

Not As Strong As We Thought: The Puzzling Collapse of the Mubarak Regime in Egypt

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research.

ABSTRACT

After nearly thirty years in rule, the regime of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt was considered by many to be as “immovable as the pyramids” (Hamid 2011: 102). However, the collapse of this regime in 2011, following a mere eighteen days of protests stymied many scholars who began to question how such a revered ‘pharaoh’ could have fallen so abruptly. In this thesis, I try to provide an answer to this question. I hypothesise that the collapse of the Mubarak regime was facilitated by four developments, which, when combined, exposed the true hollowness of the regime’s coercive and persuasive powers. These four developments were: the declining legitimacy of the Mubarak regime; the defection of key internal and external allies from the regime; the coalescence of a broad and unified opposition; and the strategic use of social media by that opposition. Through the development of a theoretical framework and the subsequent application of that framework to the case study of Egypt, this thesis finds that all four of these developments were present and did in fact facilitate the collapse of the Mubarak regime by revealing the regime’s lack of coercive and persuasive powers.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the Arab Spring Revolutions appeared to confirm Huntington's (1991: 23) claim that Middle Eastern states would become "too wealthy and too complex for their various traditional, military and one-party systems of authoritarian rule to sustain themselves." Indeed, after nearly thirty years of assertive rule in Egypt, the strongest authoritarian regime in the Middle East, that of Hosni Mubarak, was overthrown on 11 February 2011 following just eighteen days of popular revolts (El-Ghobashy 2011). The collapse of Mubarak's regime came unexpectedly with many questioning how it could have happened so rapidly to a regime which was considered to be a resilient and cohesive machine (El-Ghobashy 2011). Many others also questioned why the collapse occurred and what factors could have brought about the monumental fall of such a revered 'pharaoh' (Bellin 2011).

Through qualitative research and typification of causal explanations present in regime transition theories, many of which were developed following the third wave of democracy in the 1970s, this thesis will seek to answer the question of why the Mubarak regime collapsed. The regime transition theories that are examined will help to provide an explanatory framework regarding how regime collapse occurs and why authoritarian regimes collapse. This framework will then be used to explain the collapse of the Mubarak regime. The background and characteristics of the Mubarak regime, including its methods of rule, will be outlined so as to provide a context to evaluate changes that occurred prior to its collapse. Then the theoretical causal framework developed in the first section of this thesis will be applied to the collapse of the Mubarak regime so as to gain an understanding of the contributing factors.

The hypothesis put forward in this thesis is that the collapse of the Mubarak regime was brought about by four key developments, which, when combined, exposed the true hollowness of the regime's coercive and persuasive power. Without either persuasive or coercive power to sustain its rule, Mubarak had little choice but to tender his resignation and allow the empire he had built over thirty years to crumble. The four developments that will be examined are the declining legitimacy of the Mubarak regime; the defection of key internal and external allies, the coalescence of a broad and unified opposition and the strategic use of social media by the opposition.

Declining regime legitimacy brought about the increased use of legitimization tactics by the Mubarak regime over an extended period. These legitimization tactics included election manipulation, the creation of enemies external to the population and regime, and hereditary leadership selection. These tactics were used by the regime as, gradually, the purpose for which the regime was originally installed disappeared. The use of legitimization tactics increased as the years passed and became increasingly blatant. This in turn led to increased discontent in the population as the regime was perceived as no longer having a legitimate right to rule. Effectively, this discontent undermined the effectiveness of the regime's persuasive power as the population was no longer willing to be swayed by regime propaganda. The declining legitimacy of the Mubarak regime was further exacerbated by poor regime performance in the areas of human rights, the economy, unemployment and law and order.

Shifts in foreign policy by major external allies also limited the Mubarak regime's ability to use persuasive power both internationally and domestically. The lack of international actors willing to intervene militarily or offer even verbal support to Mubarak once uprisings occurred limited the regime's coercive sources of power. Internally, the defection of the military, a key ally of many authoritarian regimes, severely undermined the scope and cohesion of Mubarak's coercive apparatus. The support the military tendered to the opposition shifted the power balance between the ruler and the ruled.

The collapse of the Mubarak regime was also facilitated by the coalescence of a united and broad opposition. When faced with an opposition group that represented all segments of the population in Egypt, the Mubarak regime lost the ability to manipulate the population through propaganda, was unable to adopt a policy of divide and rule and could not offer inducements or co-opt selected opposition leaders. The presence of a unified opposition group also limited Mubarak's ability to exercise violence against any segment of the population without causing further dissent amongst all of the protestors. The non-violent uprisings significantly impacted on the military's decision to defect from the regime as, without the presence of violent protests, the use of coercive power by the regime could not be justified.

The strategic use of social media by protestors was also instrumental in contributing to the collapse of the Mubarak regime. Effectively, the strategic use of social media allowed

protestors to organise uprisings, develop unified motivations and goals and learn from the uprisings which brought about the collapse of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali's regime in Tunisia. The Mubarak regime was unable to stem the flow of information and anti-regime propaganda, thereby losing control of its persuasive power. The use of social media by protestors to evade authorities hindered the ability of the Mubarak regime to successfully employ its coercive apparatus.

Through the application of the theoretical framework developed in this thesis to the case of Egypt, this thesis will find that Mubarak's regime had long been experiencing a decline in its legitimacy. Furthermore, the Mubarak regime had lost extensive external legitimacy prior to the uprisings as a result of its involvement in extraordinary rendition and illegal torture of terrorist suspects. However, this thesis will also find that the developments of military defection, the formation of a unified and broad opposition and the strategic use of social media by the opposition emerged immediately prior to the collapse of the regime. As such, all four developments outlined in the theoretical framework will be argued to have been present in the case of Egypt and this thesis will find that, when these four development combined, Mubarak's lack of persuasive and coercive power was exposed therefore significantly contributing to the collapse of his regime.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Ontological and Epistemological Approach

The paradigm of post-positivism is employed in this thesis with an ontological approach of critical realism, which considers the nature of reality to be real but only imperfectly apprehendable, and an epistemological approach of modified objectivism, in which objectivity remains the "regulatory ideal" and findings of research are always subject to falsification (Guba & Lincoln 1994: 110). The core goal of critical realism is to discover both the observable and non-observable mechanisms of events (Krauss 2005: 762). As such, by adopting an ontological approach of critical realism, the author has been able to explain a particular social phenomenon, that of regime collapse, by revealing the possible causal mechanisms behind the phenomenon (Dey 1993). Such causal mechanisms are identified in critical realism through a process of theoretical reasoning and experimentation (Krauss 2005: 762).

Through such processes, critical realism allows social scientists to take an epistemological approach of modified objectivism by acknowledging the “inherent complexity that exists in the world” and that any argument put forward as to how causal mechanisms operate are therefore “real but fallible” (Krauss 2005: 762). This is especially relevant in the case of regime collapse. Whilst the author has attempted to consider all causal explanations for the regime collapse in Egypt, no one theory can ever be said to provide the absolute picture of what occurred.

In considering the collapse of the Mubarak regime, the process outlined above has been followed and the use of well-developed regime transition theories have informed the author of the causal mechanisms of regime collapse and provided the basis for solid theoretical reasoning. The use of a case study has allowed the author to experiment with the theoretical reasoning and assess its validity.

Methodology

The methodology used for this thesis has been founded primarily on qualitative analysis. This methodology was chosen as it allows for the investigation of identified social phenomenon and seeks to provide deeper understandings than can be obtained solely through quantitative data (Silverman 2001). As Silverman (2001) notes, “...there are areas of social reality which statistics cannot measure”; regime collapse is one of these areas. By using qualitative analysis, the author has been able to categorise and organise the “subtleties of... [a] social phenomenon in a meaningful way” (Krauss 2005: 766). Whilst some statistical analysis has been utilised, especially when considering the economic performance of regimes, many of the factors linked with regime collapse could not be measured nor understood in terms of quantitative data alone.

The rationale of using a single case study for this thesis was to enable the author to comprehensively consider and apply a substantial number of contextual factors and causal explanations in a relatively brief space. The use of a single case study not only provides conceptual validity to the causal explanations identified in the theoretical causal framework but also allows the analysis of complex and interconnected causalities (George & Bennet 2005). The use of case studies is imperative in social science as it does not, and cannot provide scholars with “hard theories” (Flyvbjerg 2006). Rather, knowledge gained in social sciences is context-dependent and the exploration of theories through case studies is therefore crucial (Flyvbjerg 2006).

Data collection and analysis

The author initially researched academic literature, which had a core focus on regime transition theory, and subsequently typified the general themes, or causal explanations, present in the literature. Following this, the author categorised these causal explanations into primary or secondary factors. As an example, regime performance was categorised as a secondary factor as it was considered to contribute toward the presence of declining regime legitimacy, a primary factor. The names assigned to each of the causal explanations directly reflected the themes present in the literature. Qualitative data was also sourced from secondary resources such as newspaper articles, social media sites and online blogs for the Egyptian case study. The author then performed thematic content analysis of these sources so as to identify common themes relevant to both the primary and secondary causal explanations identified in the regime transition literature. Discourse analysis was also employed by the author when assessing online blogs and the speeches made by Mubarak during the uprisings and data-analysis of information available through independent organisations such as the World Bank and Freedom House was also utilised.

It is noted that information provided by primary resources, such as that which could be obtained through interviews with those involved in the regime collapse in Egypt, would have enriched the case study section of this paper and provided noteworthy evidence to assess the plausibility of the theoretical causal framework developed. However, due to budgetary and time constraints, such an approach was not possible.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many types of authoritarian regime change which lend themselves to academic observation (Linz 1990: 143). For analytical purposes Linz (1990) categorised regime changes into three processes, namely *reforma*, *ruptforma* and *ruptura*. As Huntington (1991: 14) notes, in all three of the regime paths outlined by Linz, groups that are both in power and out of power play a role in the regime change. However, the usefulness of the three paths is that they distinguish between how much of a role is played by each group and, to what extent each group is responsible for the regime change (Huntington 1991: 114).

Reforma is used to label regime changes in which the ruling elites instigate democratic reforms without doing so to alleviate any internal dissent or opposition (Linz 1990;

Huntington 1991: 114). In this path, the regime itself is the most important actor as it plays a “decisive role” in ending authoritarian practices and bringing about democratic reforms (Huntington 1991: 124). In contrast, *ruptforma* occurs as a result of joint action by both opposition groups and the regime (Linz 1990; Huntington 1991: 114). As such, those in power and out of power are seen to play a fifty-fifty role in bringing about regime changes. *Ruptforma* could occur as a result of protests or uprisings which the ruling elites respond to effectively or as a result of the regime co-opting opposition parties (Linz 1990). For example, reforms could be offered in the form of greater individual freedoms and, when lived up to by the regime, cause a change to authoritarian practices and allow for some democratic practices to surface (Linz 1990).

The final path is that of *ruptura* which occurs when an authoritarian regime collapses from the actions of opposition groups (Linz 1990; Huntington 1991: 114). In this path, groups that do not hold power play the most significant role as a regime can only take this path in conditions of revolution and mass protests (Linz 1990: 152). There are three phases in the *ruptura* process: the struggle to produce the fall of the regime, the fall of the regime and the struggle after the fall (Huntington 1991: 142). Huntington (1991: 144) argues that a triggering event must occur to “crystallize the disaffection” of those out of power as only opposition groups that are united have the ability to wear down the regime and shift the balance of power. The collapse of the Mubarak regime in Egypt clearly falls within this concept of *ruptura* as opposition groups instigated uprisings and were apathetic toward the proposed concessions and reforms offered by Mubarak (El-Ghobashy 2011).

As such, for the purpose of this thesis, only the path of *ruptura* will be considered. As noted by Linz (1990: 149) regime *ruptura* occurs as a result of a “constellation of social and political forces...the nature of the authoritarian regime...and, to some extent, the international context”. The literature on authoritarian regime collapse is complex and even from a brief overview it quickly becomes apparent that it is a multi-faceted process which involves shifts in areas of politics, the economy and society. In offering variables that may cause regime collapse, the literature focuses on both structural and non-structural factors in addition to factors that are exogenous and endogenous to the regime and the state in which the regime operates. Exogenous factors are argued to be equally as important as endogenous factors when considering regime collapse. Indeed, as noted by Kesselman (1973: 149), the picture of regime collapse is “less than complete if one treats [regimes]...

as isolated and autonomous". As such, any theory that accounts for regime collapse must also account for variables such as external political influence, foreign military assistance, the power of dependency relationships and the manipulative power of trade relationships (Kesselman 1973: 149).

Structural factors are observable factors which include the institutions and frameworks in which the regime operates and includes both domestic structures, such as economic policy, and international structures, such as the United Nations, the World Bank and multinational corporations (Kesselman 1973). Structural factors are significant as they can limit the ability of regimes to deal with uprisings and manage crises in addition to actually being causative variables of regime collapse themselves (Mahoney & Snyder 1999). Non-structural factors are non-observable factors which result from the choices and strategies of key actors involved in the regime collapse (Mahoney & Snyder 1999). Such factors include the decisions made by the opposition, by protestors and even those decisions made by regime leaders and international actors (Mahoney & Snyder 1999).

Mahoney and Snyder's (1999) work is of imperative importance when considering both the structural and non-structural causative variables of regime collapse. These authors argue that, in order to achieve a truly integrative theory, both structural and non-structural variables must be accounted for. Indeed, Mahoney and Snyder (1999) critique the work of many prominent theorists in the field of regime change and argue that they place excessive emphasis on either structural or non-structural variables when both should be accounted for. Mahoney and Snyder (1999: 9) also highlight in their work that most of the causative variables enunciated in the literature on regime collapse can be categorised into one of three core themes or causal explanations. These causal explanations are declining regime legitimacy, the defection of international key allies and the military, and the coalescence of a broad and unified opposition (Mahoney & Snyder 1999). Recently, however, a fourth causal explanation has emerged in the academic literature; the strategic use of social media by the opposition to bring about the collapse of authoritarian regimes (Scott 2012; Shirky 2011). Many scholars have identified that the influential power of social media is not limited to the social realm and that its use has broader implications for politics and political structures including the loss of power by regimes (Scott 2012). It is these four causal explanations that will be used to develop a theoretical causal framework with which to assess the collapse of the Mubarak regime.

Before considering each of these four causal explanations, however, it is imperative to consider the fundamental role that power plays in the collapse of authoritarian regimes as, without power, regimes cannot exist (Goodwin 2007: 323). Essentially, it is only when regimes lose power that their downfall can occur (Levitsky & Way 2010: 57; Bellin 2004: 129). Two forms of power have been identified in academic literature, persuasive and coercive, and all regimes, democratic or authoritarian, rely on a combination of these two types of power to retain control (Sedgwick 2010: 252). Persuasive power, also referred to as soft power, is the use of incentives, diplomacy, propaganda or co-optation by a regime to influence and manipulate individuals into acquiescing to its rule (Goodwin 2007: 328). Regimes utilise persuasive power to achieve “the deference and cooperation” of the population and to help establish regime legitimacy in the minds of the population (Goodwin 2007: 328). Coercive power, or hard power, is the ability of a regime to repress and intimidate potential opponents, both internal and external to the regime, through the use of threats and real violence (Levitsky & Way 2010: 57). Coercive power is measured utilising two dimensions: scope and cohesion (Levitsky & Way 2010: 58). Scope refers to the size of a regime’s coercive apparatus, which incorporates all of its security sectors, and cohesion refers to the level of compliance from those within the coercive apparatus to orders issued by the regime (Levitsky & Way 2010: 59). Declines in either of these dimensions can significantly hinder a regime’s ability to employ coercive power (Levitsky & Way 2010: 59).

If a regime’s ability to use coercive power is removed, it is then forced to rely solely on its persuasive power (Levitsky & Way 2010: 59). Reliance on persuasive powers alone, especially during times of regime instability, requires exceptional political talents and oratory skills (Huntington 1968: 345). However, such political talents are rare (Huntington 1986: 345). Therefore, a regime’s sole reliance on persuasive power is unlikely to guarantee long term regime stability or rule as dissidents seeking power are likely to emerge (Levitsky & Way 2010: 60). Similarly, declines in a regime’s persuasive power, which can occur through the population’s awareness of the empty claims on which the regime bases its power, compels regimes to rely solely on their coercive power (Schlumberger 2007: 9). However, as Schlumberger (2007: 9) notes, coercive power does not, by itself, enable regimes to maintain power nor does it ensure regime stability. It will be shown in the discussion that follows that each of the four causal explanations outlined in the regime

transition literature attribute to a regime's loss of either coercive or persuasive power thereby ushering in the collapse of the regime.

Declining Regime Legitimacy

Regimes utilise specific strategies to maintain their power; however, it is these same strategies that may cause a decline in regime legitimacy and, ultimately, cause a loss of persuasive power (Schlumberger 2007: 12). By using illicit tactics, such as election rigging, over substantial periods of time to maintain power, the populations ruled by authoritarian regimes become increasingly aware of the illegitimacy of the regime's claim to power (Schlumberger 2007). The initial reasons for supporting the regime often fade over time and a regime's increasing reliance on illicit legitimization tactics to convince its population of its right to rule causes discontent in the population (Huntington 1991: 55). Essentially, the population is no longer persuaded by the regime's claims to legitimately exercise power.

This is not to say that authoritarian regimes do not use illicit legitimization tactics from the outset. Indeed, many authoritarian regimes employ illicit legitimization tactics from the beginning of their rule as even the harshest authoritarian regimes cannot rely solely on coercive forms of power to govern (Schlumberger 2007: 3). As Sedgewick (2010: 265) argues, a "completely coercive political system is unthinkable". Thus, legitimization tactics are used by the regime to persuade the population to follow its rule. However, it is the increased use of illicit legitimization tactics when valid sources of legitimacy begin to wane that begins to foster and slowly build discontent in the population (Schlumberger 2007). In short, the regime is no longer perceived by the population to be necessary or appropriate and the regime's claim to rule is undermined (Dix 1982: 561).

When confronted with declining regime legitimacy and increasing population discontent at the use of illicit legitimization tactics, authoritarian rulers usually respond with an increased use of coercive power, most notably with more repression and violence in an attempt to preserve power (Huntington 1991: 55). This, in turn, can lead to further dissatisfaction with the regime, increasing perceptions of illegitimacy, uprisings and, ultimately, regime collapse (Huntington 1991: 55). Regime illegitimacy is therefore considered to be the "single most important lever" in regime collapse as, when the levers of persuasion become weak or disappear, regimes become reliant on coercive forms of power (Huntington 1991: 150). It is therefore imperative to consider the role of regime illegitimacy when developing a theoretical causal framework with which to assess the collapse of the Mubarak regime.

There are three main strategies, or tactics, that authoritarian regimes utilise to retain power and increase their legitimacy: the use of periodic elections; the creation of enemies external to the regime and population; and hereditary leadership selection (Schedler 2002). Authoritarian regimes do not hold periodic elections for the purpose of democratising their nations nor do they hold elections for the purpose of ensuring leaders are accountable to their populations (Schedler 2002; Geddes 2005). Rather, elections are used as a tool for gaining legitimacy, for showing a "...friendlier face while ensuring that the basic contours of the regime remain unchanged" (Brown 2003: 44). Huntington (1991: 47) asserts that many authoritarian regimes are compelled to present this "friendly face" and demonstrate their commitment to democratic structures and rhetoric in order to avoid being confronted by their own populations or international actors. Authoritarian regimes manipulate elections at four levels: during voter registration, electoral campaigning, election-day procedures, or during the final vote count and tabulation (Calingaert 2006). The manipulation of elections can however, lead to significant declines in regime legitimacy as, when election fraud and manipulation are exposed, the legitimacy of a regime is eroded both internally and in the international arena (Calingaert 2006: 139; Dix 1982: 562). The illegitimacy of the regime's claim to power therefore becomes that much more patent and the regime loses its ability to effectively persuade its population that it has a legitimate right to rule (Dix 1982: 562).

Authoritarian regimes also try to shore up their legitimacy through the creation of an "external other" (Huntington 1991: 46). Through this tactic, regimes can gain efficacy by claiming that an enemy, external to the regime, presents a threat to the national aspirations of the people (Huntington 1991: 460). Some regimes have appealed to their populations on the basis of nationalist or ideological grounds in order to obtain legitimacy (Huntington 1991), whilst others have declared states of emergency for substantial periods of time as a way to obtain legitimacy based on an external other (Goldstone 2011: 9). Regimes have also founded external others in religious rhetoric as a way to justify their use of coercive power (Sedgewick 2010: 257). Regimes utilise persuasive power, such as propaganda, in such contexts to convince their populations that coercive power is necessary to uphold the public morality of the state (Sedgewick 2010: 257). A key example of this could be a regime labelling an opposition group as radical, violent or fanatical thereby justifying the regime's repression of such a group on the basis of it posing a threat to the population. Sedgewick (2010: 257) does note, however, that religious legitimacy can only be utilised occasionally by authoritarian regimes as it quickly becomes apparent to

populations that religion is being used as a tool for justifying authoritarian rule. This can ultimately lead to increasing discontent (Goldstone 2011: 9).

A third strategy utilised by authoritarian regimes to maintain regime legitimacy is hereditary leadership selection (Brownlee 2007). Hereditary leadership selection occurs when an authoritarian ruler hand-picks her/his successor, usually her/his eldest son, who is then groomed to take over the reins of power in the near future (Stacher 2011). Brownlee (2007) argues that hereditary succession is the preferred option for regime continuity as it ensures the continued status of not only familial relatives but also extra-familial elites within the ruling party. However, hereditary succession strategies are a “particularly difficult challenge” confronting authoritarian regimes (Linz 1990: 146). For hereditary succession to be effective the core groups within the ruling elite must support the succession and, when such groups do not, regime legitimacy can suffer considerably and opposition groups can be bolstered by regime dissidents (Stacher 2011).

Despite the tactics outlined above, regime legitimacy has also been found to naturally decline over time due to unrealised promises and the resultant increasing frustrations of the population (Huntington 1991: 48). Declines in regime legitimacy have also been found to occur when a regime actually fulfils its promises as, in a sense, it loses its purpose and the population has reduced reasons to continue its support of the regime (Huntington 1991: 55). Huntington (1991: 50) also asserts that regime legitimacy and ruler legitimacy are intrinsically linked. As such, a decline in regime legitimacy must also mean a decline in the perceived legitimacy of the regime leader. It is important to note though that regime collapse cannot be induced until the perceived legitimacy of the regime and its ruler are so damaged that the population consider it to be irredeemable (Goldstone 2011: 8). In many authoritarian regimes, especially in Egypt, the ruler is considered to be the epitome of the regime and therefore nothing less than a complete destruction of both the regime and the ruler would have been accepted by the population (Goldstone 2011). Essentially, nothing less than regime *ruptura* will do when populations become aware of the sheer illegitimacy of an authoritarian regime.

Declines in regime legitimacy have also been argued to be intrinsically linked to regime performance as many of the coercive apparatuses and regime legitimisation strategies are dependent on effective regime performance (Bellin 2004). Regime performance

encompasses the state's economy, the presence of law and order in the state, the regime's ability to maintain public order and the regime's performance in areas such as human rights (Linz 1990: 146; Dix 1982: 561; Huntington 1991: 51). Unlike regimes that perform well, regimes that perform poorly are unable to translate their performance into credibility or legitimacy (Linz 1990: 146). Poor regime performance results in increases in the discontent of the population, subsequent increases in the forming of opposition groups and a reduction in the effectiveness of the regime's ability to employ persuasive power tactics (Dix 1982: 559; Huntington 1991: 55; Linz 1990: 146).

Poor regime performance is also measured through economic indicators, including a state's year-to-year gross domestic product (GDP) growth, per capita income, the percentage of the population living in cities and population density (Epstein et al 2006: 557). Economic crises and decline threaten the survival of all forms of government, whether democratic or authoritarian (Geddes 1999: 135). When plunged into poverty, populations tend to assign blame to the regime in power and are more likely to demand change (Geddes 1999: 138). As Gouveritch (1992: 9) argues, if "good times slake the propensity to contest and challenge" then times of scarcity invigorate and inspire the masses to rise up and question regimes. Declines in a state's economic climate lead to regime instability which is primarily caused by the gap between the expectations of the population and the regime's ability to satisfy such expectations (Linz 1990: 147; Dix 1982: 560). Dix (1982: 560) argues that it is this "intolerable" gap which results in revolutions and subsequent collapses of regimes. Furthermore, poor economic performance can also directly impact on a regime's ability to employ persuasive power tactics (Dix 1982). In periods of poor economic performance, broad groups of regime elites can no longer be provided with monetary rewards for their loyalty and, as a result, a regime can expect to experience some regime narrowing caused by defections. Essentially, when faced with economic decline, the regime may have to cut back on the inducements it offers and the persuasive power tactics it employs (Dix 1982).

Defection of international allies and the military

The legitimacy of authoritarian regimes is also validated, to an extent, through international structures, such as the provision of external aid and the development of alliances with other states (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 376). Authoritarian regimes are required to seek a higher level of external legitimacy than Western nations as, to date, there has been no Western polity which stands as a "legitimate example" for authoritarianism (Linz 1990: 147). As such authoritarian regimes learn to speak a "democracy language" and use "donor

talk”, both of which are forms of persuasive power, in order to gain some semblance of external legitimacy (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 376).

The decline in a regime’s external legitimacy can occur as a result of a decline in internal legitimacy brought about by the actions of the regime (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 376; El-Ghazaly et al 2011). Abuses of human rights, corruption and election rigging have all been argued to cause significant declines in a regime’s perceived legitimacy in the international arena which, in turn, undermines the effectiveness of a regime’s use of persuasive power (El-Ghazaly et al 2011). Such declines in external legitimacy can also lead to changes in the foreign policies of external actors and allies (Dix 1982: 569). Changes in foreign policies undoubtedly play a role in regime collapse in two ways: through boosting the anti-regime and possible democratic spirit of protestors and through limiting the choices available to the regime (Huntington 1991: 95; Lee 2009: 646).

Changes can include the withholding of foreign aid, support for anti-regime protestors and the provision of financial support or weaponry to the opposition (Lee 2009: 646). The regime can also be ostracised by the international community, which can include suspension of diplomatic relations, expulsion from international organizations and non-recognition (Lee 2009: 646). Essentially, foreign policy changes can hinder a regime’s survival as such changes can cause a shift in the cost-benefit scenarios that occur internal to the regime (Geddes 1999: 130). International pressure and foreign policy shifts can “turn the tide” in the favour of disenchanted protestors as Western powers can either “refuse to step in” to defend the authoritarian regime or can “constrain [the regime] from using maximum force to defend itself” against protestors. (Goldstone 2011: 8). In addition to constraining the choices of regime leaders, external actors can also actively promote human rights and democracy by offering incentives to those who are willing to open up their societies and using sanctions and economic pressures on others (Huntington 1991: 90).

Interestingly, during the third wave of democracy in the 1970s, the US altered prominent aspects of its foreign policy agenda. This altered agenda was evidenced in speeches and statements made by US Presidents in which it was stated that human rights would be placed back on “the world agenda” (Huntington 1991: 92). In this way, changes in foreign policies cannot be considered to be solely enacted for the purpose of causing regime

illegitimacy. Indeed, foreign policy shifts can also occur as a result of the vested interests of external actors (Huntington 1991: 92). For example, if viewed through a Fukuyama-inspired lens, Western powers may see a shift from supporting an authoritarian regime as an opportunity to bring about the “end of history” (Fukuyama 1992). Indeed, the structural constraints imposed by Western powers on authoritarian regimes may be a result of a regime’s failure to follow a path of “unilinear movement” toward capitalist democracy (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004).

Despite some foreign policy changes occurring when no decline in regime legitimacy has occurred, it can still be argued that such changes undermine the coercive power of authoritarian regimes (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004). By inducing a regime to have better respect for human rights or to progress towards actual democratic principles, the regime is therefore limited in its ability to use coercive power without delegitimising itself on an international level (Lee 2009). It should be noted though that foreign policy changes can only play a role in regime collapse if the external actor who makes such changes is crucial to or has some form of leverage over the regime (Lee 2009). Indeed, some scholars have identified that the withdrawal of support, most notably of the US, can only prove to be damaging when the US had previously been a significant source of support for the regime in the first instance (Dix 1982).

The defection of regime allies and loss of support is not limited to external international actors though. The defection of the military is also pivotal to any theoretical causal framework for regime collapse as it can quite literally obliterate the regime’s ability to use coercive power (Dix 1982; Geddes 1999; Huntington 1991). Military defection from authoritarian regimes is argued to be largely based on the perceived self-interests of military officers (Dix 1982: 563). The interests of military officers are primarily founded on a desire for the survival and efficacy of the military as a whole and additionally based on concerns relating to officers’ assessments of how many other officers will defect or remain loyal to a regime (Geddes 1999: 126). Ultimately, in times of regime instability, the worst outcome for the military is considered to be civil war as armed forces often end up fighting one another which is considered to be counter-productive for military survival (Geddes 1999: 126). The military will therefore avoid situations in which the likely end result will be civil war (Geddes 1999: 126).

The perceived self-interests of officers can also influence the willingness of the military, or *ultima ratio regum*, to use their weapons on behalf of the regime (Huntington 1991: 198). By calling on the military to use violence against its own population, the regime increasingly isolates the military and begins to disintegrate its image as the embodiment of the national interest (Dix 1982: 565). This is not usually a position the military is comfortable with and can lead to significant resentment toward the regime and its rule (Dix 1982: 565). Essentially, if a military defects from an authoritarian regime, the ability of the regime to therefore use coercive power is severely limited. The scope of the regime's coercive power is diminished and, based on the *ultima ratio regum* of the military, the cohesion of the regime's coercive power becomes non-existent. A good proxy measure for the withdrawal of the military from a regime is any refusal by the armed forces to stop protestors (Lee 2009). This measure is also particularly relevant if the authoritarian regime clearly expressed a preference for the military to use force against protestors (Lee 2009).

Unified and broad opposition

A further "decisive factor" in regime collapse is the formation of a united and broad opposition with shared motivations and goals (Ulfeder 2005; Dix 1982: 566). There is an abundance of literature outlining that regime collapse is most likely to occur when opposition groups encompass a "broad-based section of the population", are composed of "average men and women, students and workers" and include all ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups (Goldstone 2011: 8; Linz 1990: 152). Essentially, unified opposition groups turn "into a greater whole which identifies itself as 'the people'" and can exert strong pressures on a regime (Ulfeder 2005: 312). The more representative the opposition group is of the entire population, the less likely any segment of that population will be to tolerate violence used against the opposition group (Huntington 1991: 200). This ultimately undermines the effectiveness of any regime propaganda or inducements aimed at any section of the population, restricts the regime's ability to employ a policy of divide and rule, and impedes the regime's persuasive power (Ulfeder 2005: 312). However, one must look to historical factors, namely the opposition present during the formation of the regime, when considering the impact a broad opposition would have on regime collapse (Smith 2005). If a regime begins its rule with little to no opposition present it is unlikely to build strong coalitions or invest in party institutions as it would if there were strong opposition (Smith 2005: 430). As such, when faced with broad uprisings which it has not encountered before, the regime is somewhat fragile and cannot effectively respond.

A central tactic of those wishing to bring about regime collapse is the mass rally or demonstration which provides an opportunity for the opposition to “focus discontent...test the breadth of its support and...generate publicity”. However, there is little dissent in the literature regarding the necessity for such demonstrations to be non-violent in order to bring about regime collapse (Huntington 1991: 150; Dix 1982; Ulfeder 2005). This necessity is based on the notion that the use of non-violent protests, in comparison to violent protests, helps the opposition gain support from the military (Huntington 1991: 150). As Huntington (1991: 150) states, “...soldiers do not tend to be sympathetic to people who have been hurling Molotov cocktails at them”.

Non-violent protests have also been argued to trigger the defection of the military from regimes and bolster the inspirations of the opposition (Huntington 1991:204; Ulfeder 2005). When faced with peaceful uprisings, authoritarian regimes can choose to respond in either a violent or non-violent manner (Ulfeder 2005). If a regime chooses to respond violently (i.e. use its coercive apparatus) the military may be ordered to use force against their own population; however, as noted above their willingness to do so is not guaranteed (Ulfeder 2005). Research has demonstrated a correlation between the ability of the military to identify with the individuals involved in peaceful uprisings, on either a social or ethnic level, and the military’s willingness to use their weapons when ordered to do so (Huntington 1991: 198). The more representative of society those involved in non-violent mass demonstrations are the less likely that the military will be to use force against them (Huntington 1991: 198). In this way, non-violent protests carried out by a unified and broad opposition can also be seen to bring about substantial losses to the regime’s ability to use coercive power as the scope and cohesion of the regime’s coercive apparatus can be fragmented.

Strategic use of Social Media by the Opposition

Authoritarian regimes are experts in what has been referred to as “technocratic electronic dictatorship” (Huntington 1991: 11). Authoritarian rule is often legitimated through the use of manipulated media and information, with many regimes in the 21st century assigning the task of information control and propaganda dispersion to specific ministries within the regime (Kubba 2000: 88). However, social media has become a proverbial double edged sword for regimes as they are not the only ones using it strategically (Haass 2011: 115). The rise of mass communication and social media has allowed populations under authoritarian rule to communicate with the outside world, engage with different cultures and ideas and

be exposed to values not akin to their own (Kubba 2000: 88). Populations can effectively reshape their opinions and learn about alternative forms of government (Kubba 2000). Such access to information inhibits the influence that pro-regime propaganda can have on a population (Kubba 2000).

However, social media plays a much greater role in the collapse of regimes than that of mere access to information. For protestors, the strategic use of social media has allowed for an effective method of communication to organise demonstrations and evade authorities thereby limiting the extent to which regimes can actually use violence or exercise their coercive powers (Khoury 2011). Choudhary et al (2012) argue that social media can also allow anti-regime movements to gain “critical mass”. In this way, social media can aid the literal coalescing of a broad opposition against an authoritarian regime and can provide a “virtual sounding board for resonating opinions...[and] views” (Scott 2012: 1). Anti-regime sentiments can be vented on social media sites thereby undermining regime legitimacy and causing the regime to lose the effectiveness of its persuasive power (Haass 2011: 116).

Social media has also been argued to further increase the likelihood of emulation effects (Kubba 2000). Emulation effects, which are also referred to in the literature as snowballing, the contagion effect and the domino effect, occur when the collapse of a regime in one nation inspires the uprisings in another nation (Almond et al 1973: 628; Ward et al 1996: 5). During the third wave of democracy in the 1970s, emulation effects performed two very important functions (Huntington 1991: 100). Firstly, the collapse of a regime in one nation illustrated to those disenchanted groups in other nations that authoritarian regimes could actually be brought to an end (Huntington 1991: 101). Essentially, emulation effects showed populations “that it could be done” (Huntington 1991: 101). Secondly, emulation effects showed “how it could be done”; individuals in other nations had an example to follow, could imitate the techniques of previous demonstrators and be aware of possible dangers that needed to be avoided (Huntington 1991: 101; Kitschelt 1992: 1033). Social media essentially increases the chance of emulation effects occurring as populations have greater access to finding out that regime collapse can occur and also be exposed to the tactics of successful demonstrators. In this way, social media exposes the illegitimacy of not just one, but all authoritarian regimes and undermines the chances of the regime’s exercise of persuasive power being successful.

Social media has one further impact on regime collapse. Social media has allowed societies, which once appeared closed to the Western world, to be opened (Kuba 2000: 88). As Shirky (2011) argues, the secrets of closed societies become public truths through the use of social media. In effect, the perceptions, grievances and demands of protestors can be made apparent to Western nations who can, in turn, express their sympathy and support. Extensive coverage of the illegitimacy of an authoritarian regime, the associated protests and subsequent regime crackdowns and use of coercive power may also incite the populations of Western nations to call on their governments for some form of intervention (Shirky 2011). In short, if protests are well publicised, Western powers are unable to declare ignorance. Such publicity could also result in international pressure being placed on the regime and lead to detrimental changes in foreign policies, such as loss of international aid.

Theoretical causal framework

From the above literature review, the theoretical causal framework that unfolds is that declines in regime legitimacy can be brought about through the same strategies used to gain legitimacy and can also occur as a result of poor regime performance. Such declines limit the effectiveness of a regime's persuasive power and regimes are more likely to employ increasingly coercive and repressive forms of power in an attempt to regain control. The defection of international allies was also argued to occur as a result of internal declines in legitimacy and through actions of the regime which included human rights abuses and election manipulation. However, international allies sometimes change their stances toward authoritarian regimes as a result of vested interests or in an effort to further the cause of capitalist democracy. Regardless of the cause of the changes in foreign policy, it was argued that such shifts limit the persuasive power of regimes due to a loss of external legitimacy and can also result in the regime being unable to broaden the scope of its coercive apparatus through intervention by pro-regime international actors when uprisings occur.

Military defection was shown to be based on the military officers' perceived self-interests and their willingness to utilise force against their own population when ordered to do so by the regime. Such defection significantly reduces the scope of the regime's coercive apparatus. The coalescing of a broad and unified opposition that protests peacefully was also shown to assist in the defection of the military, thereby undermining both the scope

and cohesion of the regime's coercive apparatus. Additionally, a broad and unified opposition inhibits the regime's use of persuasive power as the regime is unable to offer inducements or reforms that will satisfy everyone.

The strategic use of social media was also said to allow protestors to avoid the regime's use of coercive power by allowing effective communication as to where regime authorities are. Social media also allows protestors to organise demonstrations, gain knowledge in relation to alternative forms of government, gain knowledge about prior regime collapses and provides an open forum in which to voice opinions. Effectively, the use of social media in these ways inhibits the success of pro-regime propaganda and undermines the regime's persuasive powers. Social media can also expose the true illegitimacy of authoritarian regimes both internally and in the international arena.

EGYPT: THE RISE OF THE LAST PHARAOH

The Mubarak regime: A Brief Background

Hosni Mubarak commenced his career as a professional soldier (Arafat 2009: 24). He was trained in the Air Force and received commendations for his actions in the 1973 war with Israel (Arafat 2009: 24). In 1975, he was appointed as Vice President by Anwar al-Sadat, then President of Egypt, at the age of forty-seven (Arafat 2009: 24). During his vice presidency, Mubarak built a reputation as a man devoid of any presidential aspirations and avoided power politics whenever possible (Arafat 2009: 24). On 14 October 1981, Hosni Mubarak ascended to power in the wake of Anwar al-Sadat's assassination. To a large extent, apart from declaring a state of emergency upon his appointment, Mubarak adopted his predecessor's model and initially refrained from discarding any members of the cabinet he had inherited (Stacher 2012: 5; Arafat 2009: 25).

Mubarak's first four years in power largely revolved around him slowly revealing both his domestic and foreign policy changes which included the expulsion of corrupt ministers, the recruitment of young, reform-minded technocrats and he began to increase government spending on subsidised housing and medicine (Arafat 2009: 25). He also began to replace the cabinet with his sycophants and cronies, most of whom had no political experience, and replaced the Prime Minister four times in five years (Arafat 2009: 28). However, Mubarak truly solidified his rule in the 1987 elections with a reported 97% of the Egyptian vote (*New York Times* 1 February 2011).

Mubarak subsequently began to increase spending on the regime's coercive apparatus and gave the police force the right to arrest and detain individuals without charge for suspected dissent or regime criticism (Brownlee 2012). Mubarak's own people began to fear the ubiquitous presence of the police as brutal beatings and torture were not uncommon nor were deaths in custody (Brownlee 2012). The regime's coercive apparatus was sturdy with the military backing the regime and the police force and Mubarak's own thugs keeping the population, dissenters and political critics in check (Brownlee 2012). Mubarak's coercive apparatus was not used solely on the population though. In 2005, the regime disqualified 1,700 judges from overseeing the elections (Collombier 2012: 17). Judges were told to sign off on the rigging of the election and were also forced, through threats of violence, to remain silent about the attacks that occurred on voters (Collombier 2012: 17). Notably over 165 assaults were perpetrated against judges by Mubarak's thugs during the 2005 election period with only ten of these assaults investigated at a later date (Collombier 2012: 17). The military was also restored by Mubarak to a privileged place in Egyptian society, which it had lost during the reign of Sadat, received increasing salaries and benefits and was included in development projects to boost its involvement in the economic sectors of the state (Brownlee 2012).

Mubarak's development of a strong persuasive apparatus also followed and he quickly became adept at controlling the media and expanding his "plethora of TV mouth pieces" to broadcast pro-regime propaganda (Darwish 2011). The government bought stock of three of the major newspapers in Egypt and was solely responsible for appointing the editors-in-chief (*Freedom House* 2012). By 1999, Mubarak had established a Ministry of Communication of Information which controlled and managed the use of the internet in Egypt and the government also had a strong grip on internet service providers (*Freedom House* 2012).

Mubarak also quickly began to violate the long-held unspoken agreement between the regime and its population for political liberalisation, which had first been initiated by Sadat in the mid-1970s, by imposing considerable limits on opposition political parties (Shehata 2011: 29). During the 1990s, Mubarak set his sights on the supposed Islamic militant opposition by waging political war against the Muslim Brotherhood and forcing them underground (Shehata 2011: 30). By 2006, Mubarak had declared that he would hold the

presidency for life and by the 2010 elections, all opposition groups within Egypt, not just the Muslim Brotherhood, were effectively denied representation in parliament due to the extent of election manipulation (Shehata 2011: 29). It is within this context that the uprisings occurred.

The Uprisings

On 25 January 2011, the Egyptian people had finally had enough. Protestors filled the streets of Cairo voicing their objections to the corrupt and despotic thirty-year regime of Mubarak (*Freedom House* 2011). Shortly afterwards, in an attempt to regain control and cut all communications between protestors and sympathisers, Mubarak blocked all internet access and cut all mobile phone services for six days in “an unprecedented display of censorship” (Darwish 2011). Several days later, with little decrease in the number of protesters, Mubarak announced the appointment of Omar Suleiman as Vice President and dismissed his entire Cabinet. However, protestors continued to call for Mubarak’s resignation.

On 1 February 2011, Mubarak announced in a televised speech that he would not run in the elections scheduled in September (Darwish 2011). Mubarak also stated that it was not in “[his] nature to betray the trust or give up [his] responsibilities and duties” and that he would “work in the remaining months of [his] term to ensure a peaceful transfer of power” (Darwish 2011). Following Mubarak’s lacklustre speech, protestors continued to chant “*Irhal, irhal*”, “Go, go” signalling their non-acceptance of his offered concessions (Darwish 2011). It should have become obvious to the Mubarak regime at this point that half-hearted attempts at reform were not going to suffice (Darwish 2011).

On 10 February 2011, Mubarak announced that he would delegate all of his power to Vice President Omar Suleiman but mentioned nothing in relation to tendering his resignation (Darwish 2011). Protestors were again outraged and vowed to expand their presence in Egyptian streets. It appeared that protestors were unwilling to accept anything other than Mubarak’s resignation as he had come to represent everything they felt was wrong with their country – unemployment, corruption, nepotism and repression (Darwish 2011). Finally on 11 February 2011, despite several attempts at offering reforms, instigating violence amongst protestors and repressing the uprising, the Mubarak regime collapsed. Suleiman announced Mubarak’s formal resignation and the handover of all powers to the Egyptian military. Following this announcement, protestors celebrated into the night and through

the next day with many holding signs that stated, “Yesterday I was a demonstrator, today I build Egypt” (Freedom House 2011).

MUBARAK’S PUZZLING COLLAPSE

Constant Declining Regime Legitimacy: The Exposure of Mubarak’s Illicit Power

As is evident from the above outline of Mubarak’s rule prior to the uprisings, declining regime legitimacy had been occurring in Egypt for some time and was intrinsically linked to the way in which Mubarak chose to rule (Goldstone 2011). Mubarak’s rule was solidly based on the three legitimacy tactics that were outlined earlier in this thesis. Mubarak’s efforts to ensure overwhelming majority votes were poorly concealed and were becoming gradually more evident with each election (Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004: 381). Ultimately, the façade of democratic elections created by the Mubarak regime led to a growing disenchantment with the status quo and, a complete disbelief by the majority of the population of any pro-regime propaganda (Darwish 2011: 20; Paciello 2011: 10). The 2005 and 2010 elections blatantly involved mass rigging (*The Economist* 29 November 2010). In the 2005 elections, government vehicles were used to transport public employees to voting stations where they were expected to vote for Mubarak (Nagi 2008). Votes were also bought in the rural areas and poorer suburbs through monetary inducements of thirty-five Egyptian pounds and thousands of illegal votes in favour of Mubarak from non-registered citizens were allowed to be counted (Nagi 2008). On 29 November 2010, *The Economist* reported that the 2010 elections had been far worse than the 2005 elections due to a sheer lack of “...finesse in the rigging of the vote...” in which opposition candidates’ names were removed from ballots, election officials filled out piles of blank ballots and regime thugs stood intimidating voters with machetes. Overall, Mubarak was said to have won 93.3% of the vote (Stacher 2012: 7).

Mubarak was also attempting to utilise the strategy of heredity leadership succession. In 2006, the *Egyptian Daily Star* reported that a high ranking NDP member had hinted that Gamal Mubarak, the son of Hosni Mubarak, would be put forward as a candidate for the 2011 elections. However, a 2010 US Embassy report released on Wikileaks identified that, “...a key stumbling block for any effort to bring Gamal Mubarak to the presidency would be the military...Gamal Mubarak did not serve as a military officer...and unlike his father, cannot take the military’s support for granted...”. Not only did Gamal Mubarak lack the support of the military, but the Egyptian population were humiliated and “disgusted with

the idea” of Mubarak bequeathing power onto his son (Stein 2012: 46). No matter which way his son’s leadership succession was portrayed or propagated, the people of Egypt were not convinced nor were the military.

Mubarak also utilised the regime legitimisation tactic of creating an external other for much of his rule. In Egypt, the Islamist movement of the Muslim Brotherhood was severely restricted by the Mubarak regime from the mid-1990s in participating in politics and was often portrayed in the official media as a violent and radical opposition party (Kubba 2000). In reality, Mubarak was merely seeking political legitimacy by presenting his regime, both to the international community and to his population, in comparison to that of the Muslim Brotherhood as “the lesser of two evils” (Darwish 2011: 21). Mubarak also extended the use of Emergency Laws every three years following his appointment as President in 1981 (Nagi 2008: 11). Mubarak justified the extension of these laws to the Egyptian people by arguing that it was necessary in order to “confront terrorism and protect democracy and stability” (Nagi 2008: 12; Goldstone 2011: 9). Mubarak also used the violent clashes that often occurred between Muslims and Copts to validate these laws which effectively suspended constitutional rights, extended police powers and legalised censorship (Elad-Altman 2006: 9). The Mubarak regime also, on several occasions, took it upon itself to be the protector of so-called public morality and religion (Sedgwick 2010). Examples include the prosecution of homosexuals in the 2001 *Queen Boat* case as well as the case of Nasr Hamid Abu Zeid, a liberal Islamic theologian, who, following trial, was declared an apostate, removed from his rank of full professor and declared to be divorced from his wife (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004).

Mubarak’s use of these legitimisation tactics was for the purpose of controlling and containing legitimate political activities in addition to legitimating his rule (Nagi 2018: 12). Whilst the Muslim Brotherhood, as one of the largest and most influential Islamic parties in Egypt, posed a significant threat to the rule of the Mubarak regime, the increasing use of illicit legitimisation tactics by the Mubarak regime had deeper roots than merely being concerned over political challenges (Nagu 2008: 12). The regime’s legitimacy had been declining for a significant period and Mubarak’s legitimacy as the next rightful ruler in line, following Sadat’s assassination in 1981, had long since faded (Al-Awadi 2004: 11). He was therefore attempting to revive his stagnated legitimacy through the use of these tactics

which became increasingly apparent to the Egyptian population and, in turn, highlighted the cracks in the regime's "ruling edifice" (Goldstone 2011: 29).

The Mubarak regime's performance also attributed to a gradual decline in its legitimacy. Economically, the Mubarak regime performed quite well leading up to the 2011 protests (Shehata 2011). Egypt's GDP was growing dynamically and between 2010 and 2011 increased by approximately US\$11 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012). During the world financial crisis, Egypt's GDP did not fall; however, its annual economic growth rate slowed from 7.2% to 4.6%, which was still surprisingly good when compared to other countries (Korotayev & Zinkina 2011: 140). Egyptian incomes were stable during the 2010 and 2011 period, with the average income at US\$5890 in 2009, US\$6030 in 2010 and US\$6160 in 2011 (World Bank Development Indicators 2012). With regards to poverty in Egypt, the Mubarak regime managed to lower the percentage of those subject to extreme poverty (those living on less than \$1.25 a day) to less than 2% (Korotayev & Zinkina 2011: 147). However, individuals subject to moderate poverty (those living on less than \$2 a day) was relatively high with approximately 35-40% of Egyptians falling into this category (Kapadia 2011: 28; Stacher 2012: 7).

Indeed, Egypt's population had long been suffering while Mubarak and his cronies were getting fat from the profits of economic growth (Goldstone 2011: 11). Stacher (2012: 6) argues that, beneath the international recognition of economic growth lay a country "weighed under by a deteriorating infrastructure, abject poverty and a dwindling social safety net". In terms of employment, the last decade of Mubarak's reign was signified by slowly phasing out any patronage policies to subsidise workers and their families (Goldstone 2011). One of these phased out policies guaranteed Egyptian college graduates job placements; however, after being discontinued, educated Egyptians were "ten times more likely to have no job" when compared to those with only elementary educations (Goldstone 2011). Shehata (2011) asserts that state expenditure on social programs and services, which included education, health care and housing, was drastically reduced to the point of stagnation.

The economic performance of the Mubarak regime was also severely undermined by surges in food prices in 2008 and 2010. Protests occurred as a result of food price increases, with the focus being on a decrease in living standards (Saif 2011: 107). Egyptian bloggers who

supported the protest movement of textile workers against food price increases also launched a Facebook campaign called the “April 6 Movement” in 2008 (Kinsman 2011). According to the Facebook page of The April 6 Movement, the group “gathered...in the renewal of hope...in the probability of mass action in Egypt which allowed all kind [sic] of youth from different backgrounds, society, classes all over Egypt to emerge...and reach for the democratic future that overcomes...occlusion of political and economic prospects that [Egyptian] society is suffering these days” (Harvey 2012: 2). Whilst generally associated with young and technologically savvy Egyptians, the April 6 Movement was equally popular amongst other sections of the population, with 69% of 30-49 year olds and 70% of people 50 and older supporting this movement (Shahine 2011: 2).

In terms of other areas of regime performance, human rights abuses were rife in Egypt during Mubarak’s reign. A Human Rights Watch Report entitled ‘Work on Him Until He Confesses’ (2010), indicates that many Egyptians, whether suspected dissidents or not, were subject to arbitrary arrests, illegal detention, torture and brutality at the hands of police. Freedom House (2012) has also rated the civil liberties and political rights of Egyptians consistently, since 2005, as 6 and 5, respectively (1 representing the most free and 7 representing the least free) with an overall freedom rating of 5.5 and a status of ‘not free’. In terms of corruption, Transparency International (2010) found Egypt to score 2.9 on the Corruption Perception Index during the 2010 to 2011 period, with scores ranging from 0, which denotes highly corrupt, to 10, which denotes very clean. Egypt ranked 80th in the world in 2010 in terms of corruption and was argued to have “prolific political corruption, collusion between the public and private sector, as well as widespread nepotism” (Transparency International Report 2011). A telling example of the corruption of the Mubarak regime has been the amassing of the Mubaraks’ wealth which is estimated to be between US\$40 billion and US\$70 billion (Lesch 2012). Following his overthrow, Mubarak and his sons were all charged with illegal profiteering and the embezzlement of public funds, including cash and gold (Lesch 2012). As the former head of an investigative unit within the Ministry of the Interior has stated, “the Mubarak era will be known ... as the era of thieves. His official business [was] the looting of public money” (Lesch 2012: 40).

It is evident from the above discussion then that the Mubarak regime’s performance was feeble. Additionally, the perception of the regime’s performance was also dire (Shahine 2011: 2). After surveying Egyptians on their thoughts of the state of their country, Shahine

(2011: 2) found that, in 2010, only 20% of the population perceived the performance of the regime to be good. The regime was effectively failing in the eyes of the Egyptian people and losing legitimacy in a rapid manner. With an apparent feeling of declining regime legitimacy, Mubarak's regime became increasingly heavy handed and progressively began to rely solely on the regime's coercive power to maintain control (El-Ghobashy 2011). An evident example of the regime's increasing use of coercive power occurred in June 2010 when a young Alexandrian man named Khaled Sa'id was dragged from an internet café and beaten to death by police officers in broad daylight reportedly for his posting of a video on YouTube which showed police officers dividing the proceeds of a drug raid amongst themselves (El-Ghobashy 2011). Egyptians were horrified and this incident was said to have further galvanised public opinion of the illegitimacy of the Mubarak regime which was evidenced by the Facebook group "We are all Khaled Sa'id" (El-Ghobashy 2011). A review of Facebook outlines that this group's cause was "not just Khaled Said's brutal torture to death. Our opponents are not just the two policemen who tortured Khaled to death. We are standing up for the many Khaled Sa'ids who were and are still being tortured in Egypt" (Facebook 2012). This group gained approximately 4,800 followers in the ten days after its creation and, by the end of 2010, had approximately 350,000 followers (Brownlee 2012: 141).

Whilst declining regime legitimacy played a noteworthy role in bringing about the uprisings that led to the collapse of the Mubarak regime, it cannot be said to have definitively caused the collapse of the regime (Stacher 2012). Rather, during the 2011 uprisings the already delegitimised Mubarak regime was unable to regain any form of legitimacy and was ultimately considered by its population to be irredeemable (Goldstone 2011). The protracted use of legitimisation tactics undermined the regime's attempts at persuasive power and it began to rely solely on coercive power. This increasing use of coercive power led to significant disillusionment of the population and uprisings which ultimately exposed the fact that Mubarak did not have a legitimate right to rule Egypt nor to exercise coercive forms of power (Goldstone 2011).

Foreign Policy Shifts: No Longer Washington's Man in Cairo

For many years, Egypt enjoyed strong support from the United States (Saif 2011). The key facets of the US-Egyptian relationship included Mubarak's suppression of Islamists within Egypt, his promise to keep the Suez Canal open and his continuation of the March 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty (Doran 2011). Remarkably, in 2001 US Secretary of State, Colin

Powell, even commented that Egypt's heavy handed domestic security approach at keeping Islamic fundamentalism suppressed was a model for emulation (Brownlee 2002: 13). Essentially, Mubarak was "Washington's man in Cairo" and the US, in return, provided billions of dollars in economic assistance and aid (Cook 2011).

However, in 2002 a minor shift in the US' foreign policy occurred. On 14 August 2002, the Bush administration announced that Egypt would not receive any additional US aid, beyond the US\$2 billion promised annually in the 1978 Camp David Peace Accord (Brownlee 2002: 13). This shift occurred as a result of the imprisonment of Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an Egyptian who held US citizenship, for allegations of defaming Egypt and was an unprecedented step by the US in linking its foreign assistance to democratic political reforms (Brownlee 2002: 13). This shift effectively meant that if the Mubarak regime wished to have external legitimacy it would need to limit its use of coercive power (Brownlee 2002: 13). As Brownlee (2012: 88) argues, "all eyes were on Egypt...it was hard for the regime to be too heavy handed". This stance appeared to continue, albeit on a much subtler scale, with George W. Bush hinting that Mubarak should hold competitive and legislative presidential elections in 2005 by stating that Mubarak should "show the way toward democracy in the Middle East" (Brownlee 2012: 89).

However, Bush did not push this matter with Mubarak and US criticisms of the lack of political openness in Egypt were largely kept silent in favour of Egypt's assistance in helping to achieve the US security agenda (Brownlee 2012). Indeed, Bush's relationship with Mubarak flourished following the commencement of the 'war on terror'. The US became dependent on Egypt to interrogate and detain alleged Al-Qaeda suspects, assist in guiding US aircraft through Egyptian airspace and participate in intelligence sharing and joint covert operations (Brownlee 2012). In effect, during the 'war on terror' the US needed all the support it could muster from its strongest Arab ally. As Brownlee (2012: 8) notes, assistance in this regard served US interests much more than democracy in Egypt ever could.

Obama's inauguration brought about a "subtle and non-interventionist approach" toward democracy in the region and Egypt largely continued to enjoy US support (Gerges 2012: 4). Obama attempted to deepen the US' diplomatic ties with Egypt by claiming it to be the key in the pursuit of a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel (Brownlee 2012: 134). However, President Barack Obama's voicing of his preference for open governments, which

was evidenced in his 2009 Cairo speech, was viewed as a subtle and implicit criticism of Hosni Mubarak and other Arab autocrats (Gerges 2012). Indeed, some scholars have argued that Obama's speech provided inspirational fodder for the beginnings of the Arab Spring revolutions as it appeared to be a verbal undertaking by the US to support those who sought to rise up against authoritarian regimes to achieve human rights (Anderson 2011). As Anderson (2011) argues, Obama's speech "...set the expectations for how the United States would respond to [the uprisings]" when he stated that the ability to speak one's mind, to have a say in how you are governed and to have the freedom to live as you choose, are not exclusively "...American ideas; they are human rights...that is why [the United States] will support them everywhere". However, it was not until the actual uprisings occurred that the US shifted its foreign policy toward Mubarak. As the uprisings intensified in the first week of February 2011, the Obama administration explicitly asserted that there should be a change of ruler and, in doing so, abandoned its Egyptian ally (Gerges 2012: 5).

Despite its positive relations with the US, Egypt's relations with other international actors were strained. With its suspected involvement in practices of extraordinary rendition and the illegal torture of terrorist suspects, the Mubarak regime quickly lost any external legitimacy it had gained through its ties with the US (Stein 2012). International actors, such as the United Nations and Human Rights Watch, had vocally disapproved of Egypt's involvement in extraordinary rendition and warned against the significant declines it should expect in its international "moral credibility" (Malinowski 2007: 1). Reserves of international moral credibility are imperative in times of regime crisis, as it is upon the basis of such reserves that international actors will offer support or assistance (Malinowski 2007).

Essentially, Egypt's external legitimacy and moral credibility were so damaged that, once uprisings occurred, Mubarak found himself with "no powerful international friends willing to risk much on his behalf" (Stein 2012: 49). As noted above, the US in particular was reluctant to intervene and urged the dictator to hand over power to the military (Stein 2012: 50). However, Arab world responses to the Egyptian uprisings varied. Saudi Arabia, Libya, Kuwait and Palestine all continued to express their verbal support for the Mubarak regime by referring to the protestors as "infiltrators" attempting to cause instability and insecurity (CNN 27 February 2011). Israel's President, Shimon Peres, also verbalised his

support by stating his great respect for President Mubarak, however, conditioned this statement by asserting that, “I don’t say everything that he did was right” (*Reuters* 31 January 2011). In contrast, Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, called Mubarak a “traitor dictator” due to Mubarak’s prior ties to the US and offered his support to the protestors as his “brothers in religion” (*Christian Science Monitor* 4 February 2011). Iraq’s response was similar to that of Iran with Prime Minister, Nouri Maliki, asserting that the Egyptian people have “the right to express what they want without being persecuted” and that it is “intolerable” and “change is necessary” when a leader “rules for 30 or 40 years” (*BBC* 5 February 2011).

Despite the varied Arab responses to the Egyptian uprisings, Mubarak’s overall external power to persuade the international community that he was a ruler worthy of being backed proved ineffective and weak with only a minority of nations willing to offer little more than verbal support (Stein 2012: 50). Mubarak was also unable to increase his coercive apparatus as it was evident very quickly that he would not be gaining any military support from international actors (Stein 2012: 50).

The Defection of the Military: The Protector of the Egyptian People

The military in Egypt had long been held, by both the Egyptian population and officers within the military, as the protector of the national interest and the defender of the people (Kinsman 2011; Gearon 2011: 41). The military’s guardian role was self-assigned during the 1952 Egyptian Revolution when the Free Officers Movement, led by Gamal Abdul-Nasser, seized power from King Farouk, freed Egypt from foreign interference and restored Egyptian pride (Thornhill 2004: 892). Since that revolution, all of Egypt’s rulers have come from the military and have relied heavily on it for support and backing (Martinin & Taylor 2011: 129).

As noted earlier, the defection of the military from a regime is most clearly evidenced when the regime has called on the military to stop protestors using force and the military is unwilling to do so (Lee 2009). In the case of Egypt, the military’s defection was obvious as it snubbed Mubarak’s calls for the use of violence against protestors. At 4.45pm on 28 January 2011, the military was called on to restore order and peace, following violent actions by riot police and other elements of security forces of the regime (Gearon 2011: 41). Upon arriving in the streets, the military announced that it would no longer protect the regime but would rather serve the people of Egypt (Nasser 2011). Galal Nasser, a reporter

for a local Egyptian online newspaper, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, reported on 14 April 2011 that demonstrators were assured that “[the military] would not turn a single rifle, mortar or tank against a civilian...its function was to protect the nation [and] the people”. Essentially, the military did not hinder or repress the revolution that demonstrators were so desperately trying to achieve despite orders by Mubarak to turn its weapons on the Egyptian population.

Some observers have noted that, due to the defection of the military, the uprisings stood on two legs; the military and the people (*Al-Ahram Weekly* 20 April 2011), and have argued that the military and the protestors were, “in reality as well as in rhetoric”, *id wahida* (one hand) (Stein 2012: 47). However, other scholars have identified the somewhat ambiguous role assumed by the military and stated that the reasons behind the military defection appear to not be solely based on altruistic grounds (Martini & Taylor 2011). Indeed, the military clearly had self-perceived interests revolving around its own survival and avoiding civil war. The military and its officers were cognisant that they would become the “guardians of the transition” if they allowed protestors to topple the regime of Mubarak (Stacher 2012: 11). In a statement from the Egyptian military, which was relayed to the population by a senior military spokesman on 31 January 2011, the military stressed that its presence on the streets was for the safety of the Egyptian people and that it would “not allow the safety and security of the country to be tampered with” (Stein 2012: 47). Effectively, by supporting protestors, the military could “regain its governing glory” while also taking the credit for “nobly steering the country out of crisis” (Stacher 2012: 11). Thus, the military’s defection from the Mubarak regime appears to have been based on instrumental reasons.

However, the defection of the military from the regime was not the only blow to Mubarak’s coercive apparatus. Indeed, Mubarak soon also lost the support of the police with many failing to arrive at work whilst other police officers handed in their badges and resigned (Lawson 2012: 14). Therefore, it is evident that both the Egyptian military and a large segment of the Egyptian police were unwilling to use their weapons on behalf of the regime. As a result, the cohesion of the Mubarak regime’s coercive apparatus was damaged as officers were unwilling to comply with Mubarak’s directions (Stacher 2012: 11). The scope of Mubarak’s coercive apparatus to utilise coercive power was also significantly reduced. The defection of the military and police led to a shift in the balance of power

between ruler and ruled and protestors suddenly gained a significant increase in the scope of their coercive apparatus (El-Ghobashy 2011). It should be noted that Mubarak did still have the compliance and willingness of his thugs to exercise violence, however, when these thugs perpetrated violence on peaceful protestors, the military intervened and the thugs were soon dispersed (*Al Ahram Weekly* 14 April 2011). In this way, the Mubarak regime was forced to rely solely on its use of persuasive power to regain control of Egypt. As noted earlier, in order to regain control solely on the basis of persuasive power, a ruler must possess significant oratory and political talents (Huntington 1986: 345). Mubarak, however, did not possess such talents (Sedgewick 2010: 261).

This lack of talent was clearly evidenced by Mubarak's choice of language in speeches to his nation during the uprisings. Mubarak came across as strangely defiant in all of his speeches and offered little more than "drip-drip concessions" (Darwish 2011). This was largely due to Mubarak's own perception of himself as "a hero of war and peace" and a strong leader who was in control and serving Egypt by maintaining stability (Ezzat 2011: 3). The most profound illustration of his insolence was in the second of the three speeches delivered during the eighteen day uprisings when he announced that he had "lived and fought for [Egypt's] sake...and on this land [he] will die..." (*Washington Post* 10 February 2011). Mubarak's speeches also consistently utilised overly formal language and contained bad pro-government propaganda which failed to acknowledge the growing discontent of his citizens (Esmat 2011). An example of the propaganda incorporated into Mubarak's speeches was his reference to the pride he had for his "long years of service of Egypt and its people" and his claim that he had "defended its land and...its interests" (*Washington Post* 10 February 2011).

Furthermore, every speech during the uprisings started with the sentence, "Dear Brother citizens", as had been done by Mubarak for decades (Esmat 2011). Nasry Esmat, a journalist for *Emaj Magazine*, wrote on 19 February 2011, that, "...by using formal language and relying on speeches written by bad propaganda writers, Mubarak closed the door in the face of Egyptians who wanted to understand his point of views...in his last three speeches after 25th of January, Mubarak used that quote to start, while millions of Egyptians were saying at the same time: "Can't you change your ways?"".

The Coalescence of a Unified & Broad Opposition: Egyptians of all Political Stripes

During the Egyptian uprisings, the coalescence of a broad opposition was evident. Patriotism was seen to take precedence over any other political or religious preference held by the various groups of protestors and the homogenous character of Egyptian society allowed protestors to set aside any political differences (Stacher 2012: 18; Beydoun 2011). In Tahrir Square, women in veils stood alongside unveiled women, men protested alongside women, and Muslims shared with Coptic Christians the chants of calling on Mubarak to step down (Atassi 2011: 33). The coalescence of the Egyptian people during the uprisings is also well illustrated by what is referred to as the Friday of Anger. Following Friday prayers on 28 January 2011, "...Egyptians of all political stripes poured out of mosques, unified by their demand for the ruling regime's downfall" (Darwish 2011: 14). Indeed, the Egyptian uprisings were not led by Islamist movements such as Al Qaeda, whose top leader, Al Zawahiri, had long advocated the use of violence in instigating political change to Egyptian youths (Benantar 2011). No Islamic political slogans were present during the protests, nor were any pro-Palestinian or anti-Israeli banners seen (Darwish 2011). Indeed, Shehata (2011: 30) argues that, despite throwing its full weight behind the protests, the Muslim Brotherhood "purposefully kept a low profile" and did not utilise any religious slogans which may have overshadowed the secularism.

Ultimately, throughout the protests that resulted in the collapse of Mubarak's regime, the demands of protestors were not based on religious or political preferences; their only unified demand was to see the fall of the Mubarak regime (Darwish 2011). Mubarak's persuasive powers were therefore limited as he could not appeal to any one segment of the population nor could he offer inducements that would satisfy all (Darwish 2011). It is important to note that, while there was an evident coalescence of a unified and broad opposition who shared the goal of removing Mubarak from power, the opposition group did not have a harmonised vision of what shape and form a post-Mubarak Egypt would take (Goldstone 2011: 14). Indeed, the lack of religious rhetoric employed by the Muslim Brotherhood during the uprisings has been argued by some scholars to have been a tactical and transitory ploy (Byman 2011: 52). By keeping any extreme views on religion, nationalism, gender roles or human rights quiet, the opposition group was able to remain unified and achieve its goal of removing Mubarak from power which increased the likelihood of any group within the opposition achieving the post-Mubarak Egypt that they specifically desired (Doran 2011: 19). In short, after achieving the collapse of the Mubarak regime, the various groups that formed the opposition split and the once unified goal of the

opposition instead became a “marketplace of ideas” in which each group vied for political support of their cause (Snyder & Ballantyne 1996: 13; Byman 2011).

Despite the possible veiled motives of various groups within the opposition, the opposition was able to demonstrate peacefully and remained non-violent. Throughout the revolution, Egyptian protestors printed and distributed pamphlets that contained the writings of Gene Sharp which urged protestors to remain peaceful (Kinsman 2011). Hospitals were also set up by protestors and neighbourhood watches were started that did not allow any looting or violence (Beydoun 2011: 23). Beydoun (2011: 23) argues that all of these actions by protestors further strengthened their sense of unity and resulted in a more resilient determination to remove Mubarak from power. Even when Mubarak’s thugs attempted to instigate violence, in the hopes of aborting the revolution, it had a minimal effect as protestors stood their ground, remained peaceful and reiterated their demands (*Al-Ahram Weekly Online* 18 May 2011). The fact that protestors did not resort to the use of violence, ultimately also led to a decline in the scope of the regime’s coercive apparatus (Beydoun 2011). The decision of protestors to remain non-violent made the decision of the military to defect somewhat straightforward (Stacher 2012). The military understood that the use of coercive power could not be justified whilst protestors remained non-violent and that, if force was used, the military could itself become delegitimized (Stacher 2012). Furthermore, by having a unified and broad opposition, every military officer was able to identify with the opposition which ultimately meant that the cohesion of the state’s coercive apparatus was undermined (Stacher 2012). Essentially, the military lacked any will to use force against an opposition group with which it identified.

Strategic Use of Social Media: Egypt in the Twittersphere

As explained in the theoretical section in the first part of this thesis, the use of social media by protestors has a four-fold effect: it increases the likelihood of a broad opposition coalescing, increases the likelihood of emulation effects, allows protestors to effectively organise demonstrations and evade police, and can help to garner the support of Western powers and their populations which, in turn, can bring about changes in Western states’ foreign policy. In terms of social media cultivating a broad opposition to the regime, the ability of the Egyptian population to communicate freely and discuss political issues with not only each other but with the outside world had a massive impact on the success of the uprisings (Kubba 2000: 88). Not only did the use of social network sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, allow the formation of political groups which had been severely restricted by

the Mubarak regime for decades, but also allowed for protestors to discuss whether others were willing “to take to the streets” (Scott 2012). One young Egyptian man commented that the revolution was “like Wikipedia...everyone [was] contributing content...we drew this whole picture of a revolution [and] no one [was] a hero in that picture” (Khoury 2011: 80).

In terms of protestors being able to effectively organise demonstrations, protestors were able to post “minute by minute instructions about where to gather...[and how] to outmanoeuvre police” (Khoury 2011: 80). Social media also ensured that the opposition remained united as the opposition’s motivations and goals were discussed and agreed to online (Kubba 2000). By doing this, fissures within the group were remedied online and did not emerge on the streets (Khoury 2011: 80). The Mubarak regime’s response to the use of social media, that of shutting down the internet and other forms of communication, further damaged his legitimacy and increased the discontent of the population (Scott 2012). Dunn (2011) argues that, as a result of Mubarak’s actions, the businesses of apolitical citizens were disrupted as international bank transactions were hindered. These apolitical citizens became disillusioned with the regime and, as a result, the opposition was bolstered. Despite the limitations imposed by Mubarak on the internet, Egyptians soon used circumvention software to continue Tweeting and posting to Facebook (Dunn 2011). When Mubarak shut down the internet completely, Egyptians called friends in other countries to Tweet for them (Dunn 2011). The ability of protestors to continue using social media resulted in the regime effectively losing control over the flow of information thereby losing its ability to exercise its persuasive power (Morsi 2011).

For Scott (2012), the Egyptian protestors’ use of YouTube, Twitter and Facebook also helped the uprisings gain international legitimacy thereby undermining the already damaged international legitimacy of the Mubarak regime. Essentially, the virtual voice of Egyptians was disseminated to the world through international media outlets and, rather than appearing to be “foreign and violent”, protestors were understood and passively supported in their plight for human rights and political participation (Scott 2012). Due to the evident gains of the protestors in international empathy, the regime was limited in the persuasive power it could exert internationally as any pro-Mubarak propaganda was unlikely to be effective (Stein 2012: 49).

Social media also assisted in spreading the emulation effects of the Tunisian Jasmine Revolution. The self-immolation of a Tunisian man, Mohamed Bouazizi, on 17 December 2010 and the subsequent collapse of the Tunisian regime leader, Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, who had been in power for 23 years was said to spread a zeitgeist around the Arab world (Al-Zubaidi & Paul 2011). The use of Twitter allowed Egyptians to follow the Tunisian uprisings and the subsequent overthrow of Ben Ali and had a two-fold effect: protestors became aware of the overt illegitimacy of authoritarian rule and learnt how to bring about regime collapse.

The Tunisian revolution also awakened the Egyptian people to the notion that ousting an autocrat was in fact possible (Paciello 2011: 10). Indeed, the toppling of Ben Ali signalled to others under regimes of repression that they too could be revolutionaries (Kinsman 2011; Lancaster 2011). The *Egyptian Independent Newspaper* reported, on 15 January 2011, that the toppling of Ben Ali took over the “Egyptian Twittersphere” with many individuals relating the events to their own nation (Osman 2011). Notable comments on Twitter included, “From [Nicolae] Ceaușescu to Ben Ali, people need to learn that dictatorships can resist but can also immediately fall” and “Oh Ben Ali, tell Mubarak a plane is also waiting for him” (Osman 2011). Not only did the use of Facebook by Tunisians during the uprisings create a “shared awareness” of how to remove a dictator, but the Tunisians could actually be said to have mentored the Egyptians, especially in techniques of non-violence (Kinsman 2011: 39). Essentially, the Jasmine Revolution provided the Egyptians with a “masterclass in non-violent revolution” and indicated to the Egyptian people that, by remaining peaceful, the military was also likely to restrain itself and the regime could plausibly lose a core component of its coercive apparatus (De La Rubia 2011).

CONCLUSION

Overview of Research & Findings

The abrupt collapse of the Mubarak regime, which was perceived by many to be as “immovable as the pyramids”, had many scholars stymied (Hamid 2011: 102). This thesis sought to answer the question of why the Mubarak regime collapsed so suddenly after being faced with a popular uprising for a mere eighteen days. The core hypothesis put forward by this thesis was that the coalescing of four key developments resulted in the Mubarak regime’s power, both persuasive and coercive, being exposed as truly hollow. Through a thorough analysis of regime transition theories, the author developed a

theoretical framework which included four key developments. These four developments included declining regime legitimacy, defection of external allies and the military, the coalescence of a broad and unified opposition and the strategic use of social media by the opposition.

When the theoretical framework was applied to the collapse of the Mubarak regime in Egypt, all four causal explanations were found to be manifestly present and the hypothesis put forward in this thesis therefore appeared to be confirmed. The declining legitimacy of the Mubarak regime had been evident for some time and was primarily caused by Mubarak's extended use of the legitimization strategies of election manipulation, the creation of an external other and Mubarak's plans for hereditary leadership succession. The dire performance of the Mubarak regime in terms of its human rights abuses, economic mismanagement and corruption also contributed toward the declining legitimacy of the regime. As a result, the regime and its ruler were considered by the population to be irredeemable and, as such, any attempted use of persuasive power, including the use of propaganda, was not only ineffective but further added to the de-legitimation of the regime.

The foreign policies of external allies, most notably the US, had been fairly constant during Mubarak's reign. However, in 2002, the US linked its provision of aid to Egypt to democratic political reforms following the detention of a US citizen for defaming Egypt and, in 2005, subtle pressure was placed on Mubarak to hold democratic elections. US-Egyptian relations also remained constant during Obama's inauguration, however, his 2009 speech, in which the US promised to support those who rose up against non-democratic forms of government, provided some subtle criticism of the Mubarak regime. It was therefore only once the uprisings occurred that the US explicitly stated that it would no longer support the Mubarak regime and a shift in foreign policy occurred. The external legitimacy of the Mubarak regime was also significantly damaged through its involvement in practices of extraordinary rendition and the torture of terrorist suspects. With no moral credibility, when uprisings did occur the regime found itself with only a handful of international allies, most from the Arab world, willing to offer only verbal support. None were willing to intervene, militarily or otherwise, on Mubarak's behalf. In this way, the Mubarak regime was unable to expand its coercive apparatus with which it might have quelled the uprisings.

The defection of the Egyptian military from the regime occurred on 28 January 2011. With the military's declaration that it was not willing to turn its weapons on the population, the coercive apparatus of the Mubarak regime, in terms of both scope and cohesion, was almost eradicated. The defection of the police, in addition to the already defected military, caused a shift in the balance of power between the ruler and the ruled and Mubarak was ultimately forced to rely on his persuasive powers alone. However, Mubarak lacked the political and oratory skills to do this and, through the use of bad pro-regime propaganda, lost further legitimacy in the eyes of his people.

Mubarak's lack of persuasive powers was further compounded by the coalescence of a broad and unified opposition. Protestors included members of every segment of Egyptian society and Mubarak was essentially unable to offer any inducements or reforms that would satisfy them all. The use of non-violent protests by a unified and broad opposition was also considered to have been a deciding factor in bringing about the defection of the military. Any use of violence on the part of the military against non-violent protestors could plausibly de-legitimise it. Furthermore, given the broad representation of Egyptian society by the opposition, the military was able to relate to at least some of the opposition members and therefore lacked the *ultima ratio regum* to use its weapons to protect the regime. In this way, the scope and cohesion of Mubarak's coercive apparatus was undermined.

The final factor which was shown in this thesis to have contributed to the collapse of the Mubarak regime was the strategic use of social media by the opposition. Protestors were able to consolidate their motivations and goals through the use of online forums and blogs. The online postings of where to protest and the presence of regime authorities constricted the regime's effective use of its coercive apparatus as protestors were literally able to outmanoeuvre police and security forces. Mubarak's attempts at shutting down the internet only further delegitimised him in the eyes of his population and also brought previously apolitical Egyptians, especially business owners, onto side with the opposition. Overall, the Mubarak regime lost its control over the flow information and therefore lost its ability to effectively employ its persuasive power.

The strategic use of social media by protestors also gained the protestors international legitimacy and further damaged the external legitimacy of the regime. International

empathy appeared to be squarely for the protestors and appeals by the Mubarak regime to the international community were ineffective. Additionally, social media ensured that the emulation effects of the Tunisian uprisings had full effect. A shared awareness of the true frailty of authoritarian regimes occurred and the Egyptian population was essentially provided with a master class in how to bring about regime collapse.

The main finding of this thesis, that four key developments or causal explanations coalesced to expose the hollowness of the Mubarak regime's power, has provided an insight as to why the Mubarak regime collapsed within a short period of the onset of a popular uprising. In so doing, this thesis not only contributes toward a general knowledge of the Arab Uprisings of 2011 but also confirms that the regime transition theories, which were developed during the third wave of democracy in the 1970s, are still exceptionally relevant to explaining regime transition in the contemporary era. The research presented in this thesis would also allow scholars to gain an insight into why authoritarian regimes are still present and sometimes persistent in contemporary society.

Limitations of Research

While the theoretical framework developed in this thesis provided a succinct explanation for many of the factors that contributed toward the collapse of the Mubarak regime, it can by no means be argued to have accounted for all of the plausible factors that may have been present. Indeed, as Geddes (1999: 119) notes, no social science theory can be expected to "explain everything or predict perfectly". Almond et al (1973) also identify that "all [theoretical] models are abstractions from realities and any one model can apply to only a limited set of variables". As a result of this, it appears that some part of the explanation of why regimes collapse will not always be accounted for (Almond et al 1973). Social science theories therefore can only offer mere insights into social phenomenon through retrospective analysis and will never fulfil the need to provide an all-encompassing overview of why regimes collapse.

A further limitation is that, despite offering key insights into the collapse of the Mubarak regime in Egypt, the findings of this research are not generalisable for all Arab Spring revolutions. The four developments that coalesced to produce the collapse of the Mubarak regime are essentially Egypt-specific and it cannot be argued that the same causal conjunction would also explain regime collapse in states like Tunisia, Libya and possibly Syria. The theoretical framework developed can, however, be applied to other cases of

regime collapse, in order to ascertain whether any of the factors were in fact present in other case studies. Furthermore, future research could also consider why, when these factors are present, some regimes collapse and others do not. In essence, “other patterns [of regime collapse] await discovery” (Geddes 1999, 142).

An additional limitation of this research has been that, due to the use of a single case study, the author was unable to develop a causal framework which identified sufficient and necessary variables of regime collapse. Such a framework would be exceptionally helpful in considering regime collapses and could be developed through a comparative analysis of several case studies. Future research could therefore also focus on whether regime collapse can actually be caused by a single sufficient independent variable, or whether there are no sufficient independent variables and regime collapse, as a social phenomenon, can only occur when necessary independent variables coalesce.

Finally, the post-transition politics in Egypt raises both important and interesting questions which require future research. Specifically, research should focus on whether democratic principles will truly take hold in Egypt or whether, with the Muslim Brotherhood in power, the prospects for liberal democracy are dire. The Arab Spring Revolutions of 2011 demonstrated that those seeking a more legitimate and open form of government has not yet dwindled and the collapse of authoritarian regimes still inspires social scientists in their fascinations with how and why particular states move toward or away from democracy. There is little doubt that what has been achieved by the Egyptian people is nothing short of spectacular. However, the Egyptian story does not merely end with the collapse of its ‘pharaoh’. Indeed, as one journalist has noted “the Egyptian revolution was spontaneous...[but] the building of democracy can’t be left to spontaneity too” (*Al-Ahram Weekly* 22 June 2011).

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