading Iraq under the pretext of weapons of mass destruction. As highlighted above this method was seen to be not effective by the west hence the
revolutions that erupted in the Middle East were as a result of this planning. It is however naïve to neglect the prevailing conditions in Tunisia that may have led to this uprising.

Syed, (2014:62) then brings into dialogue the problems that bedevilled the Tunisian body politic. She argues that the Tunisian government lacked “legitimacy” through “authoritarianism”. Syed (ibid: 64, 65, 66) also points out that the government of Tunisia was guilty of “repression, state predation” as well as depriving the people of Tunisia of their “dignity”. The lack of legitimacy highlighted above emanates from an inherent, deep seated perception by the people in the Tunisian body politic that the government was in the office not as a result of popular suffrage but by some machinations that subverted the will of the people. Lack of legitimacy as indicated is also a serious dent over any regime that may want to be portrayed as a democracy. What it means therefore is that in Tunisia the people were not happy about their government. To use Senior Colonel Yu’s thoughts the regime of Ben Ali ignored the needs of its people including the utter disregard of the dignity of the people of Tunisia. Predation by the government which means pillaging of the state’s resources for the benefit of Ben Ali and his family coupled with government corruption were all grievances that the people of Tunisia had on their government. The revelations above are the ones that forms the pillars of democracy because if one is to refer to the tenants of democracy advocated by Rousseau in Memo Website, (2015:1) it is clear that in a democracy the majority of the people are involved in the decision making including the making of laws in that particular body politic. This summation of what democracy entails coupled with the situation on the ground in Tunisia under Ben Ali shows that the revolution in Tunisia was a truly a pro-democracy revolution.

However it is important to note that the pro-democracy revolution erupted in Tunisia as a result of the emergence of key ICTs like social media and satellite television. Another angle worth exploring is that the emergency of pro-democracy revolutions in the Middle East and in Tunisia in particular is part of cultural warfare that is rooted in the fight between civilisations, (Huntington 1993:1). Clash of civilisations implies that modern conflict will no longer be as a result of different ideologies but along cultural lines. This supposition rings
true in the sense of the Tunisian conflict because in a Western sense democracy is a culture which is rooted in Western thinking. The earlier revelations that the West had always wanted democracy to be established in the Middle East and had hoped that ICTs would assist in this realisation of a democratic dream in this part of the world clearly shows how the West wanted to impose their system of government on the Middle East and in this case in Tunisia. This also serves to answer the question of whether the revolution in Tunisia was a pro-democracy revolution or not. The aspect of who wanted this democracy in Tunisia is another angle that may need to be explored but in as much as it may seem to be a grey area the fact that cannot be disputed is that this revolution was a pro-democracy revolution. This discussion also highlighted earlier on that the regime of Ben Ali violated the rights of the Tunisians so in as much as the Westerners wanted democracy in Tunisia it was a common interest with the generality of the people of Tunisia looking at how the revolution unfolded in Tunisia.

Another factor that is worth considering in a bid to discern whether the revolution in Tunisia was a pro-democracy revolution or not is the aspect that a cross section of the key informants interviewed form military experts, intelligence experts and academics concurred with the fact that in as much as there were external factors that triggered the revolution in Tunisia internal factors were largely responsible. Both Brigadier General Waqar and Senior Colonel Yu concurred that both the Egyptian and Tunisian body politics were bedevilled with internal problems that created conditions for an uprising. Doctor Chingono of the University of Zimbabwe Department of Political and Administrative Studies was also of the view that the quest for democracy was inherent in the Tunisian body politic. She went further to refer to other revolutions that have subsequently occurred in the Middle East and those before them in other parts of the world like the Orange revolution in Ukraine. She identified a common denominator in these revolutions that the fight for freedom and universal suffrage loom large in these people’s grievances.

The discussion above has largely focussed on unpacking the Tunisian revolution in a bid to ascertain whether it is a pro-democracy revolution of not. The arguments suggesting that this
was indeed a pro-democracy revolution have been overwhelming as indicated above. Having ascertained that the Tunisian revolution was a pro-democracy revolution it becomes important to establish what sparked this revolution since from the evidence above the pro-democracy grievances were in the Tunisian body politic for over two decades of Ben Ali’s rule. Discussions with various key informants have however revealed a concurrence with the notion that in as much as there were internal and external causes of the revolution in Egypt and Tunisia ICTs were the sparking plugs of the revolution. The following section is therefore focused on the relationship between ICTs and the revolution in Tunisia.

4.3 ICTs and the Tunisian Revolution
Tunisia was ruled by Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali for 23 years. He oversaw a repressive government that incubated corruption, nepotism and bad governance that eventually precipitated an economic crisis culminating in high unemployment, inflation and poor living conditions. This was coupled with a poor human rights record and a lack of basic rights like freedom of speech and other political freedoms. The oppression extended to massive censorship of both print and electronic media. The state under Ben Ali established specialized apparatus to monitor and control the nature and character of information that Tunisians had access to. The intended objective of this was to maintain a firm grip on political power through controlling mass public opinion and political discourse within Tunisia. The control of information was also intended to stunt any coalescence of opposition opinion or sentiment against the government and its excesses.

Wilson and Corey (2012:343) note that, “Access to a range of ICTs brings with it new opportunities for information exchange and communication. The growth of social networking, such as the 2009 introduction of Facebook in Arabic, confronts governments trying to restrict networking activities and their use for organizing opposition.” The introduction of these internet based services to Tunisia made it increasingly difficult to monitor or censor political discussions in both Tunisia.

The Tunisian revolution was sparked by the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi in 2010. The Tunisian media artificially downplayed the incident and the protests that
followed. However the introduction of Facebook in Arabic and other online social media like Twitter and YouTube meant that the information could no longer be contained. Consequently pictures and videos of the protests that started in Sidi Bouzid spread all over the internet and blogosphere. This galvanized public opinion against the Ben Ali government and emboldened Tunisians in other cities to take to the streets and protest calling for Ben Ali’s resignation. Kravets (2013) argues that, “The use of communication technologies, and the Internet in particular, has been widely credited as contributor to the mobilisation of protests.” This made it impossible for the colossal censorship machinery put in place by Ben Ali to control the media and publicity to contain the spread of the revolutionary sentiment carried by pictures and videos of protestors and the heavy handedness of the Tunisian security forces in trying to disperse the protestors. In an interview with Yao Zhen Yu, a Senior Colonel in the Chinese Army, Colonel Yu argued that, “ICTs played a very important role in the revolution.” This is because, the advanced, ICTs were very important in the overall globalization of Western values of liberal democracy and free market economics which were really the core issues that the Tunisians were protesting over. Colonel Yu argued that ICTs rather had an unnoticed ideological impact on the Tunisian body politic that was lost to the white noise of the revolution. He argued that the Tunisians only revolted after comparing their own miserable existence with that of other developed countries- mainly liberal democracies of the West, and then aspiring to that level of political and economic maturity. Such aspirations were only made possible by the cultural and ideological exchange brought on by ICTs through social media. As such the role of ICTs in the Tunisian revolution cannot be simply relegated to the occurrence of the actual revolution but rather has salient undertones in the build up to the revolution itself. ICTs were simply the tools they used to express their disaffection with the way in which their government was being run by Ben Ali. The Colonel put forward that the role of ICTs in the revolution was also amplified by the fact that the Tunisian government was not really prepared on how to respond to the use of ICTs by the protestors, as such they did not anticipate that shutting down the internet would further inflame the public. This only served to bring the paramount importance of communication and ICTs.
Kuebler (2011) note that, the regime of Ben Ali had an elaborate censorship machinery which was manned by internet based security personnel who specialised in enacting blockades on social media pages to control the distribution of revolutionary material which was seen by the regime as inciting the masses to revolt. These steps however did little to counter the momentum that the revolution had already gathered. This is because other actors from outside of Tunisia took it upon themselves to help the revolutionary movement. This was done through using complex techniques to reroute Facebook traffic from Tunisia to other servers outside of Tunisia. This made the blocking or censoring of Facebook by the Tunisian government virtually ineffective. In a discussion with an official from the Egyptian embassy who requested anonymity, the official pointed out that the Egyptian government had made the same mistake of shutting down the internet, cutting mobile communication and any form of independent media. This had the effect of further infuriating the protesting public and led to more people joining the demonstrations to oust Hosni Mubarak.

In an interview with an Information Technology (IT) technician from the Chinese Army Captain Jia it emerged that that even without the use of ICTs, the revolution would have occurred anyway. He argued that the uprising had deeper causes and drivers other than ICTs. He highlighted that the deep rooted socio economic problems that characterized Tunisian political landscape were the root causes of the revolution. ICTs played a relatively minor role but were really overemphasized in their importance. Captain Jia pointed out that even after the so called Facebook revolution; the social and economic problems in Tunisia still had to be dealt with. Asked about the impact of ICTs on politics, Captain Jia proposed that governments should have more comprehensive controls in place to monitor the internet and how ICTs are used. This he argued was because not all content and websites on the internet are innocent. He pointed out that other nations like the U.S and China monitor internet traffic and the use of ICTs to counter terrorism and other subversive elements. The Egyptian embassy official however alluded to the fact that it is very difficult to control the internet and the wide range of ICTs that exist today. He also cited that the freedom of association and speech are fundamental freedoms that governments have to protect and as such pursuing control of the internet and ICTs is countering the existence of these freedoms.
The official pointed out that there was an essential difference in the revolutions in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt because in Egypt the military stood by the people. As such there was no escalation of violence or suppression of the media or ICTs as seen in Tunisia. This sort of alludes to the important role ICTs played in countering a domineering and repressive state apparatus that would stop at nothing to maintain its hold on power.

4.4 Tunisia: The spark plug of the Arab Spring

This section aims at examining the role that Tunisia played in setting in motion the wave of pro-democracy revolutions that engulfed the Middle East from 2010 to date. To understand better the events of Tunisia that led to a revolution in the rest of the Arab world one can refer to the following extract from Abouzeid, (2011) who posits that the level of suffering in Tunisia was extreme as highlighted by Radia Bouazizi a relative of Mohammed Bouazizi who burnt himself alive who said Mohammed Bouazizi never aspired for a flash life but earned for a better life in Tunisia. She went on to say his aspirations were frustrated by the Tunisian regime to such an extent that he committed suicide by burning himself alive and did not know that this act of desperation would trigger a whirl wind of insurrection against several governments in the Middle East. This revelation gives a clear picture of the level of suffering in Tunisia personified by Bouazizi. The opinions of Radia Bouazizi also indicate that Bouazizi had aspirations which may appear modest but symbolises the yearning of a better life by every Arab in the Middle East. Bouazizi as indicated above never set out to start a revolution like he did but because of desperation he set in motion events that led to the ousting of his own president and subsequently presidents from other countries like Egypt.

Abouzeid, (2012) further asserts that the story of Bouazizi who set himself on fire in front of the municipal buildings was the final stroke that broke the camel’s back. This paper is of the persuasion that social media and the internet in general coupled with satellite television helped in the spreading of the images of a burning Buozizi that helped to whip up emotions leading to the people in the Arab world coalescing around the objective of examining their conditions and demanding for better conditions. The events that led to the ouster of Ben Ali in Tunisia had a domino effect and soon the people of Egypt followed suit. According to an
Egyptian official based at the Egyptian embassy in Harare the people of Egypt drew lessons from the events in Tunisia and also began examining their conditions. He was of the view that the Egyptian people began demanding better living conditions from Mubarak who responded in a brutal manner leading to subsequent calls for his ouster. This is showing that the revolution of Tunisia was the awakening call to the people of Tunisia who discovered that it was possible to confront authoritarianism and triumph through adversity.

Brown et al (2012) also asserts that as the revolution was spreading in the Middle East online activists came together and civil society in the Arab world began educating people on the importance of mobile phones and internet in spreading the message of the rebellion. This education by the civil society in the Arab world is the reason why the people in the Arab world became alive to the benefits of citizen journalism. There was no more need for a television crew from a huge media house to go and cover events in remote parts of the Arab world because the citizens from these remote parts of the Arab world would spread information of what was transpiring in their areas through mobile phones or through the internet.

The revolutions in the Middle East spread across this geographical enclave through ICTs from Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya to Bahrain. However some study in the USA points to the fact that social media was not very instrumental in the uprisings of the Middle East. Brown et al, (2012) points out that this research indicates that the social networks played a role in broadcasting the events surrounding the upheavals in Tunisia more than to the Tunisians themselves. In elaborating this assertion he used the analogy of social networks acting as a public address system meant for the international community to hear. The proposition by this research at this juncture is that social media was more important in informing the rest of the world on what was transpiring during the uprisings. The symbolism of social media being a megaphone is important in the sense that in as much as the research asserts that it wasn’t a triggering cause but the admission that it was the tool for spreading updates to the world on the progress of the revolutions was important in ratcheting up international pressure.
on the alleged despotic regimes thereby speeding up the process of handing over power to a new government especially in the case of Tunisia and Egypt.

In the earlier stages of the research it was noted that the various new media available in the contemporary world was responsible for piling up international pressure on the regimes that were cracking under pressure. As evidenced by the findings of the research noted above it was indeed a critical role that social media and other ICTs played in bringing the crisis in the Middle East to the attention of the international community. The fact that country exists in isolation in this contemporary world means the input of private citizens and officials from other countries weighed heavily on the so called despotic regimes leading to their deposition.

The fact that social media was responsible for spreading the revolutionary message outside the location of the revolution serves to validate the assertion that Tunisia was indeed the cradle of the revolution of the Middle East. This is because the people in Egypt got inspired by the bravery of the Tunisians through videos posted on You Tube, Status updates on Facebook and a constant flow of news through internet based news platforms and through satellite television channels like Al Jazeera. Those in Libya also followed suit until the whole of the Middle East was on fire.

4.4.1 ICTs and global consciousness to the revolution in Tunisia

In discussing Tunisia as a the plug that sparked the revolution in North Africa and the rest of the Middle East it is necessary to focus on the role ICTs played in global awareness. The importance of understanding the role of ICTs on global awareness is born out of the role that ICTs played in domestic coordination of the demonstration. As a core cluster of demonstrators was realised through ICTs the next important aspect of the revolution was to spread it to the world. To illustrate this Trechsel, (2011:15) asserts that “Rather than mobilizing their own citizens, online activists moved to inform the international community. Through blogs, Facebook updates, cell phone communication, and, most vividly, YouTube, activists targeted friends, family and colleagues abroad, as well as the international media”.

What this essentially means is that the ICTs had a two pronged effect on the revolution in
the Middle East, the first one being the mobilising effect in Tunisia first and the second one being the megaphone role of spreading the events of the revolution in Tunisia to the rest of the world a view shared by a cross section of several key informants interviewed. This is one very important aspect in unpacking Tunisia as the trigger of the revolution in the Arab World. This is mainly because of the inspirational role that the Tunisian revolution had in the Middle East. However a key point to note is that had there been no ICTs in the form of social media what transpired could have remained in Tunisia without anyone ever knowing although key informants like Senior Colonel Yu was of the view that the revolution could still have happened.

The importance of the global reach of the events of Tunisia is that it played a galvanising role to the people in the Middle East who faced a similar predicament. The filtering of the news that Ben Ali has fled Tunisia across the Middle East was obviously received with joy by others who were oppressed in other countries like Egypt, Bahrain Yemen, Libya and even Syria. Miladi and Wagner in Trechsel, (2011:16) also asserts that the internationalisation of the revolution that took place in Tunisia at first was aided by the satellite television channel, Al Jazeera which helped to reproduce and publish tweets and Face book statuses of individuals on their channel to circumvent the internet black outs that were instituted in Tunisia as well as in Egypt. This also helped to galvanise the rest of the Middle East in their quest to remove their respective oppressors. The fact that Al Jazeera was a satellite television channel dedicated to cover the Middle East using both English and Arabic meant that almost everyone in the Middle East had the opportunity to know what was going on in the execution of the revolutions resulting in a regional movement consummating in the region.

4.5 ICTs circumventing censorship by mainstream media in Tunisia
Having discussed the role played by ICTs in the global awareness of the revolution in Tunisia it is also of importance to also examine the role of ICTs in bridging the gap that was created by mainstream media in their actions of suppressing certain information. This paper is of the view that in Tunisia Ben Ali thrived of suppressing all voices of dissent hence the quashing of successive uprisings that have been attempted in his territory as is the case in
many Arab countries. To illustrate this narrative Benkirane, (2012:1) opines that “real time” feeds on social media like Twitter Facebook and Google searches on the internet were instrumental in breaching the control of information by government controlled media such as newspapers, radios and television. The essence of these real time searches is that even if the mainstream government controlled media in Tunisia censored the press valuable protest information could still be accessed on various Google searches that the population would do. Live Twitter feeds were also instrumental in breaching this strong hold on information dissemination by the state. The importance of this intervention by ICTs in Tunisia is that it broke the Tunisian government’s monopoly over information.

In emphasising the role of ICTs in breaching the state’s monopoly mover information this research also endeavoured to have conversations with a government official in the Zimbabwean Office of the president and cabinet who proffered anonymity. This official emphasised that it is of great importance for the government to control information flow to the public and the international community at large. This he argued that the reputation of the country is kept intact and no fissures or cracks in the body politic become visible for outsiders to exploit. To juxtapose his assertion with the breach of monopoly over information that took place in Tunisia it becomes very clear that the revolution materialised as a result of failing to control the information that the people consumed a scenario made possible by ICTs. Although the aforementioned official was convinced that the flow of information in the public domain must be regulated he was however weary of the repercussions it would have to the provisions of the access to information advocated for in a vibrant democracy as well as inability to control the information by small states. Based on the misgivings that this official was expressing it is therefore prudent to delve into the thought of Brigadier General Waqar who opined that “small states have become helpless in controlling their territories” as far as the access to information by their citizens is concerned. Although General Waqar was in a rather mournful tone as far as the inability of small states to control their territories on information accessed by their citizens the above assertion by Benkarine was rather celebratory in its acceptance of the role of Twitter live feeds and real time Facebook updates in the revolution in Tunisia.
Based on the above discussion, this paper is of the view that ICTs also had the importance of bridging the time lag that existed between the occurrence of events and the broadcast of those events. For instance events that take place towards the end of the day are usually available in print media the following morning. Television also has a time lag between receiving it and airing it serve for satellite television where there is use of live coverage. The live Twitter feeds and Facebook updates as well as real time Google searches therefore had the effect of giving the population real time news resulting in instantaneous reactions to events as they happened. This also means that ICTs enabled the population in Tunisia to act based on their emotions in real time, a fact that resulted in the spread of the revolution to other geographical enclaves outside Tunisia.

A cross section of other respondents interviewed was also of the view that there is always a way of checking the type of information circulating in mainstream media and possibly control it but in the case of the new ICTs like social media it is very difficult to have access to these platforms and control them as happened in Tunisia resulting in the revolution to consummate. The respondents were of the view that more powerful countries like those in the West have the capability and resources to keep a complete digital monitoring mechanism on the communications going on their territories but smaller less powerful and less developed countries are not able to institute and sustain these digital monitoring mechanisms. To further illustrate the capacity of powerful counties in monitoring private communications one can also refer to the United States of America’s (USA) mass surveillance of American and European Union (EU) Citizens for the purposes of fulfilling various intelligence tasks. Bowden et al, (2013:13) asserts that the USA used to main programs run by a private contractor code named “PRISM” and Xscore which had the capability of monitoring private internet searches as well as creating profiles for all searches which were useful in identifying terrorists for example. Bowden et al,(ibid:13) also opine that Verizon a major telecoms company in the USA was given and order to surrender details of all calls made by Americans in an order that was instituted under the patriot Act. This serves to show that the USA has both the technical and legal capacity to monitor communications not only in their territory but in far afield lands like the EU.
With this capability that the USA showed in monitoring and intercepting private communications one therefore wonders how it is possible for smaller countries in Africa like Tunisia to monitor the communications of the citizens. Had this capacity been present in the Tunisian state machinery maybe the government could have detected the voices of dissent long before a revolution consummated. This inability by the Tunisian government to monitor private communications and to possibly thwart the flames of rebellion serves to authenticate the assertion that ICTs were instrumental in breaking the state’s monopoly over information also serving to authenticate the presupposition that ICTs were instrumental in the revolution of Tunisia.

If one is also to look at the massive surveillance that USA was doing on Europeans as well as the Americans citizens, one can equate it to information warfare that was alluded to by a senior official in the Central intelligence organisation who preferred anonymity. He alluded to the fact that the revolution that took place in Tunisia and the rest of the Middle East was as a result of this information warfare. In his view information warfare has seen smaller and less powerful states pitted against powerful and rich countries. As far as ICTs are concerned he was of the view that Western intelligence systems have well-oiled machinery used for information warfare where disgruntled groups are identified and influenced through the new ICTs that the governments in poor countries cannot control. He gave the example of the movie named the Dictator that was produced in the USA. He believed that this movie was a ploy targeting the Libyan nation trying to expose the so called irresponsible and corrupt leadership of Gadhafi. He went to argue that this movie serves to give ideas to the so called oppressed masses. He also referred to the recent movie made in America named the Interview which is a caricature of the North Korean president. He further argued that all these movies depicting heads of state from other countries as crazy tyrants are part of the information warfare that generates unrest like what happened in Tunisia. In dissecting this information warfare he was also of the view that the powerful states target the fault lines that exist in these smaller countries. In relation to Tunisia this warfare may not have been direct but it is covert were giant ICT companies form the USA provides these countries with
internet services that will then be capitalised on by the controller of this orchestra called information warfare.

What is however important to note is information warfare or not, the fact that still remains is that ICTs were responsible in the uprising of Tunisia due to their capacity to defeat the government’s attempts to censor the information circulating in the Tunisian body politic.

4.6 Conclusion
The preceding chapter has focused mainly on the Tunisian revolution specifically on whether the revolution in Tunisia was a pro-democracy revolution or not. Also discussed was the critical role of ICTs in the Tunisian revolution as well as a discussion on the revolution in Tunisia in a bid to ascertain whether it was the spark that lit the whole of Middle East in a wave of revolutions that ended up being labelled the Arab spring. Furthermore the discussion also focused on how ICTs defeated government censorship of information. In the discussions above it was clear that in as much as there were other grievances in the Tunisian body politic the overarching call was against repression from the regime of Ben Ali hence the people revolting. In the majority of the research findings it came out that Ben Ali was guilty of repression of his people and was also corrupt to such an extent that the people of Tunisia had to revolt against him. ICTs as indicated above played a crucial role in mobilising the people around a common goal of ousting Ben Ali so that a new era would be established in the Tunisian body politic. Furthermore the discussion above also focused on whether Tunisia was the real spark that ignited the revolution in Tunisia. It was indeed ascertained that the events in Tunisia became the torch bearer of the revolution in the Middle East. It however has to be noted that this leading role that Tunisia played in the revolution could not have been possible without the enabling effect of ICTs especially Face book, Twitter, You Tube and satellite television especially Al Jazeera news channel. Countries that also revolted against their regimes like Egypt, Libya, Bahrain Yemen and Syria can be argued to have taken lessons from Tunisia especially having noted how ICTs defeated the attempts by the Ben Ali regime to censor information available to the public or to block private communications. Although they had varying degrees of success the fact remains that Tunisia took the lead in igniting a revolution that has been simmering for
decades and the game changer in this eruption can be unequivocally be argued to have been the advent of new media that is social media under the umbrella of ICTs.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study noted that the Arab world in general and Tunisia and Egypt in particular were suffering from a strangle hold of power by authoritarian regimes. It was also noted in the study that the Arab world has tried for several decades to break this hold on power by the ruling elites who included Ben Ali of and Mubarak of Tunisia and Egypt respectively. Several nonviolent mechanisms were tried included pressure from the international community for these despotic enclaves to reform. It was noted in this research that the Western world had always hoped and remained optimistic that the Arab World would democratise due to the advent of globalising forces like ICTs which were instrumental in enlightening the oppressed peoples of the world of the virtues of democracy. In a bid to understand the role ICTS played in these revolutions this research saw it fit to trace the evolution of ICTs and how they have become a defining factor in the MENA.

In tracing the evolution of ICTs it was noted that communication between individuals was rather rudimental and began as rock paintings and signals. With the passage of time new technologies began to emerge and evolved until the internet was invented. This research noted the various developments that took place before the computer and the internet came into being but noted that the invention of the internet was the watershed of modern communications. The internet came along with the e-mail and other associated services but social media defined the contemporary era signified by the critical role it played in the revolutions in MENA not negating the emergence of satellite television which was also critical in these revolutions.

This paper also focused on democratisation in the Arab World with specific reference on Egypt and Tunisia. This focus on democratisation was in a bid to ascertain whether democratisation was one of the grievances or not. The focus on democratisation was inevitably linked to the revolutions that took place in Egypt and Tunisia and the endeavour to understand the driving force behind these revolutions.
It is in this vein that ICTs were discussed to ascertain the whether they were the driving force behind the revolutions in the two countries of Egypt and Tunisia. This research therefore found out that the Tunisian and Egyptian body politic was riddled with internal social political and economic fissures which were in an internecine quest to widen into huge crevices that symbolised the revolting masses which used nonviolent means. It was also evident in in this research that ICTs were instrumental in the nonviolent revolutions that erupted in Tunisia and Egypt.

The importance of this discovery that ICTs were instrumental in the uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia is importance in this research because it set out to determine if indeed ICTs were instrumental in the uprisings and to what extent. After going through a series of interviews with several key informants, it was ascertained that ICTs became the spark that spark lit the two revolutions. It is also important to note how this spark lit the revolution. It is in this vein that the internet through its associated social media networks like Facebook, You Tube, and various e-mail services were identified to be the main drivers of the revolutions.

In Tunisia the revolution was sparked by images of the Mohammed Bouazizi who burnt himself alive after being ill-treated by local authorities after trying to make a living out vending. The critical role that ICTs played in this Tunisian scenario is that the images were shared on line via, Facebook, You Tube and on various news sites. It is important to note that the act of Bouazizi of burning himself was not enough to ignite the revolution because it could have just happened and passed without being reported. What was important therefore was the fact that the majority of the population had to see the images being shared on Face book as well as the video being streamed on You Tube. This aspect of having the evidence of a citizen being distressed by his government to the extent of committing suicide is what angered the people of Tunisia resulting in them becoming spontaneously in solidarity with Bouazizi resulting in the ouster of Ben Ali. This epitomises the critical role ICTs played in the revolution in Tunisia. The international community also became alive to the situation in Tunisia as a result of ICTs which resulted in pressure mounting on Ben A li to reform or quit although the situation on the ground presented him with only one option of quitting.
In Egypt on the other hand Wael Ghonim a high ranking official at Google was browsing on the internet and came across a picture of a twenty eight year old named Khaled Mohammed Seed who died in controversial circumstances and appeared to be battered and bruised. The research also noted that Ghonim was so touched by this picture that he felt something had to be done to stop such brutality. It was also noted that he subsequently formed a facebook page in solidarity with the late Saeed. Thousands of people liked the page and it became the symbol of resistance to the Egyptian authorities. Notices for rallies were posted on that Facebook page and a lot of updates and images of what was transpiring in the revolution were posted on that page. The importance of Face book in this particular revolution is that it is responsible for the creation of the vital cog necessary in the motion of the revolution by creating a virtual assembly point where people could share their frustrations and update each other on the progress of the nonviolent revolution without government interference.

This flagship role that Facebook played in the revolution of Egypt prompted other several academics to dub the revolution in Egypt a Facebook revolution. This christening of the revolution as a Facebook revolution also has the effect of cementing the critical role ICTs played in the Egyptian revolution showing how this research managed to ascertain the role of ICTs in the revolution of Egypt. A cross section of the key informants interviewed also concurred with the view that ICTs were critical in the revolution in Egypt. It is however important to note that some respondents like General Waqar Khan of the Pakistan military were of the view that the role ICTs played was more of a facilitator or a catalyst. He preferred to dwell more on the internal schisms in the Egyptian body politic and how they simmered over a period of more than two decades and how it was inevitable that the people would not tolerate the repression perpetuated by Mubarak. But tellingly he admitted that ICTs created a vent for the people to be able to channel their anger and confront the system. This aspect of ICTs being the decisive factor on the revolting of the people who were perennially oppressed but could not find a way out serves to magnify the important role that ICTs played in the revolution of Egypt.
The above viewpoints have served to highlight how ICTs were decisive in the revolutions of the two countries studied and the Middle East in general. It is however also important to note how ICTs were critical in the international pressure that mounted on Tunisia and Egypt during the revolution. As already highlighted before, Ritter and Trechsel (2011) opined that “a revolution that is not reported does not take place”. What this assertion proves is that attempts to revolt in any one particular body politic are nothing if the whole world is not aware of the situation obtaining in that particular territory. In the cases of Egypt and Tunisia it is very clear that ICTs were responsible for reporting the situation obtaining in the two countries. ICTs such as satellite television, the internet, radio and so many more were responsible for beaming what was taking place in the two countries. To be more specific on the internet social media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were instrumental in spreading the news so that the international community became alive to the situation in the two countries.

This paper also sought to ascertain the nexus between ICTs and the democratisation agenda in the two countries. As far as the research was concerned it came out that grievances on the need for democratisation in these two countries were looming large and it was only a matter of time before a revolution materialises. It was noted that Tunisia was reeling under corruption and misrule from Ben Ali and his family as well as Egypt under Mubarak. What the respective presidents of these two countries managed to do for so many years was to suppress all voices of dissent. As noted in this research the Tunisian government was guilty of corruption and also lacked legitimacy from the electorate since the leadership was viewed to be ruling under a stolen mandate.

Having ascertained that the need for democratisation was part of the grievances of the Tunisian and Egyptian people what was need was to make this democratic dream materialise. The miracle that then happened in the two countries was the availability of various ICT instruments that could be used for mobilisation and not being interfered with by the state in the process authenticating the hypothetical conjecture that presupposed that ICTs were largely responsible for the revolutions that took place in Egypt and Tunisia.
The revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt occurred as a result of the two governments’ failure to appreciate the enormous power that their people wielded through ICTs. It is therefore recommended that any government in the contemporary times should have an appreciation of the technological penetration that their boundaries have to be able to anticipate any upheaval that may take place as a result of such technologies. This however does not mean to say this appreciation of the use of ICTs by the people is linked to repression but rather to change policy direction and make use of those ICTs to communicate to the people the new policies they will be demanding.

During the course of the research it came out that ICTs helped the people to topple repressive regimes like those of Egypt and Tunisia but it has to be noted that governments should appreciate the enormous potential that ICTs have as far as communicating with their people is concerned. They should therefore not view ICTs as subversive tools but rather mechanisms of opening channels of communication and feedback to avoid having to be at the receiving end of the ICT capabilities. On another hand some people are genuinely oppressed by their regimes and this discovery of the enormous power wielded by ICTs can be tapped into so that there is creation of one rallying voice for the need to reform. When the oppressive government discovers that the people have come together through the new ICTs they are normally forced to reform and offer concessions. This therefore means that the future fight for democratisation may be in the airwaves first and on the street at last as happened in Egypt and Tunisia.

The demand for democratic government is overwhelming the world over serve for a few despotic enclaves that included the countries of Egypt and Tunisia in the Middle East. ICTs however broke this hold on power by these regimes in the case of Egypt and Tunisia. It is therefore recommended that the international community at large should recognise ICTs as agents for democratisation because of their capacity to give voice to the voiceless. This however is not advocacy for chaos but rather advice to those who are oppressed to be able to share their problems and be able to confront their leadership in the virtual world where it is impossible to persecute anyone.
The research also recognised that even though democratisation was one of the core demands of the revolutions in the two countries ICTs also assisted hostile elements to penetrate the systems of these two countries and influence the people. This does not negate the fact that the regimes of the two countries were brutal but in a country that is not facing such brutality seeds of rebellion could be sown by hostile countries through ICTS and a democratically elected government may fall, not for the interest of the people but serve some foreign policy objectives of the instigator. It is therefore recommended that all governments be on guard of the type of information that their people receive via the internet. A solution would be to create a firewall on the national gateway to the internet such that some content that is genuinely aimed at compromising national security is blocked for the stability of the nation to be achieved. This may be viewed as censorship by others who advocate for free access to information but nothing beats national security.

In as much as ICTs have been lauded for the purposes of advancing the democratisation agenda in the Middle East, it has to be noted that state security practitioners who recognise the role that ICTs played in Tunisia and Egypt should be weary of their capabilities within their national frontiers. As highlighted in the preceding chapters modern ICTs have the capacity to evade monitoring by states so it is recommended that states acquire new technology necessary for monitoring the flow of information that is considered to be genuinely threatening their security. For example monitoring of communications aimed at recruiting people into joining terrorist groups and thwarting their plans can be achieved through monitoring such communications. States however should understand that they need to straddle a fine line between national security and privacy of citizens.

This paper has also been largely dominated by the analogy of fault lines that existed in the Tunisian and Egyptian body politic. ICTs were seen to have been used as a means to an end which was used to highlight and magnify the fault lines that existed in their respective body politics. It is therefore recommended that governments should be sensitive to the needs of their people to avoid these fault lines that may be economic, religious or political in nature. Addressing such contradictions in any country is useful because such innovations that are
supposed to be celebrated as the defining moments in human progress are not viewed as
some alien mechanisms designed to upset the status quo. As this research revealed the
Tunisian and Egyptian governments viewed these new innovations like social media as a
menace and even at one time shut down the internet. Had the two governments managed to
clear the contradictions in their systems they were not going to have problems with the
people mobilising one another against the government on social networks.

Having discussed the role of foreign influence in the revolutions of Egypt and Tunisia it is
recommended that contemporary governments needs to develop think tanks that monitor
information flow on the various social media networks on satellite television and on the
internet in general and create a counter narrative that is aimed at advancing the interest of
the nation under siege in the cyber space. In Tunisia and Egypt this could have been
impossible due to insurmountable evidence against the regimes but in a scenario whereby a
stable country is facing such an onslaught it is prudent to have these think tacks that are
solely responsible for creating this counter narrative.

A final recommendation that this paper proposes is the incentivising of this in the diaspora
to love their country. For instance a country can create green routes at the airport for all
returning residents such that they don’t have hustles with tax and immigration officials. By
so doing a national who is abroad would be averse to engage into posting negative
information on their country online for fear of forfeiting such privileges on their way back
home. This helps to reduce the number of people who feel short-changed by the government
and subsequently decides to vent out their frustrations online.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Journals


Policy Papers


Internet sources


Cohen, H. 2011. Social Media Definitions, [Online]. Available at:


Fisk, R., (2011). The brutal truth about Tunisia [Online] Available at:

Howe, W. 2012. An anecdotal history of the people and communities that brought about the Internet and the Web [Online]. Available at:

Huntington, S.P. 1993. The clash of civilisations [Online]. Available at:

Kravets, David. 2013. Threat Level [Online]. Available at:


Liener, B.M. et al. 2012. Brief History of the Internet [Online]. Available at:


APPENDIX 1: Interview guide used in in-depth interviews with key informants

SECTION A

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Mutamangira Humfrey and I am postgraduate student at the University of Zimbabwe in the Faculty of Social Studies’ Department of Political and Administrative Studies. I am doing my dissertation research for my Masters in International Relations. My topic is: An analysis of how Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) played a role in the Arab uprisings: The case of Egypt and Tunisia 2010-2014. The in-depth interview guide has been prepared to assess the implication and investigate the role ICTs played in the aforementioned uprisings. The interview guide has been divided into three thematic areas, which are (1) examining the nature of ICTs (2) assessing the impact of ICTs in the uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia (3) To examine and determine how ICTs can be embraced to advance democratisation

Section B: Demographic Profile

1. Profile of the Respondent:

   (i) Name
       ……………………………………………………………………………………………….

   (ii) Age:
       ………………………………………………………………………………………………

   (iii) Gender:
       ………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Profession: Ministry/ Government Dept. or Agency/ Diplomat: (please specify in the space below)
3. What do you understand by the term ICT?

2. Based on your understanding how widespread is the use of ICTS in the Arab world particularly Egypt and Tunisia?

3. Do you think the governments of these two countries had any capacity to control the use of ICTs in the face of the revolutions?

4. What do you think of the ICTs’ capacity to operate outside government control?

SECTION C: EXAMINING THE NATURE OF ICTS

5. Generally, how do you think the use of ICTs impacted on the uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia?

6. Among the various tools in ICTs which ones had a profound effect on the uprisings and how?

7. In your view, could the activism that happened in the two countries have happened without ICTs?
8. Is there a relationship between ICT capability and international pressure that mounted on Tunisia and Egypt during the uprisings?

9. Is there a relationship between ICTs and the wave of democratisation that took place in Egypt and Tunisia in particular and the Middle East in general?

10. In your view, were ICTs part of the causes of the uprisings or were merely a means to an end?

11. With respect to the uprisings in the two countries can ICTs be viewed as a blessing or a vice?

12. What mechanisms can be put in place to have ICTs as key drivers of the democratisation process?

13. What recommendations can be proffered in respect of the influence of ICTS and social mobilisation?

SECTION E: To examine and determine how ICTs can be embraced to advance democratisation