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An empirical assessment of consumption practices in a revolutionary
epoch: The case of Egypt and Libya

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to determine the impact of the recent and ongoing Arab Spring phenomenon on consumption practices in Egypt (Cairo) and Libya (Tripoli). The purpose behind the research was to empirically analyse how the Arab Spring has been driven by consumption and the extent to which consumption has been affected by the Arab Spring. A study was conducted between March-April 2013 in two of the main cities associated with the Arab Spring; Cairo (Egypt) and Tripoli (Libya). Retrospective accounts were obtained to capture citizens past experiences, present experiences and future expectations in order to develop a greater understanding of changing consumption practices. This thesis is grounded firmly in the marketing discipline as much as it is in the social sciences, particularly since the consulted literature is of an interdisciplinary nature and the Arab Spring phenomenon is not only of interest to marketing academics and practitioners but also policy makers and sociologists alike.

Change is central to this thesis and citizens are considered the anchor of change. The main findings to emerge from this research are that consumption was a call for the revolution but also a cause of it. Two streams of consumption have been identified. These are conservative and conspicuous consumption. While citizens in Cairo have become more conservative in the present epoch (time of data collection March-April 2013), Libyans have become more conspicuous and are excited to try new modes of consumption. Furthermore, a contention raised in this thesis is that marketing operations in times of flux are often neglected. However, the findings demonstrate that there is a greater opportunity to capitalise on new clientele in a state of flux and amidst the instability and insecurity. As a result of the data collected in flux, this study would seem to have particular value and *interestingess* in the marketing discipline and beyond.

Contributions made in this thesis are of a revelatory nature due to the combination of multiple theoretical lenses and the findings marking a very early empirical contribution across the social science disciplines in understanding the impact of the Arab Spring on consumption practices as well as the development and ongoing epiphenomenal state of flux in the Middle East. To the author's best knowledge, this study is the first to conceptualise the revolutions within the marketing discipline. The findings may be transferred to other contexts and settings to examine other societies in a state of flux such as Ukraine, Syria and Iraq. A conceptual framework is used to illustrate practices in flux.

Emergent themes are proposed via a conceptual model to demonstrate how flux influences consumption practices. Moreover, a novel and unusual methodological approach is used by combining a systematic literature review (SLR) as an entry point into the literature alongside grounded theory methods to study matters of consumption practices.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

The greatest milestone in my life is finally reached and this page is for those who I hold very dear. This thesis has been a roller coaster ride and I could not have done it without special people by my side. I have been unbearable at times, a don in distress and a bouncing yo-yo of emotions. For these reasons, I would like to dedicate my work to the following people. With so many of you to list, please accept my apologies if I have not cited your name directly.

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Background to the study

1.1 Research overview

The Middle East region (hence forth ME) is home to more than 350 million consumers. While ME consumers share many common bonds such as language, the diverse range of cultures and beliefs in the region makes for a dynamic and heterogeneous marketplace. There is a growing young demographic of fifty-three percent of the ME's population aged twenty-five or younger. This youth population has lived through times of turbulent change and the opening up of markets to the wider global economy. When compared against other emerging markets such as India (48% of the population under twenty-five years old) and China (34%), the ME has the largest demographic of young consumers (Mahajan, 2012). The 'shabab' (youth) generation in particular, are much more aware of global consumption than their parents' generation and as such, they express a desire to consume foreign products and services. In addition, the ME is a significant consumer segment because of the high urban population. Only Yemen has a more rural population than India and only five Arab countries have more rural divides than China (The World Bank, 2014). The increase in urbanisation and leap from traditional to modern trade is contributing to the rise of the middle class, whose consumption practices reflect both tradition (e.g. shopping from 'souks' or traditional markets) and postmodernity (e.g. shopping from modern malls). Given the scope for a wealth of consumption opportunities and following the political turmoil of recent events which have resulted in regime changes, it would appear timely and important to reassess how consumption practices have been affected. Consumption practices are defined as a system of observed perceptions, beliefs, values and motives of a consumer towards the act of consuming (Holt, 1995).

The aim of this thesis is to determine the impact of the Arab Spring on consumption practices in Egypt (Cairo) and Libya (Tripoli). The purpose behind the research is to empirically analyse the recent substantial environmental upheavals in the ME popularly known as the Arab Spring, how the Arab Spring has been driven by consumption and the extent to which consumption has been affected by the Arab Spring. An examination of Arab Spring citizens' past experiences, present experiences and future expectations is required in order to develop a greater understanding of changing consumption practices. Therefore, a study was conducted between March-April 2013 in two of the main cities

associated with the Arab Spring; Cairo (Egypt) and Tripoli (Libya). The thesis is grounded firmly in the marketing discipline as much as it is in the social sciences, particularly since the consulted literature is of an interdisciplinary nature and the Arab Spring phenomenon is not only of interest to marketing academics and practitioners but also policy makers and sociologists alike.

Egypt and Libya were chosen as the focus for this study due to the following reasons: both countries succeeded in overthrowing their previous governments (Dalacoura, 2012) and the opportunity for new consumption is potentially greater than before (Abdellatif, 2012; Daragahi, 2012; The Economist, 2012). Authoritarian political and social conditioning guided by socialism (El-Essawy, 2011) contributed to sustained planned economies instead of market based ones (Springer and Czinkota, 1999) and restricted the flow of consumption due to a lack of variety of consumer choices and freedoms in the marketplace. In contrast to Libya, Egypt has had a more advanced consumption environment which is demonstrated by an established consumer culture attuned with both foreign and local products as well as a growing number of foreign multinationals and also local Arab firms (Business Monitor International, 2011a; Business Monitor International, 2011b). In Libya's case, after the lifting of economic embargoes in 2003, restructuring programs were concentrated mainly in the oil and gas sectors to increase energy productivity. However, none of the programs indicated transformations towards a market economy because of governmental intervention in private companies and state control over products (Masoud, 2013). In the aftermath of regime change, the country has undergone post-conflict reconstruction (Siddiqi, 2012) and consumption is seen as an important driver in rebuilding the country. Cairo and Tripoli were explicitly chosen because both capital cities were at centre stage during the Arab Spring and have a network of growing marketplaces (e.g. supermarkets, independent stores and traditional markets) which are just some of the places where consumption occurs. The geo-political context of these two nation cases in which consumption practices are investigated is somewhat incidental but they have been selected in order to gain new and interesting insights by studying society in a state of extraordinary change, a study which may not be possible in relative stability. The importance of conducting the study in a state of extraordinary change is significant because consumers have to engage in consumption and firms marketing operations must continue. Such a study would seem to have significant novelty in the marketing discipline and beyond because there is an opportunity to revaluate what

is known about marketing in the ME and the findings may be transferrable to other ME contexts.

This research challenges the implicit assumption across disciplines that effective research is best conducted in periods of relative stability rather than in times of political and social unrest. Positivistic assumptions are predicated on empirically tested cause and effect relationships; often that environmental stimuli leads to consumer based responses (Heath, 1992). As in so many areas of social science, the functionalist paradigm and its assumptions underpin the vast majority of literature examining consumption in the ME. The reliability of hypothetico-deductive models developed in pre-Arab Spring conditions would seem to become less reliable during and after an upheaval. Building on what has been discovered in the past may be an unreliable strategy for assessing contributions to both theory and practice, regardless of whether the research is grounded in functionalist or interpretivist assumptions. A re-examination of what is known and an investigation of what is new seems to be equally required in the face of extraordinary change.

For introductory purposes, consumption practices are defined from the perspective of consumption choices. Individual lifestyles negotiate different consumption choices whereas on a macro-level, political and societal influences can also steer such choices. Extraordinary change may foster candidness that will allow consumers to elucidate their past consumption experiences, present experiences and future expectations as outcomes of choices or aspirations made. Due to having broad meanings, the term consumerism is carefully used and viewed as the notion that the self (consumer) cannot be complete without a wealth of consumer products/services, aspiration of goals to be fulfilled and solutions to problems through consumption (Murphy, 2000). Consumption practices are the outcome (i.e. determination of consumption choices) and consumerism is the social system which governs the direction of consumption and becomes the lens through which society is viewed (Bauman, 2013). Each society that is in some way characterised by consumption is known as a consumer culture (Yani-de-Soriano and Slater, 2009). Therefore, studying consumption practices, particularly in times of extraordinary change is important because societal consumer culture is influenced by changes in consumption. Further contributory value from the findings of this thesis is grounded in offering insight into an ongoing and rapidly folding and unfolding phenomenon. At the time of writing (February 2015), the period of change throughout the ME seems to be escalating and other regions (e.g. Crimea, Syria and Iraq) appear to be characterised by extraordinary change.

The findings therefore may have increasing relevance and broader transferability inside and outside the ME.

To date, the Arab Spring has been the subject of commentary rather than research. The thrust of that commentary has focussed on political, social, ethnic and religious implications. Given this lacuna, this research has proceeded on the assumption that consumption practices have had a role to play in the societal changes and expectations that have driven the Arab spring, and that consumer expectations have been affected by significant environmental changes. Conclusions in the thesis have strategic and ethical implications. Strategic, in the sense that domestic and international marketers must change their understanding of marketing in the ME to be able to remain updated with changing consumption practices. Ethical, in being aware of the extent to which their operations effect and opportunistically respond to extraordinary change. Market operations must continue as society adapts around the concept of change. At the thrust of change opportunities are raised for Arab citizens to speak out and voice their opinions in a way that they were unable to do so previously under respective tyrannical regimes. In the next subsection, the contributions made in this thesis are explicitly outlined.

1.1.1 Contributions

A discussion of the contributions made in this thesis is important at the introduction stage because there is a tendency in academic research to ignore contributions until the conclusions stage. This point is echoed by Cuervo-Cazurra et al. (2013: p.285) who stated:

> "More often than not, this [contribution] is dealt with in a token paragraph, written in the conclusion section as an afterthought once the research and article have been all but completely, with scant concern for praxis that results in dubious practicality".

A seminal article by Corely and Gioia (2011) was used to explicitly outline the type of contribution made in this thesis. They suggested that academic researchers may affix themselves to two distinctive sets of dimensions. These are revelatory and incremental tenets of theoretical contribution which are presented in a four box matrix (figure 1). In this matrix 'incremental' and 'revelatory' encompass the originality aspect and also on the horizontal axis 'practically useful' and 'scientifically useful' make up the utility elements. To extrapolate these terms, the originality factor can be summed up as either having an incremental theoretical contribution whereby a researcher delivers the

understanding of theory in an incremental fashion. The revelatory dimension denotes advanced understanding, which produces some form of revelation. Utility symbolises how practically useful the research is outside a researchers zone of intellectual competence. In the context of this thesis, utility is concerned with how applicable the theoretical contribution is to marketing science and marketing practice.

Revelatory	4	1
Originality		
	3	2
Incremental		
	Practically Useful **Utility** Scientifically Useful	

Figure 1: Displays the current dimensions for a theoretical contribution as defined by Corley and Gioia (2011)

A contribution which is based on incremental originality adheres to a traditional gap-spotting approach (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011; Sandberg and Alvesson, 2011). However, a gap-spotting strategy is not strictly followed in this thesis, particularly since assumptions about stability in flux and consumption practices in flux are challenged. Although gap-spotting strategies are commonly used, particularly in the context of getting published (Tadajewski and Hewer, 2011), the novelty of trying something different and interesting allows for the revealing of revelatory insights and coincide consistently with the view of Bartunek et al. (2006) who argued in favour of *interestingness* as opposed to just generating incremental insights. The notion of revelatory insights also complements the view of Alvesson and Gabriel (2013) who praised non-formulaic contributions, defined as a contribution that is unique and original. Originality is also grounded in Corely and Gioia's (2011) matrix. Thus, the type of contribution made in this thesis is therefore revelatory due to the findings of this thesis marking a very early empirical contribution across the social science disciplines in understanding the impact of the Arab Spring on consumption practices as well as the development and ongoing epiphenomenal state of extraordinary change in the ME. Second, a conceptual framework is used to illustrate practices in flux. Third, emergent themes are proposed via a conceptual model to demonstrate how flux influences consumption practices. Fourth, a novel and unusual methodological approach is used by combining a systematic literature review (SLR) as

an entry point into the literature alongside grounded theory methods to study matters of consumption practices.

Shelby Hunt (1994: p. 15) also supported revelatory originality as seen in the following quote:

> "Marketing reviewers react quite negatively when a manuscript offers a genuinely original contribution to knowledge. Criticisms such as "where is the precedent?" and "where is the authority?" are, in my experience, disproportionately prominent in reviews by marketing referees. Indeed, marketing authors have been known to cite nonmarketing researchers for authority (using locations such as "drawn from…") even when, strictly speaking, the marketing author has made an original nonmarketing contribution. Marketers making genuinely original contributions to knowledge do so at their peril."

Hunt's comments address the point that reviews are comfortable with incremental formulaic type contributions. Moreover, by making a non-marketing contribution, Hunt is referring to a sister or mother discipline. The comments suggest that researchers are reluctant to claim a revelatory contribution, even when it is apparent that current marketing literature may not be able to explain the phenomena under investigation. A possible reason for such reluctance can be due to concerns that papers will be rejected for being non-formulaic. As Hunt (1994: p.15) emphasised:

> "Also unsurprising is the lack of attention that our journals receive from non-marketing academics. If original contributions to knowledge are systematically screened from our literature, only those (few) non-marketing academics who have an interest in other disciplines' theories applied in marketing will pay attention to our literature."

In line with Hunt's stance, the revelatory contribution made in this thesis falls beyond the parameters of marketing and into the social sciences discipline, especially since practices in flux are identified and transferred to assessing consumption practices in flux. Therefore, in accord with Hunt's comments, the contributions made in this thesis are not "drawn from" other disciplines but apply theory blending from the social sciences for the purposes of transferability and application to marketing theory. The premise of this argument is also supported by Okhuysen and Bonardi (2011) who argued for the combination of theoretical lenses by applying interdisciplinary perspectives.

Consequently, the combination of marketing, politics and sociological lens allows for a greater understanding of the Arab Spring phenomenon and reduces the proximity between the disciplines and the phenomena, making the degree of compatibility between the findings stronger. Alvesson and Sandberg (2014) also concurred with the notion of breaking across interdisciplinary boundaries and offered two typologies which they called *boxed-in* and *box-breaking* research. Within boxed-in research, researchers are often confined to the boundaries of their own community and discipline due to institutional pressures, publishing endeavours and community acceptance. On the other hand, new context and revelatory research would seem to fit consistently with box-breaking research. Alvesson and Sanberg (2014) further supported box-breaking research as a way to move across interdisciplinary boundaries and break out of a tightly defined research paradigm. Moreover, boxed-in research is considered to confine researchers because little thought is given about what is going on outside one's specialised field. A supporting view is provided by Weick (1989) who noted that gap spotting and too much emphasis on methodological rigour can neglect emerging insights, conceptual development and reduce the possibility of challenging and surprising results (Alvesson and Gabriel, 2013).

The revelatory contributions made in this thesis can be positioned within theory blending because the combination of emergent themes derived from the findings stemmed from the mother discipline (i.e. the social sciences) and are used to explain the sister discipline (i.e. marketing) (Oswick et al., 2011). Returning to Alvesson and Sandberg (2014), they contested that limited interaction with sub sister disciplines or mother disciplines reduces the production of radically new ideas and interesting contributions because researchers remain boxed-in and are simply concerned with finding and filling a gap in the literature. In the case of this thesis, the researcher faced some data collection challenges pertaining to insecurity and instability in Egypt and Libya which threatened the fluidity of *breaking the box* and making a revelatory contribution. Thus, the researcher was presented with two options before commencing with the data collection: the first option was to retreat and abandon an empirical investigation. The second was to persevere and generate insights into a continuing phenomenon. The latter option was chosen. Moreover, recording a very early empirical contribution across the social science disciplines was important in order to understand the impact of practices in flux and how such practices affected consumption practices as well as the ongoing process of change in the ME.

After explaining the type of contribution made, the following subsection details the structure of the thesis.

1.1.2 Thesis structure

This thesis is structured as follows: the research questions and objectives are presented next, followed by the research purpose and motivation behind the study. There are three (A, B, C) main sections to this thesis. Within each main section are chapters. Following the introductory chapter, section A entails the process of constructing a systematic literature review, prior to commencing with the literature review. In section B, the methodology and methods are examined and in section C, the findings/discussion as well as conclusions and contributions are discussed in detail.

A visual thesis route map is provided at the end of each chapter to illustrate the position of the chapter within the thesis.

1.1.3 Research Question:

To fulfil the research aim and meet the objectives, the following research question has been set:

1) In the context of recent events in Egypt and Libya, how are consumption practices 'interwoven' within the contemporary state of flux?

1.1.4 Research Objectives

By attempting to answer the research question, the study states the following objectives:

1. To develop a conceptual framework for examining *practice* in a period of environmental flux.

Through the deployment of the framework:

2. To provide an account of how Egyptian and Libyan consumption practices have been *affected* by the Arab Spring phenomenon.
3. To provide an account of how Egyptians and Libyans' consumption hopes/expectations and histories have in turn *influenced* the Arab Spring phenomenon.

…Thus, by gaining insight into the degree that consumption and flux are interwoven, the fourth objective is:

4. To provide an analysis of the extent that the consumption practices identified can provide insight into other ME countries or other regions in a high state of flux.

… Thus, helping consumers and practitioners make sense of flux.

In the next subsection, the research purpose and motivation is discussed.

1.2 Research motivation and inspiration

The author of this research has had long-term affinity with the ME region. Extensive involvement and interest for pursuing an empirical study within the context of the ME has long captivated the researcher's mind whose origins lie in that region. As a British-Iraqi who was born in the UK with family origins in Baghdad, Iraq, the researcher has experienced two juxtaposed cultures and their traditions. On a personal note, the author defines himself as a hybridised person and one that possesses attitudes and values from both British and Iraqi cultures. Given the mixed cultural background of the researcher, epistemic reflexivity is used throughout this thesis and involves analysing lived experiences against one's own cultural background; similar to a point alluded by Coghlan and Brannick (2005).

The motivation for doing a PhD was fuelled through a passion for marketing and international marketing gained during the researcher's MSc degree in Marketing Management. Through further reading, incremental gaps in the literature were identified. Consequently, in the first year of the PhD, a research question was drafted to examine the extent of standardisation in the ME with regards to fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) in the region. However, it was only after ongoing meetings and discussions with the researcher's personal supervisor, or 'advisor' as a more conducive term, that a new idea emerged in the form of tackling the Arab Spring from a consumption perspective. Although significantly different than the original research idea, the suggestion of examining a new phenomenon proved more challenging and provided further inspiration. According to Balakrishnan (2013), less than one percent of the total papers published across business, management and accounting (BMA) are from the ME. Furthermore, few

journals based in the region are listed on the Thomson Reuters ISI ranking index or the Association of Business Schools (ABS) even though some are highly specialised such as the *Journal of Islamic Marketing*. Therefore, the paucity of marketing studies in the ME fuelled the research motivation even more. Since childhood, the researcher had understood that visiting Iraq was dangerous because of wars, insecurity, instability and authoritarian rule that constrained citizens. Wishes were made that one day citizens would stand up, speak out and discover a sense of liberation. That day may have arrived or is in the making.

An important feature of this thesis is the exploration of historical narratives as told by Egyptian and Libyan participants who lived through the upheavals. Participants could narrate their own experiences of how they felt in the past, present and also their expectations for the future. In the next subsection, the research context and problem is discussed.

1.3 Research Context and Problem

As an unfolding phenomenon, the Arab Spring may have come as an initial surprise to many citizens in the ME. The research context is situated within the capital cities of Egypt and Libya. Both countries experienced the successful overthrow of their previous regimes. The human agency that sparked the revolutionary episodes was the citizens who contradicted the state norms by speaking out against their respective governments. A key theme in driving extraordinary change was freedom of expression which allowed citizens to form structured movements that epitomised shared attitudes and values for 'change' (Hussain and Howard, 2013).

The research problem is grounded in the context of extraordinary change and the investigation of changing consumption practices. Due to the ongoing Arab Spring phenomenon, commentary articles documenting the events so far had to be constantly reviewed and updated. Moreover, given the paucity of studies (Abaza, 2001, 2005) that have approached the ME from a consumption perspective, an SLR was carried out as an entry point in order to identify the extent of consumption literature in the ME. The emergence of themes such as consumer ethnocentrism and country of origin effects are treated as peripheral level themes surrounding consumption practices. Changes in consumption practices are relative to themes located in its periphery, whereas on a macro-

level of the broader environment, consumption practices are affected by environmental stimuli (e.g. the political and social environment). These stimuli potentially reconfigure lifestyles, values and needs and cause new practices of consumption to emerge. A focus on buying behaviour or specific industries, brands and products is beyond the scope of this thesis. Consequently, the focal point of the research problem is centred on the life processes that consumers undergo during the act of consumption. These life processes are past experiences, present experiences and future expectations. In line with the research questions and objectives are three epoch stages. The term epoch is used in reference to a point in time beginning a new or distinctive period (Collins Dictionary, 2014). *The past refers to past experiences of consumption practices before regime change and the present epoch is the time of data collection. The future deliberately is not termed 'future epoch', because this is still unknown. In order to gather visions and aspirations for the future, future expectations are captured.* A conceptual framework is illustrated (see figure 1) to show the linkages between the research context and problem and to demonstrate studying change in flux.
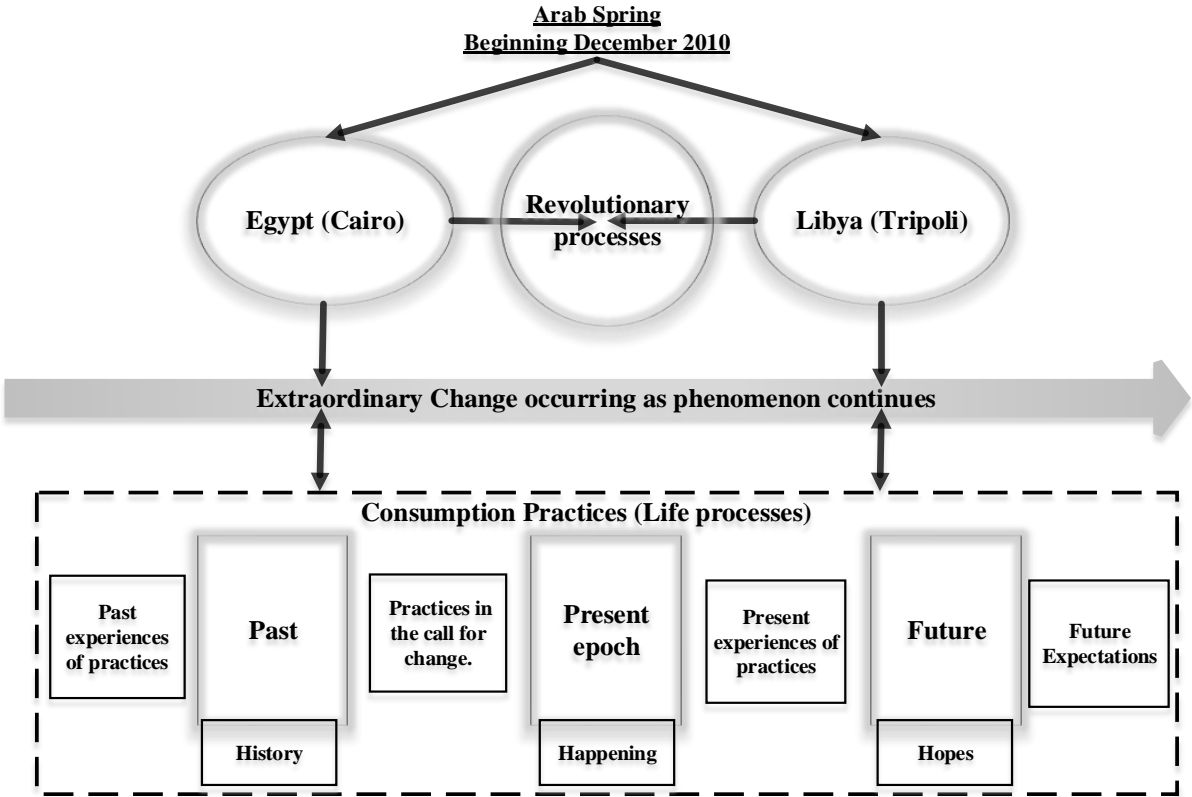
Figure 2: A conceptual framework for examining practices in flux-Source: author.

As shown in figure 2 above, the Arab Spring began in December 2010. Extraordinary change is an ongoing process as the phenomenon is still progressing which is why end dates have deliberately not been inserted. The revolutionary processes are the modes of action that triggered changes such as mass protests and demonstrations in Egypt and a civil war in Libya, both of which have resulted in regime changes. The three stages assist in determining any changes in practices in Cairo and Tripoli. The literature review is presented in the next chapter. A narrative overview is given as a pre-entry point into clarifying the boundaries of the ME, the ongoing extraordinary change of societies, the contextualisation of consumption practices and an analysis of the key events concerning the Arab Spring to date. The literature reviewed here has been approached using a narrative review. The SLR, on the other hand, is considered an entry point into the marketing literature in the ME. In the next chapter, the literature review is presented.

Section A: Literature Review

Chapter 2: Pre-entry point into the literature
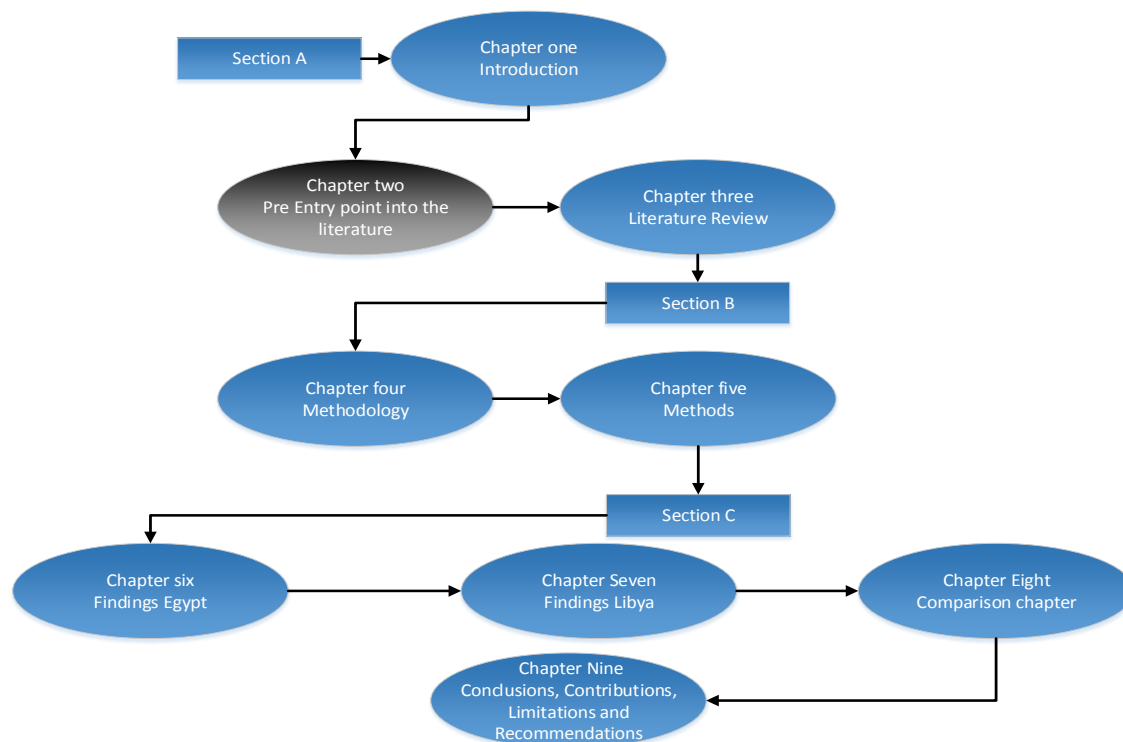
Figure 3: Route Map – The position of the current chapter in the thesis-Source: Author.

2.1 Pre entry point into the literature

2.1.1 Defining the boundaries of the Middle East

The purpose of this section is to gain a better understanding of the ME by describing the composition of the region. Explaining the ME boundaries is important because of contrasting views towards its geographical makeup. According to Ali (1999) the term 'Middle East' was coined in 1901 by U.S Admiral Alfred T. Mahan but was not officially used until 1916 by the British. The term implies an area of restrictive geographic scope between Europe and Asia and has changed a lot over the course of history due to external influences such as colonialism. The Arab countries that constitute the ME have been very much debated. However, Al-Olayan and Karande (2000) stated that the region is comprised of twelve countries. These are Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine (the Gaza strip and West Bank), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, U.A.E and Yemen and ten African countries: Algeria, Egypt, Eritrea, Djibouti, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco,

Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia. In addition, Amine and Cavusgil (1990) identified three groups of Arab Countries: The Arabian Gulf, North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. Extending the debate further, Elbanna and Gherib (2012) claimed that the term 'the Arab world' relates to twenty five Arabic speaking countries that span from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Arabian Gulf in the east, from the Mediterranean Sea in the north and down to the Indian Ocean in the southeast. Furthermore, Elbanna and Gherib termed the Asian side of the Arabian hemisphere as 'the East' or 'Mashriq' in Arabic, the North African region to the west of Egypt as 'the West' or 'Maghreb'. Egypt's and Libya's geographical positions can also be considered in North Africa but cultural connections are argued to attach the countries closer to the 'Mashriq'.

The combination of both the Middle East and North Africa is commonly known as the 'MENA' region. Depending on the person's ethnicity, the gulf region may be referred to as 'Arabian gulf' or 'Persian gulf' (Whitaker, 2010). Various ancient and modern idiosyncrasies have contributed to its geographical composition. For example, particular attention has focussed on the ME as a result of military conflicts such as the Iraq war from 2003. Each ME state differs culturally and politically. Thus, economic activity and the extent of globalisation also vary. The discovery of oil, particularly since the 1930s, has led the ME through major transitions (Ali, 1999). Exposure to western countries and companies has to an extent modernised and improved the standard of living, brought better communications, education, healthcare and also global integration. However, transitional growth in some ME states has been more successful than others such as the Gulf region (Welsh and Raven, 2006). Distinctive sub-cultures such as Bedouins and strong tribal allegiances also exist. Many ME states such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Libya have carried over traditions, tribal inheritances and have varying degrees of religiosity, cultural values, other minority religions and perceptions towards the west (Hickson and Pugh, 1995). Furthermore, Hickson and Pugh questioned the usefulness of the homogenous consumer and market segmentation strategies because of heterogeneous differences amongst ME states. If historical colonialism and crusades in the ME are indicative of revolutionary evolution, then there is a constant state of unrest within society which reconfigures human beliefs, values, practices, aspirations and relationships (Pendergraft, 1998) that lead to changing consumption practices. In addition, Burnheim (1997) argued that cultures cannot be designed but they are by-products of distinctive activities that consumers take part in. The geographic profiling of consumers in the ME is discussed in the next subsection.

2.1.2 Consumer geographic profiling in the Middle East

Amine and Cavusgil (1990) attempted to extend marketing scholarship and regional forms of market segmentation by researching macro-environmental, attitudinal and lifestyle dimensions. They identified three groups of Arab countries: The Arabian Gulf, North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean and also some 'unique' countries. To a greater extent, the validity of these claims can be questioned on the basis of what constitutes 'unique' countries as the labelling is quite vague. Mehta (1999) proposed an alternative view that different Arab countries had underlying and juxtaposed degrees of stability, affluence and consumption spending power. Moreover, some Arab countries such as the Gulf States (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain) (Leonidou, 1991) had a huge flow of expatriate nationalities, especially from developing countries. In the UAE for example, the level of expatriates outweighs the UAE nationals. Mehta (1999) contested that each respective Arab country had its own variant of the Arab culture, differing levels of modernity, tolerance and ethnic profile. Variations not only existed between countries, but also across different cities in the same country. Consequently, Mehta argued against the homogenous classification of Arab countries. This subsection has given an introductory insight into how marketing scholarship has used ME boundaries as a means for segmenting and understanding ME consumers and their cultures. However, the preservation of one's culture is not immune to external factors such as globalisation and macro-environmental factors (Appadurai, 1990; Cleveland et al., 2013; Firat, 1997). Similar to a point mentioned by Mahajan (2012), many ME societies have adopted western consumption practices but still to an extent, assimilate their own cultural values while consuming. Thus, cultural values in the ME are not stagnant and are susceptible to uncertainty, especially in the context of a revolutionary epoch. It is this uncertainty and continuous change that is referred to as extraordinary change, which is discussed further in the next subsection.

2.1.3 Societies undergoing extraordinary change

The term *change* has a variety of connotations ranging from short-term to long-term changes in a given environment. The shaping of future events is directed by the progression of human agency. It is the human agency that determines the extent of future change/s (Orhun, 2011). Mechanisms of stability are continuously metamorphosing as

environmental punctuations in society occur. In the context of the Arab Spring, the process of extraordinary change has to go through what are known as 'rapid punctuated equilibriums' in order to reach a reliable state of stability (Gersick, 1991). It is the instability caused by political and social actors that propel the actuality of unrest. Thus, for Gersick, the objective becomes that of actualising stability. Similarly, Habermas (1999) supported the notion of societal movements (e.g. protests and demonstrations) and argued that globalisation increased capital programs whereas corporations distorted the configuration of nation states. Consequently, the state has to maintain economic stature by becoming globalised. Paradoxically, for Egyptians and Libyans, the revolutions sought reconfigurations in political, social and economic systems, which in turn brought other demands such as democracy, social justice, welfare and equality (Nuruzzaman, 2013). On the other hand, foreign policy and organisational models are commonly built according to the assumption that a country is characterised by fundamental stability (Kleistra and Mayer, 2001). The over emphasis on conducting studies in times of stability may be a reason for the scarcity of studies conducted in times of political and social unrest. Years of the same rule by authoritarian regimes made their removal difficult and prevented the possibility of citizens starting mass protests and demonstrations. Perhaps, this is why Egypt and Libya still remain in a state of unrest. At the time of writing (February 2015), current political and social agendas are blocking movements towards stability.

The unrest experienced in Egypt and Libya is argued to be confined to the timings of each respective revolutionary process. Revolutions are episodic because they are subject to space and time temporalities. An episode in the history of a society is made up of historically significant events that are visibly prominent in their relationships with each other as well as their differences with the preceding and following events. Therefore, the underpinnings of unrest must be understood beyond the context of episodic instances (Moaddel, 1992). Macro-environmental issues such as regime change in Egypt and Libya can be considered as episodic. The agents that determine macro-environmental changes can be seen as actions on the part of protestors, activists and drivers such as social media in generating changes which also have a knock on effect on consumption practices. It is for this reason that ideology is seen as an episodic discourse, whereas extraordinary change is constant and presupposes that macro-environmental changes evolve over time and space. To illustrate the progressive movement of ideological discourse, the removal of former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi (July 2013) in Egypt (Housden, 2013)

can be witnessed as an epiphenomenon (a phenomenon following a phenomenon), indicating the episodic fashion of a possible second revolution. Epiphenomena is important because ME societies are still undergoing extraordinary change. A punctuated equilibrium continues to burst through rapid periods of extraordinary change (Wollin, 1999) as the macro- environment is reconfigured to attract a state of stability. Despite the turbulent conditions in Egypt and Libya at present, international marketers have to understand the changing environmental dynamics that affect consumption practices and continue to operate. Otherwise, the needs and wants of consumers will be neglected and hidden opportunities will remain untapped. Also, a disregard for consumption practices and human agency (consumers) in driving change may also contribute to firm failure. In the next subsection, the multiple connotations of the term consumerism (Swagler, 1994) and consumption practices are contextualised in order to position the focus of the study.

2.1.4 Contextualising consumption practices via consumerism

Over time, the term consumerism has acquired an array of definitions. Vance Packard, in 1957, viewed consumerism as the strategies for persuading customers to actualise their needs and wants (Packard, 1957). Packard criticised advertising and rigorous sales tactics as reasons in driving consumerism forward (Yani-de-Soriano and Slate, 2009). Lambin (1997) concurred with Packard and referred to consumerism activities as 'manipulate' or 'wild marketing' because of promotional focus on encouraging consumers to over consume and buy unnecessary goods beyond basic needs. On the other hand, Drucker (1980) adopted an ethical perspective and argued that companies had to counteract the idea of consumerism being manipulative by becoming socially responsible in their actions. Drucker contested that if marketers applied marketing concepts with consumer satisfaction in mind, then consumers would consume products because they wanted and needed to and not because of consuming for status (conspicuous consumption) or for protection from extreme promotional mechanisms.

A second definition of consumerism was articulated by Kotler (1972) in an attempt to counteract the idea of consumerism being manipulative. He described consumerism as a social movement which tried to increase the rights and powers of buyers in relation to sellers. Kotler's view is in accord with Bauman (2013) who viewed consumerism as the social system which governs the direction of consumption and becomes the lens through which society is viewed.

Similarly, Kotler complemented the views of Packard and Lambin who agreed that marketing took advantage of consumers' wellbeing in the long-term by over emphasising the value of products and services to stimulate profits instead of satisfying consumer needs and wants. Thorstein Veblen in 1899 coined the term conspicuous consumption to refer to the permissible flaunting of the rich who saw consumption as a social status symbol by displaying materialistic possessions. Moreover, the envious strived to match the things that others had in order to formulate their own place in society. Consequently, products are almost communication devices that denominate others' social class or identity (Slater, 1997).

A third definition of consumerism was provided by Murphy (2000) who argued that consumerism is when an individual cannot be complete without having consumer products and services. Extraordinary change may guide consumerism by either pushing consumers towards becoming conspicuous or pull them to become more conservative in their consumption practices. The reasoning behind the production of two opposite streams of consumption (conservative and conspicuous) may be explained by role theory where consumers are imagined as actors in a global marketplace. Just like a theatrical play, consumers have their own written script, props and stage name. Therefore, in real life situations consumers have an abundance of roles to play on a daily basis and choose to consume products and services depending on the particular 'play' they are in at a given point in time (Solomon, 1983). It is the way in which consumers wish to be seen in society that gives rise to a sense of self (Belk, 1989) and identity. Identity is not viewed in this thesis from the perspective of brand meaning but as an antecedent of consumption practices. Consumers are constantly bombarded by marketing ideas for who to be and how to live (Shankar and Fitchett 2002). It is this sense of self that is important for consumption practices because a sense of having and being (Cherrier and Murray, 2007) can guide consumer choices in the marketplace. At the most extreme end of consumption, conspicuous consumption practices evoke hedonism (the view of consumption as a form of pleasure, enjoyment or delight) (O'Shaughnessy et al., 2002; Migone, 2007), materialism (the value placed on the possession of material objects) (Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002) and status consumption (Bourdieu, 1984; O'Cass and McEwen, 2004). At the less extreme end, conservative consumption or utilitarian consumption takes place. Less is known about conservative consumption than utilitarian consumption. The former denotes consuming basic necessities and holding on firmly to traditional values (Shechter, 2011), while the latter is concerned with consuming for a particular reason or purpose

(Babin et al., 1994; Bussiere, 2011; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Okada, 2005; Overby and Lee, 2006).

In summary, the first definition relates to manipulative business practices to encourage consumer spending and profit maximisation. The second assumes the notion of consumer protection and the third is of the belief that consumption is almost a way of life and is shaped by macro-environmental issues that produce a consumer culture. The third definition of consumer culture is adopted in this thesis, particularly since a reassessment of consumption practices is needed after punctuations in Egyptian and Libyan society. Further justification is positioned within Kaynak's (1982; 1985a; 1985b) arguments who stressed that consumption and marketing policies were explicitly directed by governmental legislation and not by businesses in less developed nations. It is the lack of recognition for marketing practices that assists in explaining why marketing practices have focussed heavily on developed nations with advanced market based economies and where there is less government interference (Burgess and Steenkamp, 2006). If consumption is accepted as the act of consuming goods or services beyond consumers basic needs (Firat et al., 2013), then consumption practices are important components of consumer life processes (i.e. the consumption choices taken in the act of consuming) (Firat, 1977) because they demonstrate the processes that consumers go through and are representative of a consumer culture. Moreover, the term consumerism is carefully stationed within the periphery of consumption practices. Now that the key terms related to consumerism, consumer culture and consumption practices have been identified, in the next subsection, a summary is provided to contextualise how the events of the Arab Spring unfolded.

2.1.5 Unveiling the silhouette behind the Arab Spring: A spark of candidness

An analysis of current upheavals in the ME is presented. Owing to the continuous unrest that is taking place, it is likely that much of this literature will become historic news as extraordinary change continues. Importantly, the aim of this subsection is not to take a personal bias but to provide a summary of the Arab Spring to date and highlight the main drivers of change. Similarly, this section is correct as of the time of writing (February 2015).

According to Massad (2012), the term 'Arab Spring' was part of US strategy in maintaining strategic aims and objectives as part of pushing for an American style

democracy. Much like the seasons 'winter' and 'summer', the 'spring' season is imagined as the mid-point, hence the term 'Arab Spring' metaphor (New Statesman, 2011). Given that many 'springs' have come and gone since the first 'Arab Spring', the metaphor seems to bear less significance and therefore, 'revolution' is used henceforth as the term does not refer to a particular period within time and space. However, the term revolution is also treated with caution because many associated elements such as popular and, indeed, violent anti-establishment protest and removal of incumbent political authorities are evident across the region. Furthermore, a revolution in modernist terms is considered a series of progressive movements against a particular issue, which Argyrou (2013) criticised as modernist prejudice. He claimed that *re-volutions* always returned to an earlier state of affairs or prior point of departure and restored governmental figures far worse from those that the revolution was meant to overturn. Moreover, he asserted that when revolutionaries take the given for granted or as a gift, citizens become *re-volutionaries* and hungry for even more changes. If Argyrou's claims are accepted, then the direction of extraordinary change may be punctuated back to a state of pre-revolutionary unrest.

Since the 17th December 2010, democratic pursuits were driven by citizens with the desire to politically intervene on members or leaders of government who had been in power for an unprecedented length of time (Tadros, 2012). Citizens had grown restless of mass corruption, nepotism and the inexistence of political lucidity (Hashemi, 2011; Sakbani, 2011). About sixty per cent of the ME's population is under thirty. These young people shared aspirations for change (Inayatullah, 2011) and filled the streets to voice their anger and fight against political regimes (Lynch, 2011). In particular, the revolutions were popular amongst the youth because they had never experienced a revolution or indeed regime change (Daou, 2011). Khalid Al Qashtaini, an Iraqi writer in London, developed the following equation for change in the ME: education+ freedom of thought = awakening + salvation (Butt, 2011). To critically appraise the author's assumption, this equation seems worthy of critical merit and valid in theory. However, if one was to challenge this view and reverse the equation, how would awakening the people's mind-sets and salvaging their own opinions affect their education (intellectuality) and freedom of thought? Moreover, from a personal standpoint, the consequences of salvation would seem to produce greater freedom of thought and so freedom of expression becomes an actor of change.

The events began in Tunisia where a street vendor known as Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire amid several altercations with local authorities who attempted to take away his livelihood (Noueihed and Warren, 2012). Mass protests and demonstrations ensued and later saw the subjugation of Tunisia's president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Bouazizi, meanwhile became known as a hero and is considered one of the catalysts behind the Tunisian revolution. Soon after, the domino effect sprawled in neighbouring Egypt and Libya, which eventually led to the overthrow of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Libya's Muammar Al Qaddafi (Bilal, 2011; Coetzee, 2013; Gelvin, 2012; Snider et al., 2011). Although the vast majority were jubilant after the toppling of previous regimes, there are growing political and religious secular divisions that have left revolutionary Arab societies polarised (Guzansky and Berti, 2013). Similarly, in Libya, civil divisions have increased, causing social secularisation (Bowen, 2012). The call for regime changes and the removal of heads of state may have mirrored the collapse of Eastern Europe in 1989 to a certain extent (Friedman, 2011) but reaching a state of stability is still very much a work in progress as citizens' visions and aspirations have not yet been met.

At the time of writing (February 2015), the civil war in Syria continues as armed militias clash with Bashar Al-Assad's armed forces (Eyadat, 2013; Dalacoura, 2013; Sorensen, 2011). The escalation of a bloody civil war (Landis, 2012) and the insurgency of Islamist extremists show little sign of ending anytime soon (Van Veen, 2014). A similar scenario is witnessed in Iraq where since the war in 2003, sectarian violence has restricted redevelopments from taking place (Hafedh et al., 2007). The country has experienced conflict amid the insurgency from extremist militants that have taken over large parts of the country (Bayoumy, 2014; Lister, 2014). Protests in Yemen have continued despite the stepping down of their previous leader Ali Abdullah Saleh (Mohammed Ali, 2014). As a result of a failed attempt to overthrow the Bahraini monarchy in 2011, tensions in Bahrain have remained high amid Shia citizens protesting because of a lack of democratic rights, alienation in society and the hegemonic nature of the *Sunni* (largest denomination of Islam) led government, which many *Shia's* (second largest denomination of Islam) considered as favouring Sunni citizens (Ismael and Ismael, 2013; Kamrava, 2012; Sultan, 2013). The situation is made more complex given that Shia citizens make up over seventy per cent of the Bahraini population.

The remainder of the gulf countries (Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) have been largely unaffected by the revolutions in other ME states (Hess, 2013). Gulf monarchies have not experienced sustained widespread protests (with the

exception of Bahrain, which has witnessed a sectarian dilemma), because the monarchies are based upon tribal, clan and family ties and therefore do not face a crisis of legitimacy. Furthermore, Gulf monarchies have sustainable social contracts with the majority of their citizens (Forstenlechner et al., 2012). Gulf States such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have not witnessed mass protests. Likewise, in Kuwait, the government quickly announced increased salaries for their citizens to minimise the potential for demonstrations (Kamrava, 2012). In neighbouring Saudi Arabia, moderate protests were experienced (AlJazeera, 2011). A fifteen per cent increase in state workers' salaries as well as extra funds for housing, studying abroad and social security was provided by King Abdullah to placate citizenry dissatisfaction. Moreover, after decades of uncompromised law, the Saudi government allocated the right for female citizens to vote for the first time (Khalife, 2011). In Oman, minor demonstrations demanded better social contracts (Massad, 2011). In response, the Sultan followed Saudi Arabia and Kuwait's strategies of increasing working salaries (Forstenlechner et al., 2012).

Apart from the three transitional lead revolutionary nations (Tunisia, Egypt and Libya), North African neighbour, Morocco, saw only a few minor incidents, but King Mohammed VI vowed to amend the constitution to reflect new measures that ensured the authority of the Moroccan parliament (Owais, 2011; Sater, 2012). In Jordan, King Abdullah II appointed a new prime minister and replaced the complete ministerial cabinet with the promise of political reforms (AlJazeera, 2011). Lebanese citizens demanded better economic welfare from their government, who in return handed out economic concessions to citizens (Ottaway, 2011).

The unrest in Egypt and Libya was very dissimilar. Egypt achieved a political revolution by way of mass protests and demonstrations (Housden, 2013; Kienle, 2012; Pace and Cavatorta, 2012), while Libya experienced armed conflict (Brahimi, 2011; Wehrey, 2013) and a political revolution. Common causes of unrest in both Egypt and Libya were believed to be the lack of economic freedom, political rights as well as a sense of social injustice (Ahmad 2013; Campante and Davin, 2012; Winckler, 2013). Al Shayji (2012) argued that the revolution phenomenon has led to instability and it must do so in order to transition through times of uncertainty and change. The uncertainty is emphasised by the most recent counter led revolution in Egypt (4th July 2013) also known as an *epiphenomenon*, which saw the removal of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) leader Mohammed Morsi from power. His subjugation was seen as a second revolution by anti-Morsi supporters but as a military coup by pro Morsi followers (De Smet, 2014). Abdel

Fattah Al-Sisi eventually became the new leader of Egypt after winning the presidential election with 96.1% of the votes (Kingsley, 2014). A similar scenario occurred in Libya, where Prime Minister Ali Zedan stepped down from office (Al-Arabiya News, 2014a). Moreover, Chomsky (2013) criticised the progress of Egypt and Libya thus far, arguing that Libya is struggling to control its militias and that the military in Egypt are returning the country to a state of authoritarianism. For example, rival militias have taken over the capital city Tripoli's airport and engaged in armed conflict in a bid to gain greater legitimacy and power (Laessing, 2014) while in Egypt, polarisations in society have increased because of differences in political and religious views (Georgy, 2014).

Religious and traditional cultural values are two of the most prominent factors under question in the battle for change in the ME. Although religion as well as cultural traditions vary between ME states, they are deep rooted within ME citizens. Many Arab countries follow Sharia law (such as Saudi Arabia), while others follow a mix of both Sharia law and Civil law (such as Egypt, Sudan and Morocco) (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000). Hashemi (2011) suggested that the vast majority of Arabs were against the idea of a western style of democracy that followed secularism and citizens supported the idea that Sharia law should be *a* source although not *the* source of legislation governing political affairs. Furthermore, Hashemi argued that Arab societies have been dominated by negative experiences of post-colonial authoritarianism. The various modernisation projects and political constitutions granted by authoritarian regimes were often overcast under the umbrella of Arab nationalism. What were the main drivers behind the revolutions in Egypt and Libya? Technology is considered a feature of globalisation (Cleveland et al., 2013; de Burgh-Woodman, 2014; Short et al., 2000) but media technologies in the form of social media were innovatively used in the call for change. In consuming media technologies, citizens appeared to take on new consumption practices that were previously unseen. The key drivers are discussed in the next subsection.

2.1.6 Drivers behind the Egyptian and Libyan revolution

An understanding of the influential drivers is needed in order to comprehend how the revolutions in Egypt and Libya unfolded. Contrary to subjective opinion, no driver was superior over another but rather this section should be viewed from the perspective that the combination of multiple drivers were significant in driving the revolutions forward. It is beyond introductory parameters to discuss the drivers. Historically, revolutions such

as the French Revolution (1789-99) occurred due to an array of issues such as economic struggles, political rights and rising food prices (Sydenham, 1997). Contradicting the French Revolution, the spread of media technologies were influential in causing the 'domino effect' of the revolutions, beginning with Tunisia, followed by Egypt and then Libya. The downfall of Tunisian leader Ben Ali, sent shockwaves across Egypt which has the second largest internet using population in the region after Iran. Media communications such as the internet and social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and mobile phones saw a technological eruption in the call for change (Ray, 2011). Egyptians and Libyans used these methods of communication to build extensive networks, create online social capital, organise mass demonstrations and arrange political action (Ghannam, 2011). However, in Libya, the armed conflict between rebel fighters and the Qaddafi regime (Chorev, 2012) meant that the impact of social media was more peripheral than central to overturning the old regime.

Similarly, in Egypt, social media paved the gateway for activists such the '*Tamarod Movement* (BBC, 2013), *Kefaya* (meaning enough in Arabic) and the *April 6th Movement* (Zunes, 2014) who disseminated key messages for collective action. Silent protests such as for *Khaled Said* (an ordinary Egyptian citizen who was allegedly subject to police brutality) (Ahram online, 2014) also assisted in establishing structured movements against the Mubarak regime. Religious gatherings in places of worship also contributed to awareness and discussion as did activism from different political factions. Social anarchy, chaos, cultural imagery, symbolisms and other forms of artistic expression were ambivalent in both Egypt and Libya (Cavalluzzo, 2011) and were utilised by the people. Graffiti for instance, known as a traditional tool of communication, was everywhere on Egyptian streets but evaded explicit political reference that could compromise the graffiti culprit (Abaza, 2013). Perhaps the ability to speak out has existed a long time before the internet, social media mechanisms and cultural interactions, yet many individuals in ME societies had not been given an opportunity to cast their own candid views. To its credit, the drivers of the revolutions assisted in transforming Arab citizens' voices of discontent into a structured movement that epitomised shared values for 'change' (Howard and Hussain, 2011). More importantly, if it is accepted that new acts of consumption emerged via taking part in technological activities (e.g. social media) as well as social activities, then Egyptians and Libyans had taken consumption to a new level. To an extent, the censorship of information may have accelerated citizens' consumption of media technologies.

Despite attempts by Mubarak's government to block telecommunications and the internet, the protestors had already flocked to Tahrir Square in unprecedented numbers (Joseph, 2012). Many Egyptian citizens also utilised Google maps to pinpoint demonstration locations, while armed rebels in Libya used it to target Qaddafi strongholds. The rise of social media in recent decades has resulted in consumers who are more informed and exposed to global information. The Insights MENA (Middle East and North Africa) interactive online tool provided statistical data on internet usage patterns, media habits, social networking, mobile, online perceptions and also E-commerce. Their findings demonstrated that approximately 44% of men engaged in social networking against 27% of women. Of the 44% of men, the highest age demographic using social networking online was the 15-24 age group with 61%, thus, confirming the rise of young citizenry interest. The same age group ranked the highest amongst Arab women with 45% (Insights MENA, 2010). Limitations of the findings are that the data was conducted between September-November 2010 and therefore, the findings are likely to be outdated. Moreover, the study's sampling strategy can be criticised for only incorporating the UAE, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan and Saudi Arabia and not Libya. Consequently, the results cannot be generalised to the wider ME.

Born global virtual sphere MNEs such as Facebook, Twitter and Google created the technology and infrastructure that enabled Arab citizens to vocalise their opinions and consume new technologies. One of the advantages such firms have is that they can advocate their technologies (social media, mobile technologies, Google maps) without having a physical presence in a particular country, thus establishing a borderless virtual sphere (Benmamoun et al., 2012). Although the extent of social media in the revolutions is still unclear (as it was a driver but not the main driver in the Egyptian and Libyan revolutions) online media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter will continue to be readily available (Markham, 2014) and therefore virtual sphere MNEs have a strong foothold in the ME. Other media such blogospheres were commonly consumed in the five years leading up to the revolutions, but many were apolitical and averted most politically charged debates (Rinke and Roder, 2011). Regardless the number of drivers present in driving the revolutions forward, regime change would not have been possible without the consumption of new technologies, social activities and the desire to speak out. What is not yet clear is an understanding of the themes that influence consumption practices. It is important to investigate the themes that affect consumption in order to advance an understanding of changing consumption practices in the ME. Therefore, in chapter three

presented next, the methodology of conducting SLR for the literature review, the process of identifying themes and the literature review themes are discussed.

Chapter 3 Literature Review
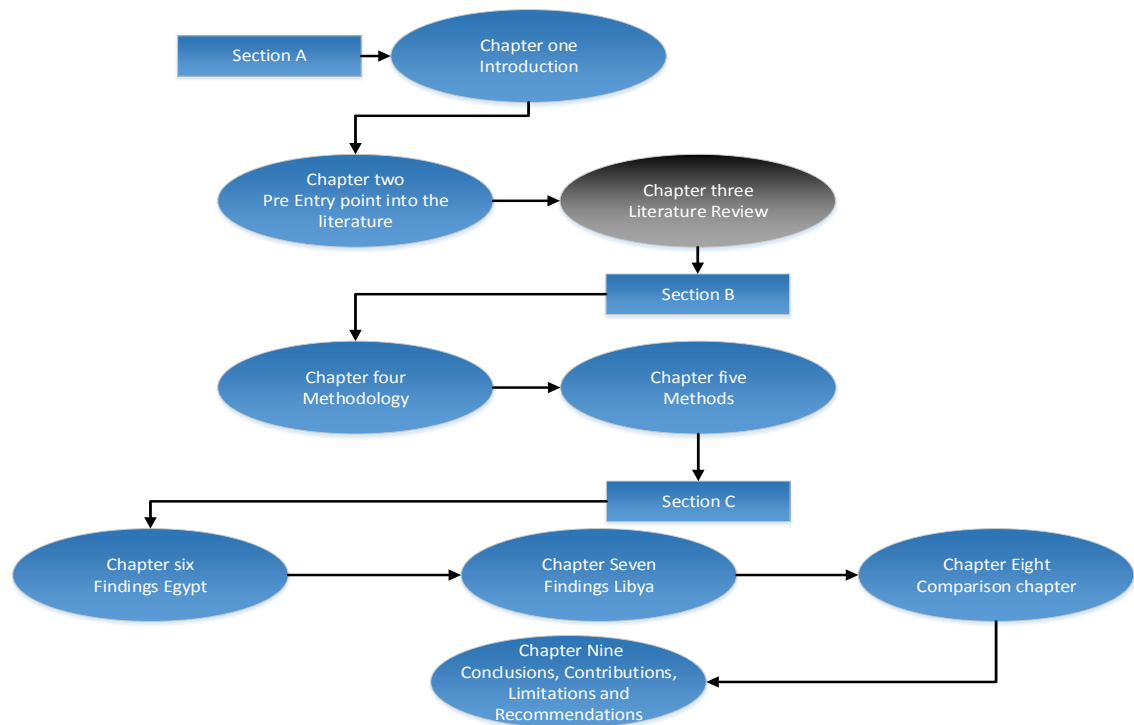
Figure 4: Route Map - The position of the current chapter in the thesis-Source: Author.

3.1 Constructing systematic literature reviews (SLR's) as an entry point into the literature

The purpose of this literature review is to systematically and critically review the foci of marketing scholarship with regards to the ME and the themes pertaining to the research aim. The predominant purpose of conducting an (SLR) is twofold: to serve as an entry point into the literature in respect of marketing in the ME and to explicitly identify the body of literature relating to consumption practices. Developed themes assist in the configuration of proposed themes for the interview schedule. The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: first, the background to constructing an SLR is presented. Second, the methodological process of conducting an SLR is discussed.

The main aim of traditional SLRs are to provide results which can be generalised, applied to other contexts and used to hypothesise the happenings of future events, thus advocating a deductive aggregated review based approach (Gough et al, 2012). There is much debate about the links between academic research and practice. Researchers have attempted to construct SLRs to converge academic research with practice. To date, SLRs have been invariably popular within the medical fields (Tranfield et al., 2003) because of the

scientific nature of medical research which forgoes extensive experimental implementation, strong unanimity among the research questions and predominantly quantitative research with the reviews conducted by a series of panel members in the field (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006). Management research has fairly recently recognised the attraction for adopting an SLR approach by acknowledging the advantages used in the medical division which applies a systematic base to explore novel methodologies that have been previously developed. SLRs have the ability to locate, critically analyse and synthesise existing research in the literature to ensure that observations are applicable to medical policy and practice (Denyer and Neely, 2004).

Contrary to medical approaches, management research is still in its infant stages with regards to SLRs due to the vast majority of studies focussing on a 'narrative review approach' (Antman et al., 1992; Cook et al.,1997; Denyer and Tranfield 2006; Griffiths, 2002; Hart,1998; Mulrow,1994). One of the issues with applying an SLR in management research is the lack of raw data within the literature studies. Tranfield et al. (2003) argued that the majority of authors may only point out generalised findings from their respective studies, present their results, or part/s of them, and only briefly indicate in their methodologies how the research was carried out. Tranfield et al. also criticised the selection criteria of an SLR, claiming that they are frequently based upon subjective findings and analogies of the researcher rather than raw data. Validity concerns of the systematic findings are therefore relative to the thoroughness of the search conducted and the comparability of the studies derived from search/s (Greenhalgh, 1997). Many interpretivist authors have criticised the traditions of an SLR and argued that they conform to positivist markings (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006; Hammersley, 2001; Macdonald, 1996; Noblit and Hare, 1988). However, the author of this thesis contends that this SLR is firmly positioned within an inductive based approach. Consequently, the review scope is to generate and explore existing concepts and favours iterative exploration over pre-defined, pre-specified methods typically seen in aggregated reviews. Moreover, the SLR overlaps concisely with the author's social constructionist stance because of the critical synthesis in excavating emerging concepts. Thus, a thorough qualitative synthesis of the existing literature advances explanations made in the research findings. On the other hand, positivistic stances would not be able to capture emerging concepts beyond the boundaries of theory testing or hypotheses. Similarly, the progress of extraordinary change in revolutionary societies cannot be quantified by statistics.

Marketing as a discipline is stationed within the field of management which incorporates sub disciplines such as finance and accounting, organisational behaviour, international business and economics (Tranfield et al., 2003). Given the significant ontological, epistemological and methodological differences within these sub disciplines, Tranfield et al. argued that a uniform prescribed approach to an SLR is not possible. Consequently, a novel social constructionist qualitative systematic review, that has not been previously replicated, was developed. Unlike conventional SLRs (Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Denyer and Tranfield, 2006; Greenhalgh and Peacock, 2005; Pittaway et al., 2004; Rashman et al., 2009; Thorpe et al., 2005; Tranfield et al., 2003), the emphasis of this SLR was not focussed on the quantitative analysis of articles but on providing theoretical lucidity and the development of a conceptual framework that illustrates how the themes relate to consumption practices. Identifying thematic areas for exploration took precedence over hypo-deductive testing. Thus, qualitative synthesis acknowledged areas where knowledge was still lacking and synthesised the findings in a structured manner that allowed for the construction of emerging themes. This SLR was guided by considering the principles underscored by Thorpe et al. (2005) which are: 'transparency' where each search of the research studies is recorded. This also involves utilising inclusion and exclusion criteria; inclusion criteria to filter included studies and exclusion criteria to eliminate any irrelevant studies. 'Clarity' is an integral element which entails a series of searches and reveals a trail into how the researcher arrived at a final set of studies. The 'focus' then forms the emphasis of the emerging research question and allows the researcher to pursue relevant primary evidence. By broadening the scope of returned hits, the SLR is designed to both accurately shape the literature review and inform the researcher of perspectives regarding the evidence collated. Practically, this embodies that of the 'unified research' and 'practitioner communities.' 'Equality' is the next aspect which implies that the review filters the literature on its merits, inductivity and methodologies within the study. Adopting the above principles gives value to doing an SLR and differentiates it from 'narrative analyses since research bias is reduced and studies have not been selected at the discretion or favourable pursuits of the researcher.

In summary, the applicability of an SLR to the research and the differences between SLRs in management and medicine have been discussed. In the next subsection, the methodology for carrying out the literature review is presented.

3.2 Application of a systematic literature review within the study context

The process of conducting an SLR began by interacting with journal search databases. In order to capture a detailed insight of data and expansive search of the literature, ten search databases were chosen to carry out the searches. These were the Web of Science, ProQuest, EBSCO, Emerald, Ingentaconnect, Jstor, Sage, Science Direct, Scopus and Taylor & Francis. Further justification was to cover the majority of databases used for business and management studies and their sub disciplines. Typically, SLRs may only use one search database but the argument here is that this limits the thoroughness of the review and restricts the number of articles assigned to a particular database. For example, a search involving the Web of Science (WoS) does not encompass the wider literature in business and management because it tends to hold records of the main international journals and not more regional and nationally orientated journals (such as *the Journal of Islamic Marketing, International Journal of Islamic Finance and Management, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Euromed Journal of Business, Journal of Euro-marketing and Gulf marketing review*). Therefore, methodological thoroughness is underscored by the extensiveness of the searches and consultation of ten databases. Two criteria were used to filter the searches. These were inclusion and exclusion. Consumption could not be screened as a discipline and neither could marketing as it is not characterised as a sub-field in journal search databases. The inclusion criteria restricted results to business and management disciplines in order to yield results that were matched towards the epicentre of business and surrounding fields. Results were limited by article title to narrow the scope of the search and between the periods 1970-2014 to amass over four decades of research (see figure 5). The exclusion criteria filtered irrelevant content such as book reviews and editorial material.

Keywords were carefully considered in order to reduce pre-determined biases. Search strings did not use concepts or keywords embedded within the marketing school of thought because this would have also encouraged bias. Consequently, fourteen generalised search terms (see Table 1) were typed into each of the ten databases. Truncations containing an asterix (*) were used. So for example, 'market*' returned hits associated with 'markets' or 'marketing'. The same search strings were typed into each of the ten databases to avoid compromising the reliability of the systematic approach.

1. Market*+Arab*	2. Market*+Middle East*	3. Arab*+Consum*	4. Middle East*+Consum*
5. Market*+Egypt*	6. Market*+Libya*	7. Consum*+Egypt*	8. Consum*+Libya*
9. Arab Spring*	10. Egypt*+Revol*	11. Libya*+Revol*	12. Revol*+Soc*
13. Revol*+Pol*	14. Revol*+Market*		

Table 1: SLR search using 14 search strings

The results were exported to Microsoft Endnote. Endnote is a useful program not only for bibliographical references but has search functions which allowed for further filtering of the results. Moreover, the duplicate function excluded 357 duplicates. This circumscribed to 1,168 articles which proved to be unmanageable. Some databases indexed bibliographical information differently which meant bypassing the Endnote duplicate function so after a manual review of duplicates, 192 were removed. The elimination of 498 commentary articles on the Arab revolutions left 478 articles. After scrutinising article titles and abstracts, 344 articles were discarded. A qualitative synthesis and critical review of the remaining articles followed which explored each article's purpose, findings, theoretical frameworks, methodology and methods, contributions and main themes. SLR methodologies, however tailored, involve subjective interpretations of studies after the dissemination of the results. The final number of studies was 150 (see figure 5 below). Similarly, even if a quantitative aggregated review is pursued, scholars belonging to the functionalist paradigm deploy subjective interpretations for the final selection of studies. Articles were split into two dichotomous strands of literature in correspondence with the context of the study. The first strand contained articles pertaining to the evolutionary environment (global) and was labelled 'Global Marketing' (77 articles) while the second, related to the revolutionary environment (local) and was named 'Middle East Marketing' (73 articles). The use of the term 'revolutionary environments' does not imply that ME states such as Egypt and Libya have achieved revolutions in the strictest sense, but rather, denotes the process of extraordinary change in local environments. Simply reviewing the foci of marketing literature on Egypt and Libya would not have represented a wider corpus of knowledge, which is why it was crucial to consolidate the current knowledge known about marketing and consumption in the ME. The final set of studies proposed emerging themes for the literature review (presented next). Methodologically, the SLR is also transferrable to other contexts and settings such as the unrest in Ukraine as long as the review is well documented and follows a tailored series of steps. Emerging themes

can then be used for research methods such as part of interview protocols or as guideline prompts to survey questions.
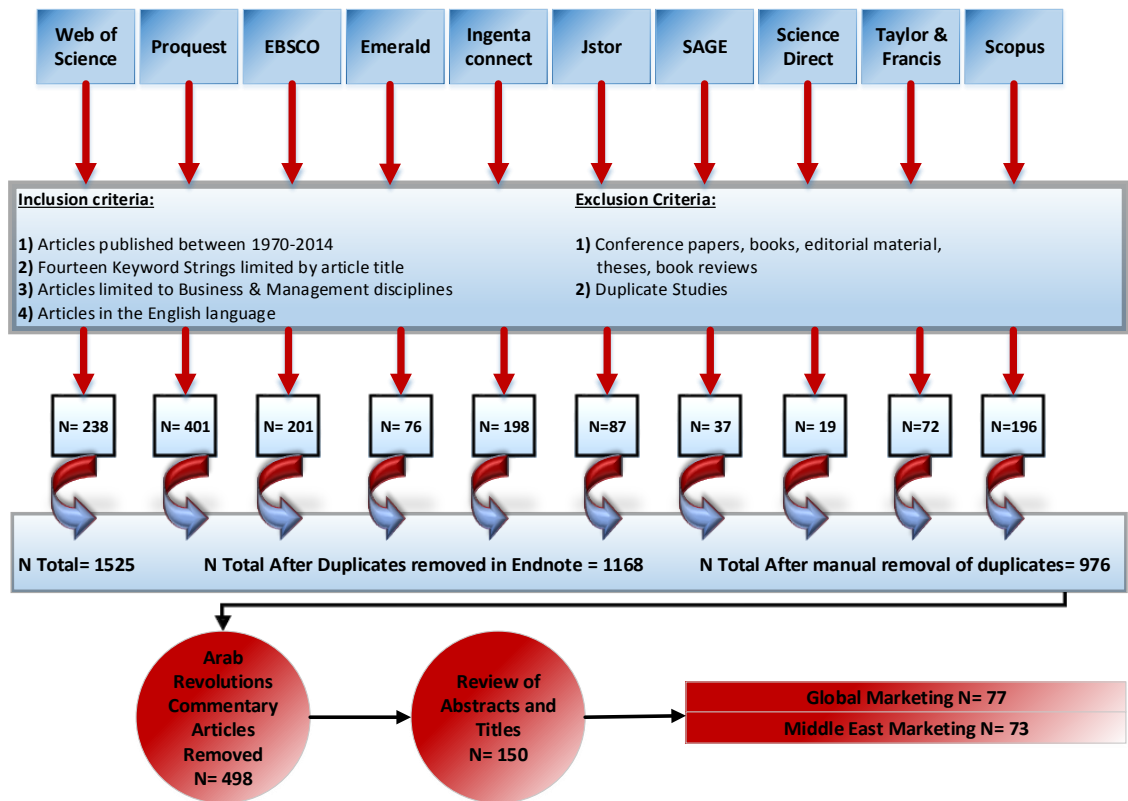
Figure 5: The SLR process from start to finish-Source: Author.
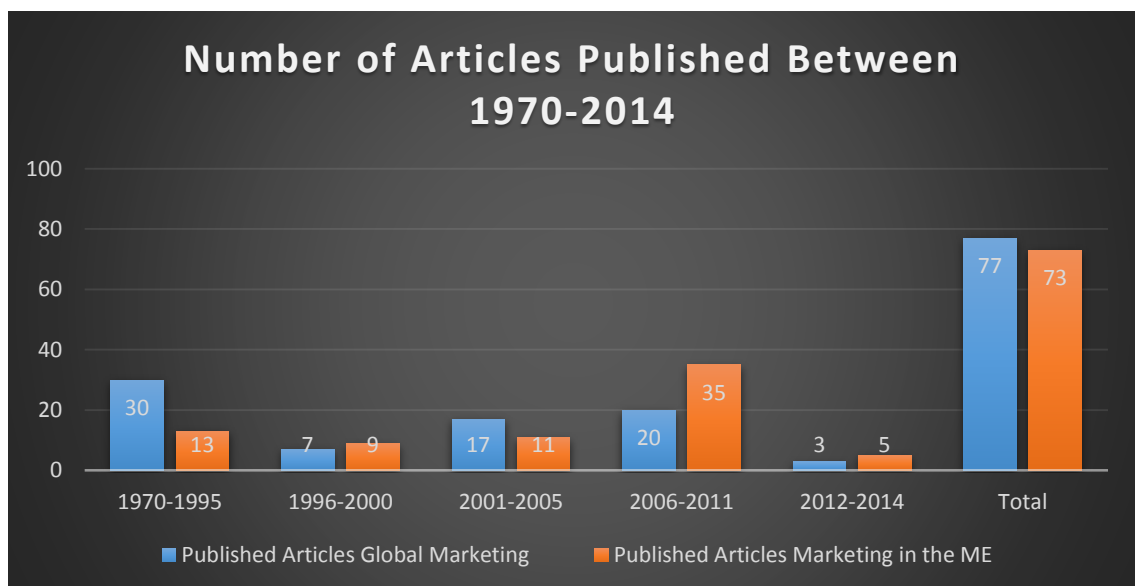
Figure 6: The number of published articles between 1970-2014 (after using the 14 search strings) - Source: Author.

A citation analysis was initially performed to pinpoint the frequency of bibliographical references and the most prominent authors in the field of marketing in the ME (Al-Abdin et al., 2012) but it was removed because only few databases such as Scopus and the Web

of Science could be used to generate cited in (how many times an author/s cite other authors) and cited out (how many times other authors have cited them). A number of scholars in the field of management and marketing have documented their own citation analysis in recent years (Alves, 2010; Backhaus et al., 2011; Coombes and Nicholson, 2013; Ma and Yu, 2010; Marr and Schiuma, 2003; Ramos-Rodriguez and Ruiz-Navarro, 2004). Essentially, citation analyses are better suited to established fields of study and are not usefully represented by new phenomena such as the Arab revolutions.

A limitation of the located studies are that they were conducted in a less candid era and not in a state of unrest. Nevertheless, by constructing an SLR and in terms of literature proximity, the studies disseminated were the closest to understanding marketing concepts pertaining to consumption practices in the ME. Articles outside the marketing and management discipline may have allowed further knowledge advancement. However, such articles were not followed up due to the nature of this thesis and the objectives of the study. Furthermore, journal databases are constantly being updated, meaning that new studies may emerge but marketing publications focussing on the Arab revolutions are unlikely, hence the contributory value of this study. Of noteworthy mention is that an SLR for a thesis differs from that for a journal article. A thesis must incorporate literature sources from predominantly scholarly journals but also from relevant books and other published theses. Such material was integrated within this SLR through a process called 'hand searching' (Gough et al., 2012). Another issue was the search criteria. Maintaining consistency was paramount but the layout of each database's *advanced search criteria* differed and, as a consequence, may have impacted on the inclusion criteria of limiting studies to business and management. Conversely, generic search strings and detected duplicates reduced the possibility of studies going undetected. In the next subsection, the process of constructing the themes for the literature review is illustrated.

3.3 Constructing themes- A concept mapping approach

Constructing the themes entailed scrutinising the final set of studies from the SLR by using qualitative synthesis. The next stage was to go through a process of concept mapping. Concept maps (CM) are a tool for organising and developing knowledge. Ideas/themes are constructed in circles or representative shapes that denote, in some form or another, a relationship between concepts. Interrelated concepts are usually grouped together (Novak, 1990; 1991). By visualising the concepts (see figure 7), a knowledge

trail is provided into the evolution of studies and themes over a period of time (1970-2014). Furthermore, CMs are adapted differently depending on the individual social scientists' (Novak, 1990) interpretations of socially constructed meanings and the happening of events. Based on this premise, it is argued that CMs can overlap consistently with a social constructionist approach. The point of departure from interpretivism is where propositions made in the form of concepts become objective and therefore shift towards functionalist assumptions. In contrast to Novak's original application where leading concepts (higher tier) are usually positioned at the top and spiral downwards, the CMs used here were guided by the SLR. Moreover, visualisations made do not follow a top-down structure because of the emphasis on the evolution of studies and themes over a designated period of time. Consequently, the applied mapping technique follows Novak's mapping principles but, by extension, adds the researcher's own novel approach.
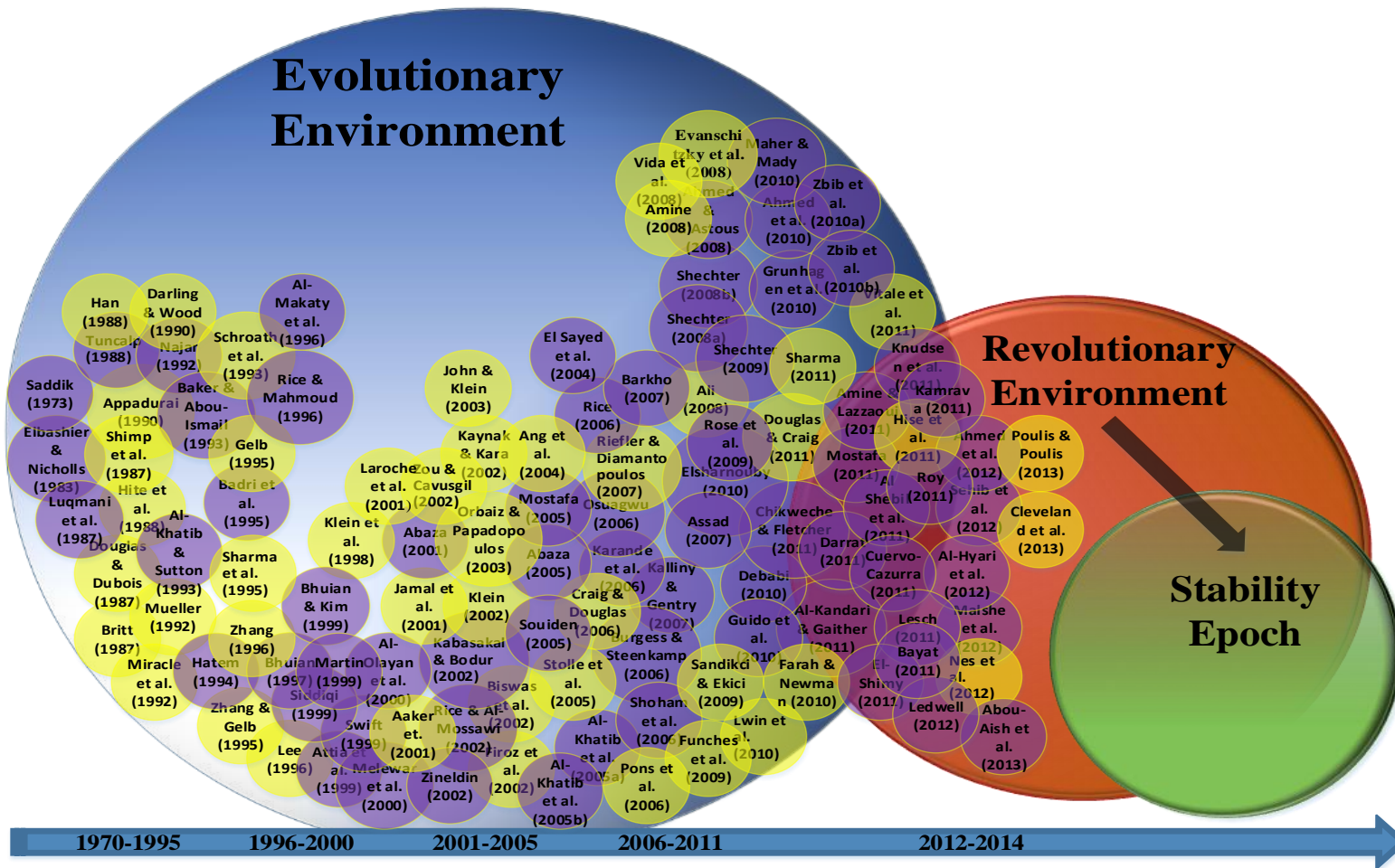
Figure 7: Showing the evolution of studies between the periods 1970-2014- Source: Author.

As demonstrated in figure 7, the progression of evolutionary studies (the global marketing environment – demonstrated in yellow) has been relatively constant over the prescribed time periods. By contrast, the evolvement of revolutionary studies (marketing in the ME – in purple) has been rather scarce but rose incrementally towards the latter end of the noughties. This indicates to an extent, an emphasis on emerging studies in the ME and can be attributed to the rise in educational practices, globalisation, a growing global consumer culture and a competitive overhaul of ME states in recent years (Zineldin, 2002). However, as much as the SLR is considered an entry point for the literature review, the disembarkation point is still unknown. Consequently, the stability epoch circle is where a state of stability is reached and is therefore purposely positioned as an extension to the revolutionary environment.

Figure 8: The evolution of the themes between the periods 1970-2014- Source: Author.

Alike Figure 7, Figure 8 should be read alongside Table 2. The key emphasis is on the impact of the identified themes on consumption practices. For simplicity and to visually track the progression of themes, the theme names have directly replaced the authors so that they may be easily understood. In Table 2, the themes are summarised.

Theme number	Themes Identified in the Middle East
1.	Cultural values (CV)
2.	Religious Values (RV)
3.	Desired vs. Desirable Effects (DD)
4.	Candidness and Freedom of Expression (CFE)
5.	Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) and Consumer Animosity (CA)
6.	Perceptions of country-of-origin (COO) effects in the ME
7.	Political Consumption (PC) in the ME
8.	Consumer Boycotts (CB's)
9.	Homogeneity vs. Heterogeneity (HH)
10.	Global Consumption (GC)
11.	Middle East Consumption (MEC)
12.	Consumption Practices in Egypt (CPE)
13.	Consumption Practices in Libya (CPL)

Table 2: Identified themes from the SLR with abbreviations

Following CM, the set of themes are discussed in the literature review, which is presented next and begins with the first theme of cultural values. Beginning with cultural values is important because consumption choices are guided by cultural norms and values (Park and Rabolt, 2009).

3.4 Cultural values

Cultural values are an implicit and significant aspect of the global marketing environment (evolutionary) and therefore consumption, because without understanding cultural values, international and local marketers face difficulties in reaching out to consumers in a given country (Firoz et al., 2002). Keegan (1980) broadly defined culture as the different ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another. Paradoxes exist between western and, more specifically in the context of this study, ME cultures. There is an abundance of existing literature on cultural research in

the ME and also the marketing strategies that home firms and western firms use to understand the impact of cultural values on consumption in the region (Al-Khatib et al., 2005a; Al-Khatib and Sutton, 1993; Attia et al., 1999; Debabi, 2010; Elbashier and Nicholls, 1983; Kalliny and Gentry, 2007; Karande et al., 2006; Malshe et al., 2012; Rice and Al-Mossawi, 2002; Swift, 1999; Uskul et al., 2010). However, Al-Kandari and Gaither (2011) criticised the literature for lacking ME based studies dealing with cultural values and that studies frequently examined the most economically advantaged ME states such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia. If this view is accepted, then emerging markets in the ME such as Egypt and Libya are interesting contexts to examine, particularly during turbulent times of unrest. Research on emerging markets has been given increased attention over the last decade (Attia, 2013; Chikweche and Fletcher, 2011). Osuagwu (2006) claimed the application of marketing philosophy in countries such as Egypt was still widely debated. Burgess and Steenkamp (2006) agree with Osuagwu and suggested that emerging markets contradicted the assumption of theories developed in the western hemisphere and challenged traditional norms. Perhaps the lack of marketing attention in ME markets explains a lack of comprehension for changing consumption practices. Thus, to enhance the development of marketing science, academic attention should be drawn to researching emerging markets. In the case of Egypt, the country's strategic alliance with the west has partly contributed to a hybridised consumer culture and given rise to multicultural dynamics (Abaza, 2006). On the other hand, Osuagwu's view can be criticised on the basis of positioning emerging markets as typically having characteristics pertaining to strong government control, economic shortages and general reservations against marketing philosophy. From a personal standpoint, the influx of foreign capitalistic practices is embedded within Egyptian culture and may have been strengthened in light of the revolutions. Understanding changing consumption practices may assist in determining if a comprehension of marketing philosophy and knowledge have become recognised in the present epoch and if so, how cultural values have contributed to the development of consumption practices.

In the case of advertising in the ME for example, the comprehension of marketing philosophy is important for multinationals in the region in understanding consumption practices. This is because multinational firms can be hindered by the international marketers' own 'self-reference' criteria. These criteria may lead to cultural myopia due to unconscious references to the home country firms' own respective cultural values, associations and affiliations (Lee, 1996; Melewar et al., 2000). Consequently, an inability

to interpret cultural values outside the home country of origin impedes the progress of the foreign company in the host market. Ricks et al. (1974) echoed Lee's standpoint and advocated that the multinational marketer must appreciate and fully integrate cultural values when shaping international marketing strategies in foreign markets. Douglas and Dubois (1977) moved a step further in their study of cultural factors in advertising and concluded that cultural influences affected the advertising spectrum in four explicit ways: the choice of the advertising theme, the connotations of word and symbols embedded within the semiotics of the brand, the interpretation of visual aesthetics and also the media selection. Consumers are pushed to consume advertised products or pushed away depending on how much attention has been given to cultural values.

Two of the most popular works in the cultural domain are Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions and Hall's (1976) high and low context analogies. The Hofstede model (Hofstede, 2001; 2005) maintains the position that cultural values are inherently stable and depicts cultures according to five dimensions: power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long term vs. short term orientation. 'Power distance' is the extent to which less influential members of society accept and perceive power to be allocated unequally. For example, in high power distance countries such as the ME, social hierarchies are prevalent and orders from authority are obeyed. Similarly, higher power distance can signify social status and prestige via the consumption of more luxury products, particularly amongst more affluent members of society. 'Individualism' refers to people looking after themselves independently while 'collectivism' denotes people looking after themselves/taking care of themselves within the wider community or group. In individualistic cultures, people are 'I' conscious and focus on self- actualisation, whereas in collectivistic cultures (e.g. the ME), people are 'we' conscious, altruistic, family orientated and their identities are reflected by the wider group. In terms of 'masculinity/femininity', masculine societies (e.g. Japan) focus on achievement and success whereas in more feminine societies (e.g. Scandinavian countries), there is an emphasis on caring for others and quality of life. 'Uncertainty avoidance' can be defined as the degree to which people are less likely to take risks and avoid such situations. In high uncertainty avoidance cultures (e.g. Germany), there is an abundance of rules and structure to life. Thus, people in these cultures are less open to change and innovation than people in lower uncertainty avoidance cultures. 'Long term' vs. 'short term' orientation is when people adopt a pragmatic future orientated perspective instead of a short term point of view. Some

inherent values in long term orientation cultures are perseverance, ordering of relationships by status and having a sense of shame. ME cultures can be considered as having a high long term orientation because of the emphasis on family honour and reputation (Uskul et al., 2010). In contrast, short term orientation cultures focus on personal steadiness and stability as well as happiness (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). In 2010, Hofstede et al. (2010) expanded work on the five cultural dimensions and added a sixth. This is 'indulgence' vs. 'restraint'. Indulgent societies are considered to permit greater gratification of natural human desires such as enjoying life and having fun whereas restraint societies are believed that such gratification should be in cognisance with strict norms. In restraint societies, positive emotions are less expressed and happiness, freedom and leisure are given less importance.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions have been adopted by an array of academics in the marketing discipline (Aaker and Lee, 2001; Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996; Fam and Grohs, 2007; Han and Shavitt, 1994; Okazaki and Mueller, 2007; Soares et al., 2007). For instance, in the context of international advertising, Han and Shavitt (1994) identified that collectivistic cultures are more likely to be persuaded by the group benefits of having a product than the individual benefits. Similarly, Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) discovered that the type of advertising appeals (e.g. social status, power and dominance to seek conformity) used in a particular country matches up with Hofstede's (1980) power distance scores. A recent study by Jung et al. (2009) noted the importance of the 'etic-emic' distinction (Gould and Grein, 2009). An etic view is based on a researcher's perspective and uses external criteria to describe and compare different cultures, whereas an emic view is based on the perspective of the actual members of a particular culture. de Mooij (2014:p.182) argued that in order to fully 'unpackage' the culture concept, an etic approach is required and entails the use of cultural values aligned alongside interpretable dimensions (e.g. Hofstede's dimensions). Jung et al. (2009) emphasised that within an emic view, citizens of a particular culture may understand and interpret the world differently than citizens outside that culture. The findings of their study suggested that the grouping of culturally similar countries (e.g. cultural clusters) appears to be a more rational option than the grouping of countries across the board or countries with dissimilar cultures. As a result, international marketers can negotiate the extent to which marketing strategies should be globalised or localised. Moreover, in agreement with Taylor (2005), Jung et al. (2009) praised the work of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and argued that they need to be measured rather than 'assumed'. This would seem to negate the validity of

etic-emic approaches but nevertheless, both approaches are still important in marketing decisions.

Despite the prominence and importance of Hofstede's work, a number of criticisms have been raised. The first is with regards to sampling (de Mooij, 2011; McSweeney, 2002; Nakata, 2009; Orr and Hauser, 2008; Todeva, 1999; Williamson, 2002). For example, Todeva (1999) questioned the validity of Hofstede's original sample because they were from the same company (IBM) and Orr and Hauser (2008) contested that a near single gender component was used (male). Second, is the alleged inconsideration of etic-emic approaches when circulating the same cultural dimensions questionnaire to different cultures (Nielsen and Gannon, 2005). Third, Hofstede has been criticised for having a one-dimensional assumption of cultures as well as out of date and generalised dimensions (Baskerville-Morley, 2005; Clark, 2003; Kirkman et al., 2006; Nakata, 2009; Osland et al., 2000; Oyserman et al., 2002; Schwartz, 1994). Fourth, Hofstede's dimensions are adjudged to be more applicable on a national level, rather than on an individual level (Brewer and Venaik, 2012; Venaik and Brewer, 2013). However, de Mooij and Hofstede (2010) opposed this view and asserted that cultural values are an integral part of the consumers' self and not an environmental factor. Therefore, consumers are central to marketing decisions and cultural values allow marketers to explicitly define the self and personality of consumers. On the contrary, the dependence of cultural values according to Holden (2004), particularly in the marketing discipline, has been argued to be an unsatisfactory means for consumer segmentation and marketing decisions. Instead he encouraged marketing researchers to revisit their concept of culture to one that is suitable for the modern day economy, abandon the reliance on Hofstede's cultural dimensions and assume culture to be of less relevance for markets and national cultures. In addition, he suggested that culture is not an external set of factors that make up a market but a facet of evolving relationships within that market and marketing researchers must understand that culture can be discovered and that it is their discovery that establishes new marketing knowledge.

de Mooij and Hofstede (2010) contested that confusion surrounding Hofstede's cultural dimensions arises when marketing researchers and academics apply these cultural dimensions on an individual level. Further complications develop when researchers/academics from individualistic cultures are in support of individual-level studies and are against characterising people on the basis of group traits (collectivist cultures). Conversely, researchers/academics from collectivistic cultures have the

opposite bias and tend to view people as belonging to groups rather than as individuals (de Mooij, 2013; Minkov, 2007).

In relation to the ME, Hofstede originally grouped the cultural dimensions for ME countries together instead of addressing them separately. However, recent trends illustrated by the Hofstede centre (2015) denote that there are marginal differences between Arab States. For example, Libya (38) has a slightly less collectivism score than Egypt (25). The recent work of the Hofstede centre is a welcome addition to segmenting the ME countries because prior research revealed that the grouping of Arabic countries together is unviable (Hickson and Pugh, 1995; Kabasakal and Bodur, 2002). Egypt and Libya, like many other Arab countries, are considered collectivist societies where the expectation of favours through friendship ties (or *wasta* in Arabic) is common (Elsharnouby, 2010). Despite the numerous critiques that Hofstede's work has received, he remains one of the most cited marketing academics (even though he is a non-marketer) (Holden, 2004). The issue of cultural dimensions assuming homogeneity has been dismissed by de Mooij (2004) and de Mooij and Hofstede (2002) who argued that the convergence of technology and disintegrating income differences across countries would not lead to the homogenisation of consumer behaviour. On the contrary, with the rise of consumer wealth and the convergence of social classes, consumer behaviour would become more heterogeneous. Therefore, culture is integral to consumers' own values and these values vary by culture (Goodrich and de Mooij, 2011). de Mooij (2004) further argued that culture has replaced wealth as a predictor variable for consumer segmentation and is essential to understanding consumers globally. As de Mooij and Hofstede (2011: p. 11) suggested: "When designing global marketing, branding and advertising strategies companies ignore these [cultural dimensions] at their peril."

The sentiments of de Mooij (2013) that multinationals and academic researchers more often than not implement cultural dimensions from an individual level to a national one without realising the distinct individualistic cultural values of consumers could explain why ME societies are often assumed as being homogenous and are grouped together. If unanimous collectivism reigned amongst ME consumers and inferred homogeneity, then consumption practices are only as transitional as societal values and norms. Alike Hofstede, an issue concerning Hall's (1976) theory is that although particular distinctions are made between high and low context cultures, marketers must recognise that cultural distinctions have to be taken into consideration when adopting their strategies; a similar point echoed by de Mooij and Hofstede (2010) and de Mooij (2013). To critically appraise

both Hofstede and Hall, their works have implications for consumption practices so long as it is understood that culture progresses over time and space. As other examples in practice, Miracle et al. (1992) adopted Hofstede and Hall's cultural typologies in their study and discovered that US advertisements (low context culture) were more direct than Korean advertisements (high context culture) in showing brand and company names. In the same year, Biswas et al. (1992) pinpointed the Arabic culture as a high context one where the translated messages not only concerned words but also the background in which the message occurred. They concluded that advertising to Arabic consumers did not require a wealth of information and intricate details, particularly since Pan-Arab satellite contained free-to-air channels broadcasted throughout the ME. An alternative perspective was taken by Miracle (1992) and Biswas et al. (1992) who stressed that the Arab countries were deemed a collectivistic society and consumers were more likely to generate information sources from their friends and relatives about a product. If this view is accepted, then the extent to which Hofstede and Halls works can be realistically applied may be praised as having high transferability from the angle of consumption. The production of a consumer culture is dependent on the progression of consumption practices. If a new consumer culture emerges then consumption practices change at the same time to match the direction of the consumer culture.

In segmenting consumer cultures, Elbashier and Nicholls (1983) argued against cultural homogeneity in the Arab world and instead held the view that there were important sub-cultures within each respective Arab country such as tribes, clans and ethnic minorities. They claimed that ME cultures were adaptive rather than static, but were under the influence of Western products, communications and other accoutrements of the Western way of life. A few years later, Keegan and Green (1996) complemented the view of Zhang and Gelb (1996) and disputed that consumers reacted favourably to advertising that shared an affinity with their own cultural values. However, Mueller (1992) claimed that the ability to standardise advertising outside the home country was a complex process and not always achievable with every advertising mechanism. On the contrary, other writers such as Britt (1974) and Hite et al. (1988) claimed that advertisements should adapt to the cultural values and norms of the specific target market in order to effectively communicate with consumers. The latter views are indicative of the life processes consumers go through within their own consumption practices and are important in advancing marketing theories via an understanding of how cultural values and norms shape the marketplace (Karababa and Kjeldgaard, 2013).

In summary, the dimensions of culture in reference to the ME have been addressed. If consumption still remains the act, then cultural values impact consumers' consumption practices and engagement with mainstream marketing messages (e.g. advertising) or discourses. Such discourses are not limited by cultural issues but reproduced by them to establish new meanings, values and exchanges between the consumer and the object being consumed. Therefore, a change in consumption practices is relative to the influence of culture. Unlike many western societies, religion is an integral part of consumer values and forms an integral part of everyday consumption in the ME (Farah and El Samad, 2014), thereby affecting consumption practices in some form or another. In the next subsection, religious values in the ME are reviewed.

3.4.1 Religious values

In the context of extraordinary change, religious stimuli can promote change in two directions: radical change where a society is pushed into a new direction and conservative change where a society returns to a previous state of affairs (Engelland, 2014). In a similar vein, religious values (depending on the level of religiosity and the national culture) can be influential in shaping cultural values. A cause for neglect in the literature has been the scarcity of studies dealing with religious values impact on marketing (Cleveland et al. 2013; Karatas and Sandikci, 2013; Steenkamp, 2001) and indeed consumption practices.

Religious values and beliefs are deep rooted within ME culture and have a profound effect on consumption practices across all age groups (Rice and Al-Mossawi, 2002). Another issue is the idea of fatalism which is grounded in religious values and denotes that citizens believe in a divine destiny determined by God (Sidani and Thornberry, 2009; Tuncalp, 1988b). Fatalistic desires in contemporary ME societies often go beyond personal religious values and are embedded within the status quo. The majority of countries in the ME are governed by *Islamic Shari'a* such as the gulf countries, whereas the rest are ruled by both a mix of Shari'a and civil law (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000). The 'Shari'a' is a religious code of practice which governs the duties, morals and actions of all Muslims. Even though varying degrees of religiosity are apparent amongst consumers, the prevalence of Islamic Shari'a in countries such as Saudi Arabia is a mechanism that marketing strategies must abide by (Luqmani et al., 1987). Similarly, the UAE is considered to observe Islamic moral and cultural values but not as rigorously as Saudi Arabia (Al-Khatib et al., 2005a). The depiction of women in the ME is paradoxically

different to the west in the sense that religious governance is influential in shaping consumption such as with the adaptation of advertisements. An example is a European version of a Guy Laroche print advertisement which showed a man's hand grasping a perfume bottle and a woman's hand holding his wrist. On the contrary, in the Saudi Arabian version, the man's arm was clothed in a dark suit sleeve with the woman's hand almost but not quite touching his hand (Melewar et al., 2000).

Varying degrees of religiosity across ME states also shape the extent of consumption practices. Nevertheless, religious values are an integral facet of ME culture and consumption practices are usually guided by it and not the other way round. Moreover, religious and cultural values are conjunct concepts that should not be viewed separately. Religion is very important in countries such as Egypt and Libya. The problem is when marketers have a societal prejudice which causes misunderstandings about religion. Although there are different degrees of religiosity and indeed other faiths such as Christianity and Judaism in Egypt, a large number of Muslims argued for conservative approaches towards exposure to western society to protect their religious identity and cultural traditions (El-Bassiouny, 2014). Consequently, religion is nestled within traditions and local customs and in many cases cannot be separated. For instance, the life processes that consumers go through are swayed by religiosity due to religious rules and taboos. Throughout everyday life, ME consumers use religious principles to assist in the consumption of products/services, consumption choices made as well as what is morally acceptable and what is not (Khraim, 2010). The family unit is also very important as consumers attempt to advocate tradition via the congregation of family members (Parnell and Hatem, 1999; Rice, 1984). Similarly, honour and reputation are also important and the actions of one family member can impact the whole family (Uskul et al., 2010). Thus, if the family's reputation is compromised then social conflicts can occur because family units have been traditionally built around sincerity and loyalty (Barakat, 1993; Inhorn, 1996). Therefore, in an honour culture like the ME, individuals are highly connected with the family unit (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

A further problem which could explain why very little is known about consumption practices in the ME may be because consumer cultures are depicted as emulating from the west and portray hedonistic, harmful and corrupting lifestyles that conflict with traditional norms (Wong, 2007). Another conflict emerges when discussing what the state desired and what the citizens desired. If there was no requirement for change, then Egyptian and Libyans would have been content with the desired which suggests

consumers were content with their existing consumption practices. Conversely, citizens advocated the desirable (i.e. how they wish to be perceived in society and what they want to happen). Consequently, in the next subsection, a discussion of desired vs. desirable effects is presented.

3.4.2 Desired vs. Desirable effects

The terms 'desired' and 'desirable' may connote the same word but different tenses can denote two very contradictory connotations and meanings. In relation to religious and cultural values, the 'desired' concerns what people actually desire and the 'desirable' entails what people ought to desire (Hofstede, 2001). However, the latter ('desired') does not necessarily match up with the way people actually act when they have to choose (Hofstede, 2005). The contentious issues of the desired and desirable argument relate to the value paradox, which refers to a phenomenon in which observed human actions are the opposite of what is actually expected on the basis of one's comprehension of culture (De Mooij, 1998). De Mooij illustrated that the value paradox exists because of a gap between the desirable and the desired. That is to say that there is a gap between what people believe to be norms of a society (desirable) against what people want for themselves (desired). She further argued that the value paradox could manifest itself within any dimension of culture. The value paradox is also similar to that of House et al. (2004) who drew upon several dimensions of culture such as levels of power distance. The study elucidated that there was likely to be a higher value paradox in higher power distance countries such as ME states, as people put stronger emphasis on decisions of power in high context cultures and equal opportunity in lower power distance countries.

In terms of religious values in the ME, Al-Makaty et al. (1996) and Rice and Al-Mossawi (2002) studied advertising in Islam. Both studies indicated that the prevalence of Islamic values and moral teachings were practices that served as principles in everyday life. The two studies above presented several Islamic value dimensions (such as honesty, fairness and modesty) and claimed that the level of religiosity was not homogenous across all of the ME. Some countries were more observant of the Islamic faith and others were less conservative. Less conservative countries (e.g. Lebanon) were likely to be affiliated with the 'desired', while those who were more conservative (and where the vast majority of the population were Muslims) emphasised the 'desirable' (e.g. Saudi Arabia). Thomas (1997) counterclaimed that countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE were considered

to carry western values as well as their own, particularly with their consumption of foreign products. The extent to whether or not consumers in the ME follow the desired or desirable varies from country to country, since ME states were considered to be collectivist societies and tolerate more discrepancy between attitude and behaviour than individualistic societies (Gentry et al., 1995). To critically challenge Thomas and Gentry's views from a personal perspective, ME societies have contrasting demographic, psychographic, religious and cultural values which impact on whether or not consumers follow the desired or the desirable. Therefore, the trustworthiness of their claims cannot be entirely justified because differences exist between ME countries.

Contemporary use of the value paradox has been traditionally positioned in the context of evolutionary (global) environments. By contrast, acknowledging the expressions of desired and desirable values, may be more outstanding now than ever before due to ME societies in a state of extraordinary change. If Gurr's (1970) argument in his book 'Why Men Rebel' is accepted, then the gap between what people have and what they believe they are entitled to resides at the heart of a revolution. Extraordinary changes in the revolutionary (local) environment may have presented the opportunity for Arab consumers to vocalise their opinions, values and battle for what they want (desirable). What citizens wanted or desired in the past before the revolutions in 2011 could well be fulfilled now or in progress. As a result, desired and desirable effects may assist in explaining new market transformations in the region as new sense of selves gives rise to new identities and acculturation practices (Cleveland et al., 2013).

Desired vs. desirable effects can implicitly or explicitly skew consumption practices depending on individual and collective factors. On an individual level, consumption choices are made, whereas on a group level, collective consumption choices are also made within the family unit. An increase in globalisation is also linked to the development of consumption practices shifting towards a global consumer culture. Zineldin (2002) asserted that globalisation is the desirable object in many developing countries. However, attempts to achieve the desirable have been constrained by a lack of economic integration and cooperation between neighbouring Arab states. Aggressive globalisation strategies in developed nations that increased the homogenisation of consumer tastes and preferences through branded goods are a feature of economic integration and a global consumer culture. However, Zineldin also argued that globalisation pertaining from western countries could be the desirable for many Arab states (such as Egypt and Libya) but its desired effects could cause problems and crisis, particularly in relation to individual and

group identities, traditional norms and cultural values. When western values clash with tradition, the consumer is presented with several choices: to abandon the traditional values (i.e. religious and cultural values) and pursue westernization consumption practices; to seek comfort in religious fundamentalism (Sandikci and Jafari, 2013); to merge traditional and western consumption practices together or to become acculturated.

Further problems caused by globalisation also stem from a lack of integration, political tensions and socio-cultural differences between neighbouring ME states. Nevertheless, in a less candid era, the desirable may have leaned towards globalisation or in consumer terms, a greater propensity to consume, but constraints in the political arena only permitted the desired. Thus, in a revolutionary context, the balance between the desired and desirable may subside depending on the level of candidness and freedom of expression, an issue which is of importance, because when citizens have a voice, they are able to speak out and make their own choices. Such choices would seem to have implications on consumption practices. Therefore, the issue to examine in the next subsection is how the Arab revolutions may have allowed citizens to speak out against their governments.

3.4.3 Have the Arab revolutions marked a period of candidness and freedom of expression amongst Arab consumers?

Authoritarianism has historically existed in many Arab countries and conflicted with citizens' social ideals, especially those who have not experienced a period of candidness where they could uphold and express their own views against political and social norms (Lesch, 2011). Coupled within a quandary, many governments tried to censor and filter information broadcasted on state TV and the internet which restricted the free flowing of information but did not halt protests in nations such as Egypt and Libya (El-Shimy, 2011). During the protests in Egypt, there were no direct signs of discontent or animosity against foreigners, westerners and Americans (Ledwell, 2012) which suggests an acculturated tolerance of foreignness (acceptance of foreign influences such as companies, products and services). Even on a religious level, there was the inexistence of a singular organisation, pre-rehearsed demonstration, personality or religious groups (such as the Muslim Brotherhood). Given the fact that Egypt has many different religious groups, the act of patriotism allowed the protestors to come together and fight for democracy (Bayat,

2011; Kamrava, 2012). The scenario in Libya was significantly different due to the civil war but in both countries, freedom of expression was exchanged in some form or another.

Therefore, extraordinary change is continually evolving and so are the consumption practices because of punctuations in the macro environment (e.g. political and social). As long as punctuations continue, the citizens will continue to speak out and demand further changes. By contrast, theoretical concepts such as consumer ethnocentrism and animosity can also be by-products of a revolution, causing consumption practices to shift towards the consumption of national products and services. Similarly, becoming patriotic, favouring home country products and services overlaps with the concept of consumer ethnocentrism and appears rational following a revolution. Likewise, consumer animosity is often aligned with consumer ethnocentrism because of incidental resentments towards other host countries products and services (Nakos and Hajidimitriou, 2007). Both concepts have the ability to affect consumption choices and change consumption practices and are linked with social norms and cultural values (Jimenez and Martin, 2010). Hence, consumer ethnocentrism and consumer animosity are important to discuss in the next subsection.

3.4 Consumer ethnocentrism and consumer animosity

Consumer ethnocentrism (CE), and consumer animosity (CA) differ by countries and regions and are particularly important theoretical concepts for understanding changing consumption practices because they can cause consumers to refrain from consuming a particular product or service (Klein, 2002; Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2007). With the rise of globalisation, consumers are increasingly exposed to a continuously changing marketplace because of new phenomena occurring such as revolutions. The challenges presented by CA have the propensity to alter consumer perceptions towards the consumption of foreign products based on political agendas. CA was first defined by Klein et al. (1998) as the antipathy or resentment related to ongoing or past political or economic events. Their animosity model followed the construct of CE which Shimp et al. (1987) noted as the consumer beliefs relating to the morality of consuming foreign-made goods with the general consensus being that in doing so, the consumer is unpatriotic and harmful to the domestic economy. Products from other countries can be rejected by highly ethnocentric consumers (Kaynak and Kara, 2002) whose consumption practices mainly revolve around the consumption of locally made goods. To non-ethnocentric consumers,

foreign products are evaluated on their merits and adhere to the specific product criteria and promote polycentric consumption (Evanschitzky et al., 2008). Furthermore, with non-ethnocentric consumers there is less consideration for where the product is manufactured and as a result, country of origin effects are less of an issue (Shimp et al., 1987). An array of authors (Han, 1988; Sharma et al., 1995; Wall and Heslop, 1986) argued that highly ethnocentric consumers tended to make favourable evaluations and had profound perceptions of local products as opposed to imported ones. For example, Japanese consumers were in favour of products from Japan (Narayana, 1981), and the French favoured products made in France (Baumgartner and Jolibert, 1977). Canadian consumers were assessed and prepared to pay premium prices for Canadian products because of local sourcing comparable quality with imported products (Wall and Heslop 1986).

The ideology behind CE also entails antecedents such as openness to foreign cultures, patriotism, and is relative to the respective socio-cultural values of a particular country (Balabanis et al., 2001; Sharma et al., 1995). Similarly, Vida et al. (2008) studied ethnocentrism in the Balkan countries (with particular emphasis on Bosnia and Herzegovina) and found that the degree of CE was juxtaposed on a regional basis as well as the fact that the level of CE was not constant across a particular group of countries. In fact, consumers in Balkan countries had many similarities in language, culture and consumption practices. However, the intensity of CE differed across Balkan states. Lwin et al. (2010) explored the theme of transient country-specific animosity (TCSA) which concerns the ongoing political agendas that exist in the global economy and which consumers may see as a threat to their country, leading to the retracted consumption of foreign products. A possible limitation of their study is that Lwin et al. primarily focussed on Asian countries' perceptions such as Japan, Hong Kong and Indonesia towards the USA and only briefly broadcasted ME consumers' perceptions towards the consumption of USA brands. Tagliabue (2002) echoed the view of Lwin et al. and concurred that there had been a subsequent rise in Arab boycotts of American brands as a result of American intervention in the ME which changed consumption practices as consumers held hostile perceptions to American products in the ME. Mostafa (2010) claimed to have been the first to investigate CA in Egypt with regards to Israeli made products. His findings suggested that war-related factors and historical animosity deterred Egyptians from consuming Israeli products. One of the limitations of Mostafa's study was the cross-sectional orientation of the research. If a longitudinal approach had been adopted, then

potential changes in consumption practices could have been observed over an extended period of time and led to a better understanding of animosity.

Defining the animosity constructs further, Ang et al. (2004) investigated four types of animosity: these were *stable* versus *situational*, and *personal* versus *national* animosity. *Stable animosity* is the ramification of difficult historical relations amid two countries and is a value passed on from one generation to the next. *Situational animosity* originates from current economic and political events. *Personal animosity* negative consumer experiences in a foreign country or through relations with foreign nationals during overseas travel. Ang et al. also pointed out that consumers may hold feelings of *national animosity* towards a particular country, based on memories of how that country treated their home country at a certain point in time or how a particular country's connected relationship is with their own country at present. A recent example is the revolutions in the ME. Libya for instance, remained defiant against direct foreign intervention with their country's affairs (Shane, 2011). Similarly, the resentment of foreign intervention in Iraq provoked negative reactions from both Iraqi nationals and many anti-Iraq war followers (Hafedh et al., 2007). In addition to war animosity, Nes et al. (2012) pinpointed three other useful constructs to CA. These were economic, political and people animosity. Their findings demonstrated that consumers had reduced self-image and felt guilty when consuming products from countries with a poor political image. Moreover, CA was found to be negligible outside the factors considered, meaning that one or more of the four animosity constructs had to be present before consumers expressed their own feelings towards a particular nation or their product/s.

The segmentation of animosity was discussed beyond national boundaries by Shoham et al. (2006) who studied Jewish Israelis' reactions to Arab Israelis in the context of product consumption made or marketed by Arab Israelis. They found three additional CA constructs which affected consumption. These were dogmatism, nationalism and internationalism. Dogmatism refers to the degree of openness in one's belief system. Dogmatic consumers were considered to be more conservative in their consumption practices and less likely to process new information because of deep rooted personal beliefs. Nationalism relates to the view that one's country is superior and therefore, the national culture is dominant. Internationalism is seen as the view of consumers towards other nations. The results of the study extended the theoretical knowledge on CA and indicated that regional animosity exists within the same country such as the perceptions of Israelis to Arab Israelis products. Some limitations of the study are that Israelis'

perceptions towards Arab Israelis products were under question and so it would have been interesting to gauge perceptions from Arab Israelis towards Israelis products. Guido et al. (2010) used the same constructs as Shoham et al. in the context of Jewish-Italians but discovered contradictory findings. Despite expressing some animosity towards Arabs, Italians of Israeli heritage were willing to consume Arab products and services if they satisfied quality aspects and were perceived from a utilitarian perspective. Rose et al. (2009) also studied Israeli and Arab Israeli consumers but in contrast to previous CA studies, investigated sub groups perceptions towards foreign products. Study results indicated that Arab Israelis displayed a high level of animosity towards UK products compared to Jewish Israelis and a greater tolerance towards Italian products. By interrelating COO and CA, Amine (2008), studied consumer responses regarding anti-Americanism vs. Francophobia and concluded that international marketers have to explicitly research the history of a given nation to be able to assess the impact of environmental triggers and events that accelerate or decelerate CA. Purely segmenting marketing strategies on a national scale may not prove fruitful as animosity can exist within regional areas and sub-regional areas in the same country. For instance, the heterogeneous make up of sub communities such as tribes, Bedouins and Berbers in Libya (Najem, 2004) denote different consumption practices and illustrates that CA (as a construct for segmentation) should be used with caution.

Alike consumption practices, CE and CA are not stagnant and change over time and space. The argument is that the integration of CE and CA are important for understanding just what causes consumption practices to change on a macro-level. Both CE and CA are closely linked with the theoretical concept of country-of-origin effects (COO) because of consumers' favourableness or unfavourableness of products and services based on their origin (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2004). Examining COO in the next subsection is useful because little attention has been given to the effect of COO on consumption practices. Consumer choices may be dependent upon COO issues and therefore steer consumption practices. Whether the product or service is purchased is a separate matter compared to understanding how COO can reconfigure consumption practices based on consumption choices made.

3.4.1 Perceptions of country of origin effects in the Middle East

Country of origin effects (COO) are defined as the stereotype that consumers may have about foreign products (Darling and Wood, 1990). According to Zhang (1996) COO is seen as the information relating to where a product is made. Orbaiz and Papadopoulos (2003) discovered *product-country image* (PCI) as a core component of COO. They stated that consumers may have perceptions and beliefs toward a product's country of origin and revealed several theoretical concepts that affix a consumer's particular perception/s towards foreign products. These concepts included animosity and ethnocentrism. By contrast, Orbaiz and Papadopoulos also recognised that 'world mindedness', or in other words (from a personal standpoint) polycentrism, which results in favourable perceptions of foreign goods. To bridge the divide between developed and emerging markets, Sharma (2011) conducted a COO study based on two developed (UK and USA) and two emerging nations (India and China) and found that the latter countries had favourable perceptions of developed markets products, while the opposite was the case for the former. Both Egypt and Libya are considered as developing markets although the author contests the terms 'developing' and 'emerging' markets but further elaboration is beyond the requirements for this thesis. Sharma's study also devised a conceptual framework which included consumer ethnocentrism, materialism and value consciousness. It is suggested in the framework that consumers in emerging markets displayed higher levels of materialism and value consciousness when consuming imported products from developed markets. Yet, consumers still cared deeply about value for money. To an extent, the traditional view of COO has become slightly outdated. Therefore, country of brand origin (COBO) was defined as a more applicable term, giving rise to hybridised products because in the evolutionary (global) marketplace, products may be designed in one country (Country of design-COD), manufactured in another (Country of manufacture-COM) and assembled in another (Country of assembly-COA) (Schroath et al., 1993). Thus, a particular stereotype towards a product may not solely be based on the 'made in' label but also the value chain in between before the product reaches the consumer for consumption. In practice, if consumers follow the sub concepts of COO (COBO, COD, COM and COA), then consumption practices are affected by the interference of these concepts because consumers may choose a particular product based on the brand origin (COBO) or where the product is manufactured (COM).

There has been widespread documentation on the issue of COO and its effects on consumers in the ME (Ahmed and d'Astous, 2008; Ahmed et al., 2010; Ahmed et al., 2012; Al-Hammad, 1988; Badri et al., 1995; Bhuian, 1997; Bhuian and Kim, 1999; Darrat, 2011; Debabi, 2010; Ghadir, 1990; Guido et al., 2010; Maher and Mady, 2010; Vitale, 2011; Zbib et al., 2010a, 2010b). The first study conducted on ME consumers was by Al-Hammad (1988) who focussed on Saudi consumers and retailers. His findings showed that both groups favoured price and quality over COO perceptions. Following his work, Ghadir (1990) investigated the price, quality and risk perceptions of Jordanians towards domestic and foreign products. He found that Jordanians favoured American and German automobile brands and domestic products in relation to food and drink. He also concluded that marketers must use different segmentation strategies for products derived from developed countries in one corner and those produced in more developed ones in another. Some limitations of his findings stem around the notion of practically dividing products based on where they are manufactured. Furthermore, the dilemma of segmenting distinctive strategies for both domestic and foreign divisions of products could prove a challenging task for internationalising firms and also local firms in the ME. However, to the study's merit, the differing degrees of heterogeneity warranted a segmented approach.

Several years later, Badri et al. (1995) conducted a study on the decision support for global marketing strategies and the effect of COO on product evaluation. Their study examined the Gulf States in the ME (Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait). The results indicated that the 'made in' label across a wide range of product categories was a prominent factor and that consumers in the Gulf states held positive perceptions, particularly towards Japanese and American products. Badri et al. claimed that Japanese and American products were seen as technologically advanced, reliable and exhibited exceptional performance. Additionally, German products ranked the highest from the European countries and were perceived as having performance, reliability and also prestige. On the other hand, English products were observed as irrationally priced and lagged behind German products with respect to quality features such as workmanship, reliability, originality and performance.

Examining COO effects further, Bhuian (1997) inspected Saudi consumers' perceptions towards European, US and Japanese products and marketing practices. The study determined that Saudi consumers held favourable perceptions towards US and Japanese products. From the European products, Germany ranked the highest. A drawback of the study is the use of a single demographic (middle class Saudi consumers) and consumer

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perceptions may differ accordingly depending on the product category/ sector. Another possible limitation is the absence of gender components as female participants were not included in the study. Marinov (2007) declared that the restriction of female participants in studies conducted in Saudi Arabia is attributed to the restrictions on women in Saudi society. Two years later, Bhuian and Kim (1999) studied consumer perceptions towards marketing mix elements with regards to foreign products in an international market, using the case of Qatar. The results illustrated that Qatari consumers favoured Japanese products followed by American products and then European products. According to Bhuian and Kim, Japanese products depicted a strong sense of quality, durability and performance. The limitations of their research are that other countries outside Japan, the USA were not investigated and only some countries were examined in Europe (e.g. Germany).

A three country comparison study of COO effects was carried out by Ahmed and d'Astous (2008) who studied consumers in Canada, Morocco and Taiwan. They claimed that familiarity with products manufactured in a given country was the most attributable forecaster of COO perceptions. The shortcomings of their study are similar to Bhuian's study, because both studies did not sample additional gender components. Zbib et al. (2010a) studied the impact of COO with regards to global shampoo brands on Lebanese consumers. Their study indicated that COO was not the most prominent factor Lebanese consumers took into consideration when making a consumption choice. On the contrary, the most influential reasons for selecting global shampoo brands were deemed to be based on practical objectives such as the perceived benefits, quality and scent ques. Shampoo was considered as a low involvement product, many Lebanese consumers were prepared to shift between brands and alternate between them, thus advocating a low loyalty relationship towards shampoo brands. In the same year, Zbib et al. (2010b) conducted a study on Lebanese consumers' perceptions of COO in the global snack food industry. They found that COO was of secondary importance and Lebanese consumers consumed snack foods based on impulse, without thought for where the product was produced. Ahmed et al. (2010) researched the effect of consumption on COO in the case of the Lebanese airline industry. They revealed that COO and national loyalties were key drivers in influencing consumers' perceptions when assessing and choosing airlines of preference. However, their study contradicted other COO works conducted in the ME because *consumer patriotism* overrode COO aspects when consumers selected their preferred airlines.

In summary to this subsection, COO is argued to be an important component of consumption practices because of the inferences towards making consumption choices. The desire to engage in foreign consumption in the past, particularly in the case of Libya, may have been down to the socialist regimes that restricted the level of foreign products and services. Therefore, COO was of less significance and consumption practices revolved around what was available in the marketplace at the time. By contrast, COO could be better demonstrated in the Egypt because of a history of a global consumer culture (Abaza, 2005). As a result, Egyptian consumption practices were more acculturated with foreign consumption because both foreign and local choices were readily available in the past. Consumers can also be political actors of consumption, especially when negative perceptions of COO, ethnocentric tendencies and animosity are held towards a particular country. The result is action against specific countries' products and is known as 'political consumption', which is discussed in the next subsection.

3.4.2 Political consumption in the Middle East

Political consumption (PC) is a theoretical concept which is characterised by CE, CA and COO perceptions. PC is also known as consumer boycotts (CB) and can be arranged via political activism in the form of protests and gathered groups in congregated settings. Some boycotts occur on a larger scale than others depending on the complexity and magnitude of the operation (Abou Aish et al., 2013; Knudsen et al., 2011). The actual word boycott dates back to an Irish peasant protest in 1880. This was when their landlord, Captain Charles Boycott punished the residents by stripping them of their wages and expelling them out of their land. Residents hit back and refused to do any kind of business with him (Gelb, 1995). A more recent management focussed definition by John and Klein (2003) described a boycott as a tactic which influences firm behaviour by allowing consumers to avoid a particular company's products. Sandikci and Ekici (2009) extended the definition of CBs and termed them as the collective action of foregoing or withholding consumption in response to perceived wrongdoing. CBs are deliberate retaliatory actions that can impact on consumers' perceptions of certain countries products. The main stages involved are: *perception* where a nation's actions are hurtful or immorally wrong. The second stage is *the designation* of harmful or wrongdoing and directed blame which triggers anger and heated exchanges. Third, is *the determination or type of action and its target* (Funches et al., 2009).

CBs are also known as social dilemmas because the personal importance of the boycott issue is likely to encourage participation even if the costs of withholding consumption of the boycotted product are high (Sen et al., 2001). Through boycotting, consumers believe that the consumption of products relating to a specific country under scrutiny is harmful to society and while boycotting, consumers feel altruistic and utilitarian, which makes them feel good about themselves. The opposite case was argued in a study by Yuksel (2013) who found that consumers chose not to participate in boycotts for fear that their freedom and civil liberties would be compromised. Nevertheless, CBs are usually unrelated to the actions of companies around the globe. However, because of COO, CE and CA, firms and their products are boycotted and as a result, consumption practices shift towards anti-consumption. For example, on a macro boycotting level, McDonalds may not be victimised as a prime target because of any specific actions on their part, but purely because they are an American company (Knudsen et al., 2011). In 2003, during the beginning stages of the Iraq war there were boycotts of French wine. This was not solely an act of retribution against France, or indeed a vendetta against French wine producers, but an act of punishment against the French government for supporting US military action in Iraq (Al Shebil et al., 2011). The intensity of CBs depends on the complexity of the motive, the identification of who is targeted and also who is organising the boycott. Most boycotts are carried out by activists but the magnitude of the boycott refers back to the significance of issue (Farah and Newman, 2010). Political boycotts can also be propelled by government interventions such as embargoes on a particular country. An example of this was Iraq in the nineties and the UN enforced embargo in Libya against the Qaddafi regime for the massacring of citizens in the recent Libyan revolution (Anderson, 2011). The outcome of political boycotts can either be welcomed by citizens such as Libyans praise for NATO assistance in the lead to the revolutions or rejected such as in the case of western intervention in Iraq.

An example of boycotted products is the response of ME consumers against Danish products due to a Danish newspaper depicting the prophet Mohammed in a cartoon (Jensen, 2008). Scandinavian dairy manufacturer Arla Foods announced that the boycott of Danish products in the ME had cost the company approximately 54 million Euros. In response, Arla devised a counteracting strategy by condemning the cartoons in a local Arabic newspaper and pledged to provide aid for disabled children and cancer victims in the region. After a short period of time, the intensity of the boycott calmed down (Dairy Industries International, 2007). Al-Hyari et al. (2012) argued that Danish companies have

still not recovered completely in the ME. Consumers still exhibited hostile resentment towards Danish products because the root of the boycott derived from a religious issue. Within collectivistic societies in the ME, Al-Hyari et al. also noted that consumers were deeply influenced by negative implicit or explicit references to religion when making consumption choices, especially for foreign products. Therefore, boycotts occurred as a result.

Boycotts are also fuelled by rumours which cause consumers to take action by either refraining from the product or boycotting anything to do with products from the same COO. The level of action undertaken is also dependent upon personal motivation, morals and values but also CE and CA. An example of where consumers in the ME were susceptible to rumours is the case of Procter and Gamble in Egypt. The company's detergent product *Ariel* was said to have had connections with Israel so consumers targeted the product on the basis that it had alleged links to the then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The product's logo of six pointed stars was thought to resemble the Star of David and extended the speculation further. In response, the company launched a TV advertising campaign emphasising the illustrious history of the product in the country. Thereafter, the company changed Ariel's logo to a four pointed star (Postlewaite, 2003).

Abou-Aish et al. (2013) researched macro (e.g. COO and country source) and micro (e.g. companies) personal boycotting motivations and discovered that to deflect CA and boycotting intentions away from the macro-level, companies could use counteracting strategies such as changing aspects associated with a branded product or COO by placing less prominence on the *made in label*, using a localisation strategy to make the brand look more local or by taking part in community projects to promote social responsibility. If consumption practices are responsive to the macro environment, then measures to displace any CA may theoretically guide consumers back to the particular product. To direct consumers back to a specific product, Al Shebil et al. (2011) devised a conceptual framework and argued that when a brand with a high level of COO association tackles a high intensity boycott, firms should use a *blend in* strategy. The *blend-in* approach essentially encompasses the *local* character of each company and reduces its foreign identity. The effects of using such an approach potentially reduce consumers' ethnocentric mind-sets and CA animosity towards foreign products. Al Shebil et al. also claimed that a *blend in* approach could be achieved via public relations, advertising campaigns, sponsorship of sporting events as well as charitable activities. To an extent, the occurrence of high scale boycotts and demonstrations is uncommon but does not

necessarily mean that ethnocentric tendencies and animosity towards a particular country or its products are non-existent. The lack of reliable evidence on the implications of consumer boycotts on consumption practices in Egypt and Libya substantiates the requirement to investigate CB further.

In summarising this subsection, CBs, whether on a macro or micro level, can influence consumption practices and cause consumers to demonstrate animosity and either refrain from consuming a product/service or boycotting it entirely. There appears to be a cohesive relationship between CBs, COO, CA and CE, all of which have been scrutinised so far. In the next subsection, an attempt is made to understand how CBs can present an opportunity for local ME consumers in a region where some countries are dominated by foreign products.

3.4.3 Consumer boycotts: A niche market opportunity for local ME consumers

Consumer boycotts (CB) do not always deflect consumers away from the product (Knudsen et al., 2011). On the contrary, there is a lacuna with regards to reactions towards local consumption alternatives. When the size of the boycott is intensified to the point that the consumers avoid a particular foreign product, a niche local market is presented. For example, Arab consumers against Pepsi and Coca Cola who believed that these firms were contributing to Israeli artillery and funding against Palestine, turned to local consumption options. The Ulker group in Turkey designed a product named Cola Turka following the US invasion of Iraq and within months reaped a 10% market share (Sandikci and Ekici, 2009). Another product, Mecca Cola (named after the holy place of pilgrimage for Muslims), capitalised on the emotions of consumers who resented the Iraq war. The product boomed on its launch and reached 54 countries spanning from Australia to Africa in just a year (Parmar, 2004). Muslim Up, a local alternative to Seven Up also stepped into the market with the advertising slogan 'No to war, yes to peace, Muslim Up!' (Arab News, 2006). A further example is Qibla Cola, (which gets its name from the Arabic word *Qibla* meaning the *direction for Mecca*). Muslims carry out their daily prayers facing Mecca and so the name bears religious significance. Qibla Cola, alike the other local beverages, entrenched its presence on the market and pledged to donate 10% of its profits to aid victims of the Israeli Palestinian conflict (Kaplan, 2003). Consumers were also attracted to make new consumption choices because they could identify with the local firms cultural and religious values. Consequently, their consumption practices

were pushed towards local consumption. However, the extent to which ME consumers have practiced homogenous consumption practices has been widely debated, especially given the geographical coverage of the region. Therefore, in the next subsection a consumers' homogeneity vs. heterogeneity debate is put forward.

3.5 Middle East Region: the Homogenous vs. Heterogeneous argument

The extent of the homogenous vs. heterogeneous argument in the ME is still uncertain and has been contested by an array of authors (Al-Khatib et al., 2005b; Amine and Lazzaoui, 2011; Baker and Abu-Ismail, 1993; Bhuian, 1997; Elbashier and Nicholls, 1983; Souiden, 2002). Baker and Abu-Ismail (1993) claimed that the Gulf States (which comprise of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) displayed a strong sense of homogeneity with regards to their cultural norms, traditions, common sense of heritage and consumption choices. A contradistinction provided by Al Khatib et al. (2005a) disputed that foreign firms have viewed for years the Arab region as containing homogenous consumers, rather than as a region consisting of a number of heterogeneous sub-markets. Moreover, they claimed that while ME consumers could be seen as having a presumed homogenous culture due to their shared geographical location, there were delicate differences caused by historical, political, and different ethnic minorities in the region. The view of Al-Khatib et al. was echoed by Shilling (1978) who argued that the ME is characterised by individual markets and should be evaluated in terms of individual international marketing strategies deployed by foreign firms in each respective Arab country. Elbashier and Nicholls (1983) also supported the view of Al Khatib et al. and Shilling and claimed that Arab countries cannot be viewed as a homogenous unit but as dissimilar and divided markets which integrate common similarities in language, cultural heritage, moral and religious standards. In contrast, Kaynak (1986) stressed that although there were subsequent differences within the Arab nations, they still shared a number of common affiliations such as language and religion which contributed to establishing a homogenous global consumer culture.

In agreement with Kaynak, Amine and Cavusgil (1986) stated that the common features of Arab Markets favoured standardised marketing strategies in the region. A limitation of Amine and Cavusgil's research is the assumption that consumption practices are seen as static within homogenous marketing strategies. However, Amine and Cavusgil's study contradicted the findings of Souiden (2002) who disputed that it is not feasible to execute

a single marketing strategy for each of the Arab countries and by doing so the international marketer neglects the differences that reside within these countries. Souiden highlighted that market segmentation of Arab countries on the basis of macro variables (e.g. per capita, GDP) would not generate appealing segments and therefore limit the interpretations of explaining the differential associations that symbolise each respective Arab country.

Consumption practices, particularly in the Gulf region have been shown to reflect western lifestyles and the main reasons are due to globalisation, consumers' overseas travels or education which acculturates them with a global consumer culture and also the appreciation of local cultural values and norms by foreign firms (Marinov, 2007). Marinov also stressed that education amongst Arab consumers was responsible for favourable perceptions of foreign products and helped reduce ethnocentric tendencies. On the contrary, in some ME states, when there is persistent CA towards western goods, the level of CE is likely to be higher, and thus consumers become sceptical about consuming western products. Illustrating the level of heterogeneity across ME states further, Mehta (1999) debated that the Arabian Gulf countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar) had higher upper class and lower levels of middle class populations compared to other ME countries in the region such as the 'sham' region (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan) and controversially Iraq, which Mehta claimed did not have a regional imprint as a *gulf state* or a *sham* state. Complementing the view of Martin (1999), Mehta postulated that affluence was much higher in the Gulf States and consumers tended to consume and spend profusely on high end products and services. As much as there is an ongoing debate about the extent of homogeneity vs. heterogeneity in the ME, what is not yet clear is how changing consumption practices are affected by homogenous or heterogeneous consumption. In an ever changing global society, the evolutionary environment is seen as representing a global consumer culture whereby consumers engage in global consumption. Therefore, global consumption is reviewed in the next subsection.

3.6 Global consumption- The evolutionary Environment

In this thesis, global consumption (GC), sometimes called global consumerism, relates to the global environment (or the evolutionary). Consumerism has been defined in the introduction from a consumer culture lens. Embedded within consumer culture are

consumption practices which allow consumers to display their own consumption via their self-identity, material objects, affiliations with different social groups, resources, social distinctions, events and activities. The consumption of products/services falls into several main streams of consumption. These are utilitarianism where consumers consume products only for their benefits and nothing beyond serving the products' purpose (Babin et al., 1994; Bussiere, 2011; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Okada, 2005; Overby and Lee, 2006), conservatism (Shechter, 2011) where the consumer cuts back on consumption because of financial constraints, social or political pressures/restrictions or due to CA and CE. Less is known about utilitarian and conservative consumption than the remaining streams of consumption, particularly in the context of changing consumption practices. Materialism is where consumers display their possessions as a sign of vanity and social prestige (Belk, 1984, 1985; Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002; Cleveland et al., 2009; Ger and Belk, 1999; Jafari and Suerdem, 2012; Podoshen et al., 2011; Woodward, 2011) and hedonism, where consumers consume for pleasure (Drakopoulos, 1990; Migone, 2007; O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2000, 2007; Mazaheri et al., 2010; Valtonen and Moisander, 2012) and finally conspicuous consumption, where consumers assert their wealth by having material possessions as a sign of social status. Materialism/hedonism and conspicuous consumption are heavily interlinked and sometimes used interchangeably and promote similar meanings. In each case, the attachment to one or more of these streams of consumption can become evidence of self-esteem and social acceptance (Durning, 1992). The view that developing countries seek to emulate western lifestyles remains widely debated. However, Veblen (2009) stated that consumption practices were dictated by emulation defined as the stimulus for consumers comparing themselves to others within the same or similar social class. Emulation is also considered as a discriminatory practice because consumers emulating a certain consumer culture have to visibly display their consumption practices (e.g. through branded goods).Wasteful consumption can accompany emulation when the desire to conspicuously consume exceeds expectations.

GC in the literature has been discussed as a phenomenon closely associated with globalisation (Trentmann, 2004). Trentmann asserted that GC is a capitalistic principle which underlined the inevitability of excessive consumption through which consumers were more opportunistic in their consumption practices. Trentmann's view is echoed by Shaw (2008) who argued that GC in many ways has become a competitive challenge because consumers attributed their identity and self-image congruence by the way they

wish to be perceived in society. In contrast, Ali (2008) contested that GC has become a powerful trend in today's economy and could either be a source of creative imagination, giving rise to self-image congruence and/or status or a dysfunctional attitude which pushes the consumer away from the product. Ali (2008) continued his perspective and stated that the execution of the product, which lead it into the realm of the consumer, was dependent upon the following marketing variables: place, promotion, price, cultural, religious values and traditional norms that affect the product directly or indirectly. If transformations in the evolutionary (global) environment have propelled GC and benefitted globalised nations through greater consumption choice and exposure to products and services, then the significance of changing consumption practices in Cairo and Tripoli may be fundamental to the advancement of extraordinary change. A contraposition would argue against globalisation and capitalistic principles and potentially limit extraordinary change but this view seems unlikely given that the existing literature (e.g. Elbashier and Nicholls, 1983; Marinov, 2007) supports ME consumers as favourably viewing foreign products and services.

CE, CA and COO have been identified as concepts that promote negative reactions to global influences (Klein, 2002; Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2007). Abplanalp (2009) emphasised that GC has become a recognisable socio-economic trend that incorporates individual and group identities. Identities are important in this context in so far as consumption opportunities are presented. Global consumer culture pressures from the evolutionary may trigger marketplace transformations in Egypt and Libya to give birth to a new territory for consumption. Marketplace transformations are not stagnant and are subsequent to changes in both the macro and micro environment (Appadurai, 1990; Craig and Douglas, 2006; Douglas and Craig, 2011). Likewise, consumption practices evolve depending on environmental changes (Nakata, 2003). Similarly, Craig and Douglas (2006) highlighted that contemporary consumption choices in a revolutionary context cannot be explained by traditional cultural theories, individual practices or acculturation theories. In the context of Cairo and Tripoli, cultural changes on a macro-environmental level are attributed to political, social and economic factors (Varadarajan and Yadav, 2002) causing turbulent unrest. On a micro-environmental level, consumers are exposed to different life processes and a growing global consumer culture, making it difficult to suppress the forces of globalisation. The next subsection reviews the consumption literature across the wider ME.

The ME has not been immune from the pressures of global consumption and has been impacted by the evolutionary environment in several ways. The Arab world is home to a population of around 340 million people (The World Bank Annual Report, 2013) with imports of over $150 billion. In the past decade, many ME economies have gone through economic restructuring programs to bring in evolutionary investments. ME states such as the gulf countries have pursued privatisation and liberalisation strategies to attract marketplace competition (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000). As a prime example, consumption in Saudi Arabia has grown substantially in the past few decades because of consumption practices emulating western consumption which has given rise to a global consumer culture. Capitalism has to a certain degree constructed a controllable consuming cultural mass to match up with the producing mass. The pressures of the evolutionary environment are indicated by the abundance of shopping malls, urbanisation, commercialisation and ruthless advertising strategies that have contributed into shaping a Saudi consumer culture which combines a mix of global and local consumption practices (Assad, 2007).

The ME is a unique region characterised by a plethora of cultures, traditions, religious values, all of which help shape consumption practices. A rise in self-image congruence and conspicuous consumption practices in the ME has resulted in consumers that demand and expect products and services of a high quality (Fry, 2001). Additionally, consumers in the region were considered to hold competent knowledge of products due to the widespread status of pan-Arab satellite television. Other media that familiarised Arab consumers were international travel and the internet. Fry also identified a substantial middle class demographic profile amongst Arab consumers with strong brand recognition and a growing hunger for global products and services. A year later Rice and Al-Mossawi (2002) debated that the international marketer must give particular attention to cultural and religious values for consumer segmentation. They stressed that culture and religion were deep rooted within Arab consumers across the ME and also within individual ME countries. An additional factor is global consumption, which Martin (1999) in his study on franchising in the ME, discovered that young consumers were the most brand-conscious and tended to spend copiously on high-end foreign branded products as part of a materialistic and hedonic lifestyle. Desirable and desired effects also function as factors driving consumption, especially in the context of the revolutions because consumers' life

processes are constantly punctuated by the macro-environment in a bid to implement desirable changes.

The consequences of political agendas were found to either jeopardise or assist consumer perceptions of foreign products and were related to consumer ethnocentrism, consumer animosity, country of origin effects and consumer boycotts. Marinov (2007) argued that countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and the Gulf States were generally receptive towards US products and their second and third most preferred countries of origin were Japanese and German products. Marinov also stressed that the combination of religious and political issues could dictate either positive or negative perceptions, associations or values amongst Arab consumers. If positive, consumers were pulled towards foreign consumption. If negative, consumers were pushed away and became more conservative and utilitarian in their consumption practices. A supporting view was provided by Al-Khatib et al. (2005a) who examined the ethical segmentation of consumers in developing countries. They concluded that Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were the most westernised of the ME countries and there was a growing trend towards increased individualism in these countries, thus contradicting Hofstede's (1980; 2001; 2005) cultural dimensions. At the same time, the countries identified strictly obeyed Islamic moral and cultural values, although some of the countries followed religious principles more closely than others such as the UAE vs. Saudi Arabia. Siddiqi (1999) critically opposed the view that even though the ME incorporates shared religious and value systems, there were many significant differences such as the consumption of products, receptiveness towards marketing messages, demographic and psychographic variables and also perceptions towards distribution procedures. Furthermore, his view complemented the view of Martin (1999), who concluded that while the older generations were still traditionally orientated and open to consuming predominantly locally sourced products, the younger generation had adopted expanding western consumption practices. A weakness with the arguments proposed so far in this section is that the existing literature fails to resolve how issues of homogeneity vs. heterogeneity affect consumption practices or indeed how a global consumer culture impacts consumer life processes in a period of extraordinary change.

In summary, while consumption in some parts of the ME such as the affluent Gulf States is reaching new heights and hedging consumers towards a global consumer culture, less is known about consumption practices in countries such as Egypt and Libya. Areas which have significant influences on consumption practices are varying demographics, religious

and cultural values, political intervention and consumer perceptions towards marketing messages, all of which are suggestive of heterogeneous consumption practices. In the next two subsections, an attempt is made to try and understand the changing consumption practices in Egypt and Libya's capital cities, Cairo and Tripoli.

3.6.2 Consumption practices in Cairo, Egypt

Before the 1952 revolution in Egypt (which saw socialist General Gamel Abdel Nasser come to power), Egypt's economy was considered stagnant (Boyd et al., 1961a). Egyptians who were in a position to afford local commodities had limited options, which is why locally manufactured goods were consumed in abundance (Shechter, 2008a; 2009). Boyd et al. (1961b) attempted to conceptualise the state of marketing in Egypt and contested that an introduction of robust marketing management was required to manage a new five year economic program (1960-1965). Similarly, Saddik (1973) argued that during the preliminary stages of the *infitah* era (Arabic for the opening of the market under socialism in the sixties and seventies) the Egyptian market was oblivious to western marketing philosophies and many industries were preoccupied with a production-orientated philosophy. There was a belief amongst business leaders that the capacity and capability to produce superseded the need for marketing and distribution programs. Therefore, marketing did not resonate in the same way as in western developed nations and there was a void in understanding consumers' needs and wants.

During the 1960s, more than half of the Egyptian population was nineteen years of age or younger and predictions were made for consumption to boom in the coming decades. The current population is over 85 million (The World Factbook Egypt, 2013). Egypt also had a clearly recognisable social class system that comprised of higher class, middle class and lower class citizens. Despite cultural, religious and language similarities, consumers were considered heterogeneous. While lower class consumers had conservative consumption practices and limited choice but to consume basic necessities (such as food, water and shelter), middle and upper class consumers welcomed westernisation (Al-Khatib and Sutton, 1993; Saddik, 1973) and their consumption practices reflected materialistic and conspicuous lifestyles as they could afford to consume more expensive foreign products. After the *infitah* period, economic restructuring programs and the opening up of markets to western multinationals brought western marketing philosophies and as a consequence, globalisation. As a result, a global consumer culture was made

popular through aggressive advertising driven by newly established local and foreign advertising agencies which advocated modernity and through which, Egyptians interpreted as a *novelty* (Shechter, 2008b).

Rice (1984) identified that during the *infitah* period, Egypt's population grew to 42 million and had the third largest gross consumption level in the ME after Saudi Arabia and Algeria. Nevertheless, the class system was still a dominant force and determined the extent of consumption. Basic food consumption was high for the poorer segments of society, whereas the middle class and upper class citizens longed for transportation and communications, automobiles as well as foreign culture and entertainment. The market for concentrated consumer and durable goods resided mainly in the metropolitan cities of Cairo and Alexandria (Dennis, 2008; Kuppinger, 2005). Marketing research was in its infancy due to the threat of released marketing information by Arab officials who were sceptical about revealing 'sensitive' information to international companies (Hatem, 1994; Keegan, 1980). Abaza (2005) disputed that consumerist studies are considered a trivial field by most academics. Perhaps it is this perception that explains the paucity of consumption studies on Egypt and Libya to date. Since the inception of socialist regimes, Egypt's economy progressed rapidly allied with close western counterpart ties, which to an extent, encouraged the movement of a global consumer culture and exposed consumers to a wealth of global marketing brands and messages, especially in the country's capital.

Post millennium and the marketplace in Cairo (the largest metropolis in Egypt with a population of over 15 million) (Rice, 2006), is host to an evolutionary wave of consumption with over twenty shopping malls. Foreign chains such as French supermarket retailer Carrefour were amongst the first to capitalise on the globalising capital city (Abaza, 2005). Although liquidity problems have marginalised the Egyptian economy to a certain extent, other industries such as the retailing and advertising environment remained resilient and contributed to growth in the Egyptian consumer market. For instance, foreign multinationals have capitalised on Egypt's consumer market potential and have internationalised in the country (Mostafa, 2005; 2011). International franchises such as American fast-food chains have dominated the franchising industry and growth is highly driven by the country's growing youth population (Grunhagen et al., 2010).

Punctuations in the economy and globalisation caused marketplace transformations and a change in consumption practices as consumers desired western products. For instance, middle class Egyptians are known to have breakfast by having French croissants, Italian

cappuccino and a host of non-national dinner such as Japanese, Thai, Indian and Iranian. Consequently, consumption practices are indicative of a growing global consumer culture. To a certain extent, middle-high class Egyptian consumers can be considered as hybridised consumers, put simply as the adoption of local and global consumer cultures (Thompson and Tambyah, 1998; Peterson, 2010). Furthermore, consumption practices in Egypt are shaped by recommendations, with over 40% of the population using advice from family and friends to influence consumption choices (TradeArabia, 2010).

However, consumption practices share similarities with other ME states and are guided by factors such as religious and cultural values. Religion dictates consumption practices depending on the consumers' level of religiosity (Abaza, 2006). Unlike Saudi Arabia, where the vast majority of the population are Muslim and there is a lack of cultural assimilation outside the national culture (Tuncalp, 1988a), Egypt has a diverse mix of religions (Muslim -mostly Sunni- 90%, Coptic, 9% and other Christian groups, 1%) (The World Factbook Egypt, 2013). Therefore, it is neither possible to execute single marketing strategies based on religious segmentation nor can consumption practices be viewed as being homogenous. Najar (1992) stressed that Egyptians and other ME consumers welcomed global consumption but recognised that it had come at the expense of capitalism and a decline in the Islamic quality of life as well as traditional values. Of course, differing levels of religiosity contradict Najar's viewpoint. There is the perceived outlook that the traditional values that have embedded many Arab states for so long are undergoing extraordinary change which impacts consumption practices by negotiating perceptions between both foreign and local products/services. In the next subsection, a review of what is currently known about consumption practices in Tripoli, Libya is presented.

3.6.3 Consumption practices in Tripoli, Libya

In contrast to Egypt (and Cairo), Libya (and its capital Tripoli) has not seen similar marketing advancements, globalisation and a global consumer culture. Similarly, marketplace transformations and consumption developments in Egypt were historically established. For example, European lifestyles and fashions were introduced to Egypt in the middle of the 19th century, advocating neo-Marxism. Thus, the experience of shopping for many 'Cairenes' brought a sense of prestige and elevation (Abaza, 2001). By contrast,

Libya has never experienced a consumption phenomenon despite periods of colonialism such as by the Italians.

Little is known about consumption practices in the country, which makes it even more interesting to study them following a revolution. The scarcity of marketing studies demonstrates the call for greater research to be conducted. However, alike Egypt, Libya has a very heterogeneous makeup despite the dominance of Islamic values, cultural traits and language ties. In contrast to Egypt, religion is very homogenous with around 97% of Libyans practicing Sunni Islam. The current population is just over six million (The World Factbook Libya, 2013). Libyan culture is centred on an Arab/Berber tribal system of society (Attir and Al-Azzabi, 2004). These tribes are known as *qabila* which are often segmented and subdivided into families and smaller family subsets (Najem, 2004). The tribes are important for social reasons (e.g. jobs/marriage/extending family generations/heirs) and are influential in the consumption of products because consumption is often upon recommendations from tribal and family members. Tribal groups may be targeted as a form of consumer segmentation but locating tribal consumers across a huge geographical terrain constrains the possibility of targeting specific sub groups. Under the old regime, Qaddafi had strong tribal allegiances but their disparate residency was and still is scattered over a large geographic terrain, making it problematic to approach such sub consumer groups. Nonetheless, in the past decade, Libya has witnessed marketplace transformations as a result of social and economic restructuring programs. The latter restructuring program can be considered as the Libyan revolution (Gelvin, 2012). Similar to Egypt, Libya has a recognisable youth cohort of individuals (over 50%). In the past, restrictions placed by the former Qaddafi regime on foreign companies and strict regulatory measures limited the availability of official branded foreign products. Moreover, the Libyan economy was heavily controlled by the state and many industries were privatised to limit foreign domination (Vandewalle, 2006). Foreign firms such as Tesco's and Carrefour may be driven to invest in emerging economies due to saturated domestic markets and pulled towards the prospects of higher growth in developing countries (McGoldrick and Davies, 1995). Given the potential of Libya in the present epoch, new marketplace transformations could well pave the way for a new consumer culture because Libyans have not had the opportunity to choose or consume like Egyptians.

Having reviewed the consumption literature on Libya, it is evident that consumption studies in a pre-revolutionary period were scarce. In fact, only one study by Sehib et al. (2012) focussed on Libyan consumers but from a gender and social responsibility perspective. As this literature review has demonstrated, the themes have been identified in order to determine their impact on consumption practices. In the next subsection, a conceptual framework was developed by the author to harness the themes together and illustrate their influence on consumption practices.

3.6.4 Consumption practices in Cairo and Tripoli- Lessons from Eastern Europe

Capitalising on the idea of change requires a predication that a new consumer culture emerges as consumption practices change. If historic revolutions are an indication of a developing consumer culture, then the revolutionary communist collapse of Eastern Europe is a prime example. Starting in 1989, countries such as Poland, Hungary, East Germany, former Czechoslovakia and Romania overthrew their previous regimes and underwent extensive economic, political and social transformations that welcomed globalisation and the spread of a global consumer culture (Coulter et al., 2005; Feick et al., 1995). On a marketing level, a new proxy of information entered East European markets in the form of western advertising, marketing activities and consumption practices. Thus, citizens had access to a new influx of products and services that configured new cultural orders and changed consumption practices. Reminiscent of market transformations in Eastern Europe, the ascendance of a newly emerging global consumer culture in Tripoli is down to the country being seen as uncharted territory. Moreover, in the past, authoritarian control bypassed candid consumer opinions and the rhetoric in a past consumer culture belied reality. That is to say that previous regimes neglected citizens' perceptions of the marketplace and demand for products and services. Qaddafi's government policies mirrored those of European states such as Hungary which focussed on meeting basic consumer needs by providing necessities at stable prices albeit with a lack of focus on the provision of high quality products (Feick et al., 1995). In a similar vein, Cairo experienced a move away from socialism during the *infitah* area and a new wave of consumer goods also gave birth to an emerging consumer culture. Likewise, in the past, citizens in Hungary, Egypt and Libya were faced with shortage of product alternatives, availability was unpredictable and so citizens often had to settle for what was desired rather than what was desirable.

The emergence and formation of a potentially new consumer culture in Egypt and Libya can be attributed to citizens' newly discovered roles as market creators and producers of their own consumption practices in the present epoch. In the past, movements towards a global consumer culture were approached with caution because while Libyans appreciated marketplace developments, they rejected excessive foreignness that produced mass capitalist consumer states like the Arabian Gulf countries. On the contrary, Egyptians did not display any discontent to excessive foreignness in Cairo. Before the defeat of communism in Hungary in 1989, citizens had not experienced a global consumer culture and very much like Libyan citizens, Hungarians experienced difficulty in obtaining global products and services because of the irregular distribution and importation of goods (Kozminski, 1992). Through a period of change, the rise of foreign and local companies created fierce competition, which enabled greater marketplace stability and eliminated unfair practices pertaining to quality and price. Thus, the present Hungarian consumer landscape can be considered as being in a stability epoch. That is to say that the marketplace has shifted towards the evolutionary (i.e. the global environment). Analogously, as was the case with Hungarian citizens, consumption movements in Libya supported the liberalisation of trade, inflow of imports and desire for global consumption whereas Egyptians already had access to multiple modes of consumption and demanded the support of local consumption in order to redevelop the marketplace. However, just like the communist collapse in Hungary, it is only in the absence of the previous authoritarian regimes that marketplace transformations are able to occur and allow change to propel a growing global consumer culture.

In addition, Libya, alike Eastern European states such as Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic were *planned market economies* in the past, meaning that the state had extensive control and owned many enterprises (Springer and Czinkota, 1997). Whereas, after revolutionary change, companies became autonomous with limited state interference. Private enterprises emerged as state owned enterprises declined and so such transitional countries became *market based economies*. Given the dominance of the Qaddafi regime, the development of the Libyan marketplace as a hub for consumption exchanges was limited. To a lesser extent, the Mubarak regime in Egypt promoted the idea of a market based economy but in practice, few citizens saw radical reforms in the marketplace. As foreignness was severely restricted in Libya in the past, marketing was considered a threat to state politics because if foreignness had been accepted and a global marketplace developed, then the position of companies and managers would have become stronger

and reduced the power of the state. A similar argument could be made for Egypt, but the acceptance of foreign firms contradicts any animosity towards foreignness. Hence why the supremacy of the state's rule appeared to have prevailed over foreign companies and citizens. In the absence of applied democracy, citizens and managers of both foreign and local companies were limited in their ability to challenge state policies. In fact, Oliver (1991) suggested that the application of marketing knowledge to countries in transition has been scarce. In the case of Eastern Europe, marketing as a sub-discipline of business was not widely acknowledged because political and ideological beliefs conflicted with marketing practices as national economic plans took precedence over market regulation by private companies. The term 'marketing' was even banned in some countries such as Poland and Hungary. Furthermore, national economic plans ensured that supply outweighed demand and so the adoption of marketing was surplus to requirements (Springer and Czinkota, 1997).

In a similar vein, companies in Egypt and Libya used marketing practices implicitly and tailored them to not conflict with political ideals. Unlike in western contexts, where marketing is prevalent and gains popular acceptance, transitioning economies such as Egypt and Libya provided marketing practices internally within firm marketing departments to attract buyers and suppliers. Many firms seemed to perceive consumers as objects of consumption and not as typical consumers. Market research was limited because consumers' perceptions were considered unimportant. Moreover, foreign firms were told what to produce by governmental head figures and did not require marketing to meet consumers' needs and wants. Externally, marketing practices were heavily regulated such as on the advertising scene and the prohibition of the English language in Libya. The banning of the English language for promotional material under Qaddafi helps explain why Libyans' consumption practices were neglected and emphasises how foreignness was frowned upon. Consumption was confined to the objects (consumers) of consumption who consumed what was available to fill a void in their lives. In the present epoch and alike Eastern Europe states such as Hungary, consumption practices appear to have been revolutionised as Egyptians and Libyans no longer wish to return to a state of authoritarianism. In terms of future expectations, citizens anticipate that the combination of new found freedoms and comprehension of marketing activities will allow firms in Cairo and Tripoli to finally understand consumers' needs and wants.

Change is defended as being central to the transitional process because it is macro political and societal transformations that skew consumption practices. Nevertheless,

marketing is also defended as crucial to change because citizens are more educated now and have identified previously unseen modes of consumption. From the view of marketing theory, new consumption practices may have emerged due to the confinement of marketing in the past. Fundamentally, the role of Libyans as consumers has been reversed. Whereas in the past, Libyans used to be the objects of consumption on offer, they are now producers of a newly emerging consumer culture, meaning that they can experience the desirable and are fully responsible for individual choices made in the marketplace. In contrast, Egyptian consumption practices have also changed and are hedging towards tradition and local consumption. Given the existing consumer culture, marketplace transformations in Cairo have not been as rapid as in Tripoli.

In summary, with marketing as a discipline and as a business function becoming more transparent to firms in the two capital cities, there are signs that citizens are going to be taken seriously, not just as receivers of consumption but also as agents of change. Historical lessons learned from Eastern Europe are useful for comparing past experiences in Egypt and Libya. On the other hand, lessons learned from Egypt and Libya and the implications of flux on consumption practices in Cairo and Tripoli can be transferred and applied to other countries experiencing flux such as Ukraine and also Iraq and Syria who are facing a militant insurgency crisis.

3.7 Literature review conceptual framework

Identified themes (within the perforated lines) from the literature review interconnect with consumption practices across the three stages; past, present and future (see figure 9). The process of identifying changes in consumption practices is an iterative process (hence the bidirectional flow of the arrows) and is consistent with the research question. Unlike a theoretical framework which takes into account existing theories and extends them with the authors own input, the value of this conceptual framework is inductively grounded, especially given that the application of hypo-deductive theories would not be useful in explaining the ongoing revolution phenomenon. Consequently, the framework builds on from the research problem by identifying the key themes that influence changing consumption practices. In defence of compatibility criticisms for developing a conceptual framework after conducting an SLR, the framework was devised after synthesising the literature, whereas the SLR was only an entry point into gathering the literature. Based on this premise, the framework is compatible with an SLR.

Literature Review Themes

- *Country of Origin Effects*
- *Consumer Ethnocentrism*
- *Consumer Animosity*
- *Consumer Boycotts*
- *Political Consumption*
- *Homogeneity vs. Heterogeneity*
- *Desired vs. Desirable Effects*
- *Candidness and Freedom of Expression*
- *Religious Values*
- *Cultural Values*

Evolutionary (Global) Environment

Revolutionary (Local) Environment

Global Consumption   *Middle East Consumption*

Consumption Practices in Egypt   *Consumption Practices in Libya*

Extraordinary Change

Consumption Practices (Life processes)

Past experiences of consumption practices	**Past**	Consumption Practices in the call for change.	**Focal epoch**	Present experiences of consumption practices	**Future**	Future Expectations

History   Happening   Hopes

Emergent Themes

Figure 9: Study conceptual framework-Source: Author.

The conceptual framework tackles the research question in line with objectives 2 and 3 by identifying the themes from the literature that affect consumption practices. To fully understand how consumption practices have been affected by the Arab Spring, the themes are used to develop the provisional interview schedule. In Chapter four which is presented next, the research methodology and philosophical underpinnings for this study are discussed.

Section B: Methods and Methodology

Chapter 4 Methodology
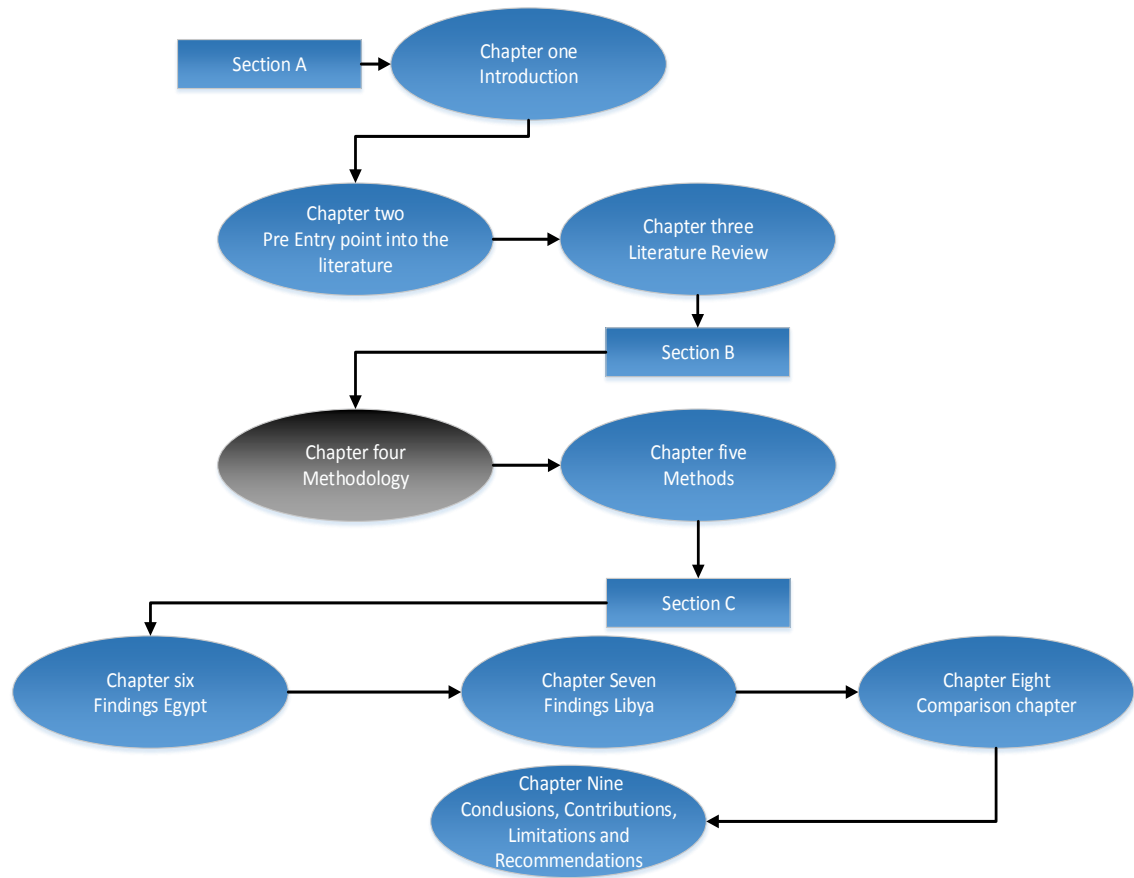
Figure 10: Route Map- The position of the current chapter in the thesis- Source: Author.

4.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter details the methodological approach and the philosophical stance adopted by the researcher in relation to this thesis. It begins with an overview of the philosophy of science, which encompasses matters of ontology, epistemology and axiology. Determining the philosophical paradigms of research and positioning the researchers own stance is fundamental to understanding the arguments made in the subsections that follow. A discussion into the implementation of the chosen philosophical view/s follows. Considerations are then made for the reasoning behind adopting the selected philosophical stance. Following a defence of the selected paradigm/s, an evaluation is made regarding the applicability of grounded theory to the body of research. The research design is then probed where an examination is made for the qualitative vs. quantitative respective divisions and an argument is made for the chosen research design. A discussion

of inductive vs. deductive logic is then presented along with the chosen research approach. After defending the stance taken for the chosen traditions of inquiry, a chapter summary is brought forward.

Taking into account the foundations of inquiry, there are three main debates that must be considered. These are: qualitative vs. quantitative, subjective vs. objective and deductive vs. inductive. A comprehension of the three debates is crucial to underpinning the direction of chapters four and five. To articulate the direction and steer the arguments of the sections that follow, a provocative and challenging exposition is required to affirm the researcher's position in relation to the three debates.

4.2 Philosophy of science

Carrying out science involves an understanding of the dynamic entities of the social world as a haven of knowledge and involvement with the objects of the experience being studied is invaluable to the researcher (De Nardis, 2012). Lutz (1989) argued that marketing scholars need to be able to acknowledge and exercise their own philosophical assumptions in their own research because all research is determined by a particular philosophical position. It is the position taken towards the world studied (ontology) and how this is explored (epistemology), which has a direct effect on how the methodology is used to derive knowledge. A controversial issue that occurs in marketing theory is the acceptance of critical theory (in its different forms). Traditionally, marketing theorists (e.g. Burton, 2001; Hunt, 1983; 1991; 2002; Tadajewski, 2010; Tadajewski and Jones, 2012) have been convinced that marketing theory should reflect some form of empirical testing. Since the turn of the 1970s, critical theory (Alvesson, 1994; Burton, 2001) emerged as a reaction from individuals outside the marketing discipline. Attempts were made to dispel the beliefs that marketing was an independent discipline. Moreover, critical theory rejects purely scientific, foundational approaches to human nature and positivist methodologies (Tetreault, 1987). Instead, there is a reliance on interpretive approaches to human behaviour within a certain time frame and space. This avoids having a one dimensional ethnocentric view of other cultures. Where marketing has been weak to explain constructed happenings in the social world, critical theory has provided the basis for reflecting on social, political and historical platforms, through which, marketing dialogue and practice has taken place (Burton, 2001). Another criticism of marketing is that social reality is not reflected as an acknowledged entity to the extent that the social

world is not static. Rather, it is shadowed by the domination of capitalistic practices (Willmott, 1999).

Before commencing with any research project it is important to offer insight into what is knowledge and how knowledge can be generated. A key aspect is the recognition of both the researcher and the participants' perspectives towards the building of knowledge and how it may be transferred. Matters of ontology and epistemology form the nucleus of research and describe the perceptions, beliefs and assumptions concerned with the making of the social world and social reality. The researcher's unique philosophical lens has direct repercussions on the way research is designed, carried out and also the resultant outcomes. Extending the perspective of philosophy in research further, Easterby-Smith et al. (1997) underlined three main ramifications of philosophy to the research methodology. First, coherent understanding of philosophy can assist in fine tuning the particular research methods used and make clear the research strategy as well as the research questions. Second, a solid grasp of research philosophy allows for a critical assessment of different methodologies and methods and allows the researcher to identify contingency plans and possible pitfalls at an early stage of the research. Third, an appreciation for the research philosophy may inspire the researcher to experiment with a variety of methods or allow for the adaptation of methods that may lie outside the researcher's comfort zone. By acquiring a particular philosophical stance and assigning considerations for the research methodology, there needs to be strong cohesion between the aims of the research, the research questions, the selected methods and the adopted philosophical stance. Otherwise, overriding inconsistencies with the research may come to fruition. A review of matters of ontology, epistemology and axiology is presented next.

4.2.1 Matters of ontology, epistemology, axiology and the significance of philosophy behind research

Three key definitions that are central to the research methodology are epistemology, ontology and axiology. Epistemology is a segment of philosophy that deals with the core of knowledge and how knowledge is made possible. Epistemology also concerns formulating a criterion that draws parameters on what does and does not constitute knowledge. Ontology is another branch of philosophy that is interested with the nature of existence and the configuration of reality (Tadajewski, 2004). The multitude of questions about reality that occur through intuitive and exploratory inquiry destabilises assumptions

and ideas about the social world. It is the instability that allows philosophical underpinnings to be of great significance (Smith, 1998). A third component is axiology which refers to the theory of values (Hart, 1971). Axiology caters for the identification of valuing systems that influence personal perceptions, decisions and actions. Questions such as "What do I value?" "How do I make value decisions that are central to axiological thinking?" (Schoof, 1999). Similarly, from an axiological perspective, if the idea of extraordinary change is to be considered in this instance, the cognitive process of *how* participants think about future changes and not *what* they think about future changes takes precedence. The knowledge that is then interpreted and disseminated is affected by the researcher's values, which in turn affect the conclusions drawn from the research. The inferences to epistemology, ontology and axiology may be better understood through the next section, which brings forward a discussion of research paradigms.

4.2.2 Philosophical paradigms of research

Research paradigms are essential to all research projects (Gummesson, 2003) and are integral to both Burrell and Morgan's (1979) and Kuhn's (1962) work on paradigms. Kuhn identified that a paradigm incorporates a theoretical structure which is made up of conceptual, theoretical and instrumental entities which provide a framework for future research. Kuhn's findings later came under scrutiny because of the small sample size of his research. As a result, Burrell and Morgan (1979) attempted to extend Kuhn's work in order to highlight the cohesion of thought which ties the work of theorists together in a way that may be seen as moving towards social theory.

Burrell and Morgan proposed four paradigms which are widely adopted in the field of marketing and also other respective disciplines. These are the functionalist/positivist, interpretive, critical/ radical humanist and radical structuralist paradigms. The four box matrix developed by Burrell and Morgan advocates incommensurability across research paradigms. Where a piece of research merges between one or more paradigms, then there are said to be multiple paradigms at play. Contrary to Mink (1992) who stated that paradigms represented a worldview, Burrell and Morgan contested that paradigms represent the extent to which the objects of inquiry can be tangibly seen, felt and touched. Thus, the matrix they developed emphasises this very point (figure 11). There are two dimensions to the matrix. Going vertically is a running issue of conflict or change. The lower section of the grid displays appreciation for social order and stability, whereas the

upper section of the grid denotes an issue with aspects of conflict instead of the preservation of order. On the horizontal side, the matrix is interested in objective truths instead of subjective interpretations. The right hand side of the matrix contains structural issues, whereas the left side postulates considerations for social action (Collins, 1996).

Drawing upon the assumption of incommensurability, a relationship exists between entities. Incommensurability is considered a three way process in that A is incommensurable with B and is relative to C (Lueken, 1991). In simple terms, paradigms belong in different worlds and cannot permeate into other boundaries. On the other hand, commensurability describes how paradigms can overlap or combine multiple views to generate a better understanding of the phenomena (Gioia and Pitre, 1990). Greater pluralistic changes are demonstrated through Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four paradigms in organisation theory. Modes of paradigmatic inquiry in this thesis favour commensurability over incommensurability because the social constructionist approach followed as a sub branch of interpretivism (bottom left of Burrell and Morgan's matrix) relies on constructing realities and favours theory development over theory testing. Consequently, paradigmatic overlaps are accumulated within the assumption of commensurability and reflect a relativist view of the social world. Boundaries of inquiry are therefore not constrained by issues of incommensurable paradigms that lean towards the radical structuralist and functionalist paradigms respectively and which advocate objectivity as well as cause and effect relationships. Similarly, social constructionism requires the flexibility to foster multiple realities that are co-constructed through a variety of governed interpretations and so absolute reality is not just an entity waiting to be discovered by way of empirical investigation or observation.

Radical humanist Paradigm Anti-organisation theory	**Radical structuralist Paradigm** Radical organisation theory
Interpretive Paradigm Hermeneutics, ethnomethodology and phenomenological symbolic interactionism	**Functionalist Paradigm** Behaviourism, determinism and abstracted empiricism

Sociology of
radical change

Subjective   Objective

Sociology of
regulation

Figure 11: Burrell and Morgan's four Paradigms in organisation theory- Source: Burrell and Morgan (1979, p.22).

After discussing and positioning the paradigm followed in this research, research approaches are examined in the next subsection.

4.3 Research approaches

4.3.1 Qualitative vs. Quantitative approaches

There are two dichotomous epistemological poles. These are positivism and anti-positivism with the former residing within the quantitative domain and the latter in the qualitative domain. Smith (1998) contended that positivist approaches to the social sciences suppose that research can be conducted with the intention of achieving empirical results or hard facts. Thus, for supporters of positivism, objectivism forms the basis for presenting absolute truths about the social world and the objects being studied. An objective reality exists, which is autonomously undetermined by human behaviour and

therefore not a production of the human mind. Paradoxically, after the emergence of post positivism, Hughes (1994) proposed that post-positivists do not conform to objectivist truths about social reality. On the contrary, it is the subjects of the research that influence the social world. Post positivists take into account a host of extenuating factors such as culture, gender and cultural beliefs (Proctor, 1998). Individual characteristics, attitudes, social and cultural elements affect ideas about reality. Appreciation of the opposite epistemological stream indicates that an objective reality (positivism) may only be observed as a sole dimension of reality. In the tunnel of positivism, the researcher attaches rules and procedures that allows for empirical generalisations about the subject matter (Tadajewski, 2004). In contrast, post positivists focus on understanding the lived experiences of participants but that does not necessarily mean post positivists have left positivism all together (Thompson, 1997). Deep into post positivism, the foundations of interpretive research emerge. The main difference between interpretivism and positivism is that social reality is subjectively created and therefore, the objectivity of findings is rejected (Szmigin and Foxall, 2000).

Positivism (quantitative) and interpretivism (qualitative) are the two main perspectives used in the construction of marketing and consumer theory (Morgan, 2003; Ozanne and Hudson, 1989; Pachauri, 2002). Quantitative research remains dominant in marketing research because of a focus on empirical testing and objectivity (Gummesson and Polese, 2009; Hanson and Grimmer, 2007; Hunt, 1983). Within the quantitative domain there are two positivist ontologies which guide research. These are *hard* positivist and *soft* positivist ontologies. A hard positivist ontology dictates that there is a concrete objective reality and, epistemologically, generated knowledge can be generalised using scientific methods (Carson et al., 2001). Consequently, issues related to validity and reliability are used rigorously to justify a certain part of reality with overlying degrees of certainty (Hunt, 1994). On the other hand, a soft positivist ontology also accepts the notion of an objective reality but, epistemologically, it indicates that methods used to unravel the social world give rise to probabilistic and indecisive understandings (Hanson and Grimmer, 2007).

On the other extreme end, constructionism is often associated with the qualitative domain. Constructionism ontology argues that each individual person possesses their own reality (Carson et al., 2001). Therefore, epistemologically, subjectivity is favoured instead of objectivity and the central focus is placed on a participant's particular standpoint (Morgan

and Smircich, 1980). The implications of the participants' lived experiences may be useful in predicting lessons for others. There is another extreme within the qualitative domain known as postmodernism which assumes that there are no valid universal truths. Instead, from a consumption lens, the social world is proposed to be made up of lots of exposing signs where consumers engage in a countless search for new and exclusive experiences provided by products and services (Bauman, 1992).

The concept of applying greater qualitative research within marketing in recent times has largely been attributed to the fact that there has been an increase in practitioners carrying out qualitative research, especially in Europe (Hunt, 1994) and also because more and more studies are undertaking market research through the use of focus groups, interviews and ethnographic methods (De Ruyter and Scholl, 1998). Additionally, exploratory qualitative studies are useful to track processual changes, while quantitative studies tend to favour variance over process (Maxwell, 2005). After making considerations for both qualitative and quantitative approaches, it is now pertinent to address the reasoning behind the researcher's own designated approach.

An in depth discussion of research methods is discussed in chapter five. For now, an understanding of the qualitative approach adopted is needed. Going back to the research problem and context, a qualitative study has been chosen as the main orientation towards developing an appreciation of extraordinary change. As a new phenomenon, the context of the revolutions have had to be approached using open-ended questions and through an inductive loop of analysis. Further pertinence is given to a qualitative study because as Romano (2006) concluded, research in ME conflict zones is usually qualitative rather than quantitative in nature because of political, cultural sensitivities and limited budget allocation to many researchers, which discourages them from using large sampling strategies and quantitative surveys. Consequently, Romano's findings can be applied to the unrest in Egypt and Libya.

Another reason for not undertaking a quantitative study is because quantitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires entail closed questions and predetermined approaches that would clash with exploring a new and ongoing phenomenon as the quantitative methods would not be able to tap into the lives of the participants and gather their perceptions and historical narratives of the revolutions. Furthermore, issues of generalisability would come into play and the only way the findings could be extrapolated

is if a larger sample size is taken. Apart from the interpretive ontological grasp of the researcher which leaned towards qualitative research, the time constraints and barricades to data access rejected both an ethnographic approach and a positivist outlook to proceedings. A decision for a qualitative design was reinforced further due to familiarity with previous projects within the marketing domain that entailed interviews and focus groups as well as their transcription through qualitative data analysis and the use of a computer aided design qualitative analysis software (CAQDAS). Following a discussion of qualitative vs. quantitative approaches, the dichotomy of inductive vs. deductive logic is tackled in the next subsection.

4.3.2 Inductive vs. deductive logic

Inductive logic is applied in this thesis and the design of the data collection reflects the requirement to develop emerging themes. By following a qualitative approach, an inductive approach is useful for unearthing unknown or unexpected phenomena. Inductive approaches are characterised by a sequence of chronological actions. These are: research questions, data collection, data analysis, conclusions, development of hypotheses and development of theory. The opposite logic is deductive which hedges towards positivistic research and entails a series of hypotheses which are tested through data collection. Thus, the process involved is described in chronological order as follows: Theory, general hypotheses, specific hypotheses, data collection, data analysis, results, conclusion, theory confirmation (Newman, 2000). Since the intent of the research is to unravel emerging theory, an inductive approach is necessary to drive the research findings. Ontologically, the research is subjective. As an axiological distinction, the data is context embedded and there is no objectivity meaning that generalisations are refused in favour of confirmability and transferability (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In contradiction, researchers following a deductive approach locate a defined suit for existing theory, a selection of variables and also quantitative methodical measures. Within a positivist approach, a theoretical framework is devised and the researcher seeks to go out and test it. An advantage is that work of previous authors can be recognised and built upon. A disadvantage associated with deductive approaches is that it is only feasible to test whether or not or to what extent the generated hypothesised relationships actually exist. As a result, unforeseen variables or new constructs are neglected. Unlike qualitative research, the researcher can lose transparency of the data in terms of the responses from the participants in an unstructured environment (Pettigrew, 1988). In positioning the

inductive approach of this thesis, Table 3 below, based on Ali and Birley (1990), provides an illustrative example of the stages involved in inductive research.

Stage	Purist Deductive	Purist Inductive	Integrated Approach
1	Develop Theoretical Framework	Area of inquiry identified-but no theoretical framework	Develop theoretical framework based on constructs
2	Variables identified for relevant constructs	Respondents identify constructs and explain the relationship between them	Some variables identified for relevant constructs- Others can be identified by respondents
3	Instrument Development	Broad themes for discussion identified	Researcher converts the priori theoretical framework into atheoretical research questions
4	Respondents give answers to specific questions	Respondents describe general themes of interest	Respondents discuss the seemingly general questions and identify constructs which are meaningful to them and explain the relationships between the constructs
5	Answers analysed in terms of prior theoretical framework	Researcher develops theory on a purely inductive basis	Respondent data analysed according to existing theory. OR theory is developed on an inductive basis- without regard to the existing theory.
6	*Outcome* Theory tested according to whether hypotheses are accepted or rejected	*Outcome* Theory developed	*Outcome* *Either* Existing theory is adapted *Or* Alternative theoretical framework is presented

Table 3: The stages of inductive, deductive and integrated approaches- Source: Ali and Birley (1999: p. 4)

The second shaded column of the table illustrates the inductive approach used in this thesis. For the instrument development, the SLR served as an entry point into the literature and provided a series of themes for the interview protocols. The general themes of interest offered by the participants gave rise to inductive categories or *free themes* which then went through a rigorous process of coding (see chapter five on coding methods) to form inductive theme categories. Further reasoning for the adoption of an inductive approach is not only because of the phenomenon of emergent Arab revolutions but also because in order to assess extraordinary change, the semi-structured interview questions had to excavate the past in order to understand the present and expectations for the future.

Participants began with projecting their views of how they felt about their country on different levels (e.g. socially, politically and culturally). It is through understanding the lived experiences and historical narratives that an inductive thrust is needed to unearth the implications of the revolutions on consumption practices.

Apart from issues of validity and reliability, one of the pitfalls of an inductive approach is that researchers can only notice particular events and not general occurrences. So all the events witnessed are past occurrences (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010). As the study examined the data on the revolutions in a state of unrest, a synchronic approach was used and warranted an inductive loop of inquiry. If the opposite was the case and an analysis was probed of the evolution of a phenomenon over a period of time, a diachronic approach would be needed and may adopt a deductive approach (Doina et al., 2010). Fundamentally, an inductive approach must be able to capture raw data and assimilate the findings into a hierarchy of themes. The themes are not predetermined which is why, regardless of the data collection method, there should be a large number of themes that are then assigned to distinctive categories and segmented into further categories. An inductive approach must be able to also ascertain links between the research objectives and the findings from the raw data. Links and relationships developed are then probed for transparency and defended against the objectives of the research. A conceptual model or theory about the materialised structure of the experience or processes involved in the data is then put together (Thomas, 2006). Inductive logic also overlaps consistently with grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2012), which further exemplify the use of such an approach within this thesis. In the next subsection, an understanding of how the philosophical stance was decided upon and how it was applied to the research is needed.

4.3.3 Moving towards social constructionism

Arguments made in the previous section in favour of an inductive approach initiate the requirement to justify the researcher's philosophical stance. Since the basis of the research focuses on lived experiences of Egyptian and Libyan citizens, an interpretive approach is adopted due to the ontological aspects being deep rooted within cultural phenomena (Gioia and Pitre, 1990). Examining the process of extraordinary change and how consumption practices have been affected by the revolutions gives further reasoning for an interpretive approach. Therefore, the level of understanding of individual experiences is deeply embedded in the researcher's mind in terms of gathering how individuals' felt in the past, feel in the present and what they expect to happen in the future. In view of

interpretivism's ontological perspective, all the conveyed meanings are contextual (Brand, 2009). Schultz and Hatch (1996) outlined that interpretive research allows for the framing of culture as meanings, associations, patterns of behaviour and cultural patterns are established. They also argued that webs of meaning/s lie behind the immediate expressions of culture, which turn the research study into a search for expressions of such cultural essence. Furthermore, Schultz and Hatch (1996) determined that interpretivists hold a strong interest in the continuous process of sense making and meaning creation.

To disperse confusion, Schwandt (1994) claimed that 'constructivist', 'constructivism', 'interpretivist' and 'interpretivism' are synonymous terms that regularly appear in research methodologies. However, the meaning and use of the above terms are ultimately shaped by the researcher. Schwandt (2000) further stated that interpretivist thinking in relation to constructivist thinking, is similar. On the other hand, he argued that where interpretivists retaliated against attempts to apply logical empiricism to human inquiry, constructivists reacted to the perception that truth could be discovered by mind, which refers to the notion of objectivism. Buber et al. (2004) complemented the view of Schwandt and asserted that paradigmatically, interpretivism can be categorised within constructivism because of the similarities they both hold. Both paradigms view the world as *constructed* by people and that their constructed reality has a strong influence on their behaviour which makes any external reality relatively insignificant. In agreement with Schwandt and Buber et al., Daymon et al. (2011) argued that since interpretivists hold a firm ontological belief in the existence of multiple realities and truths, the social world is believed to be positioned as an entity which is socially constructed. It is the comparable search for interpreted meanings that align both interpretivist and social constructionism views together. Affiliated with the psychology discipline, social constructionism aims to uncover the central characteristics of people (Lock and Strong, 2010). Moreover, assumptions held about the social world seek to unravel meanings through the eyes of the participants.

As the ME may be in a period of candidness, extracting cultural meanings and associations favours either an interpretive or social constructionist approach. Therefore, the concept of understanding which embodies both interpretivist and social constructionist approaches prevails over scientific explanation which favours a more positivist approach. Rubin and Rubin (2005) argued that to understand meanings from participants own narrative accounts requires an interpretive and/or social constructionist

approach. They added that the narratives portrayed by the participants are essential to the construction of meanings, concepts and emerging theories. Justifying the use of interpretivist and social constructionist approaches is possible, due to the fact that both approaches overlap with each other and social constructionism comes under the same umbrella as interpretivism (Carson et al., 2001). In the same way, both are consistently positioned with each other and adopt the stance that knowledge is a *social construction*. Thus, ontological positions concerning reality allow ways of *making sense of the world* as opposed to *discoveries about the world*. Therefore, from an interpretive lens, the act of making sense of socially constructed reality involves acceptance that reality is constructed by interpretations (Walsham, 1993). During the preliminary phases of this research, the researcher began with an interpretivist outlook but also recognised the appropriateness of social constructionism. However, through the course of the data collection, the applicability of social constructionism seemed to have greater resonance within the research because grounds of *truth* became judged by the participants' own narratives.

A second distinction needs to be made here to avoid further confusion. The terms 'constructivism' and 'social constructionism' are sometimes used correspondingly under the umbrella of 'constructivism' in meaning-making processes (Gergen, 1999). 'Constructivism' states that each individual under observation has their own unique constructions of the social world through cognitive processes, while 'social constructionism' dictates that there is more of a social focus than an individual one (Young and Collin, 2004).

Rather than objectivity (positivism), subjectivity took precedence under a social constructionist approach due to the fact that the open ended questions assembled through convergent depth interviews were narrated in the participants' own words based on their own experiences of the Arab revolutions. Following an inductive approach overlaps consistently with a social constructivist view of the world because the construction of meanings and generated lived experiences are integral to the building of conceptual categories. Consequently, the philosophical anchor of the thesis follows a constructionist epistemology. The idea that change can and does exist within the social world adheres to the perspective of social constructionism. Burningham and Cooper (1999) identified the position of the social constructionist as a concern about ontological claims and not as an ontological assertion about the inexistence of reality. Rather, the truths about reality are

not rejected but the meaning of reality is socially constructed. Similarly, the transferability and confirmability of the findings are key elements to achieving an analogy of extraordinary change (see subsection 5.7.4 on trustworthiness of qualitative research). Furthermore, Burningham and Cooper (1999) stressed that social constructionists do not present their findings with the goal of objectivity in mind. On the contrary, reliance is placed on the 'them' (i.e. participants) in objectivist terms. It is the subjective interpretations made of how others construct the social world that are projected through the credibility of the findings. In other words, there are ongoing considerations towards issues of trustworthiness such as confirmability and transferability.

Instead of arguing that the results are in any way *definitive*, invoked ideas in *constructionism* suggest that by refraining from any neutrality, social constructionism can stimulate a progressive debate and lead to change. Change of course, is an integral facet to this research so the application of a social constructionist approach embodies the ontological foundations of assessing extraordinary change. A drawback which might impede assessing extraordinary change is social constructionism's stance on human activity. Authors such as Burr (2003) contested that there is currently a gap with regards to the very issue of human activity, while Berger and Luckmann (1991), like Burr, stressed that change is activated by human activity. Both sets of authors concurred that it is the individuals who define 'change' and that participants constantly attempt to present both themselves and their version of events in a manner which takes hegemony over other versions. If the above view is accepted, then there is confirmation that the social constructionist philosophical stance is an undiscovered novel approach for understanding extraordinary change in the ME. Furthermore, social constructionism enforces the idea that people can be their own agents of change. Perhaps since Burr (2003) argued that one of the less developed areas of social constructionism is testifying the case for people's influence on change, the responses from the participants and social constructionist approach goes a step further in addressing the limitations of social constructionism. Having critically examined the transition from an interpretivist approach towards a social constructionist stance, the involvement of grounded theory is discussed in the next subsection.

4.3.4 Grounded Theory

The application of knowledge within a grounded theory methodology relates to the establishment of emerging theories over the data collection process. Unlike many other methodologies, the researcher goes into the field with little or no literature review. Foundations of the research therefore develop in context and over time (Daymon et al., 2011). The rationale behind using grounded theory for this research is increased by the fact that it has the ability to offer original insights into how phenomena and the creation of new ideas occur (Flick, 2002).

Charmaz (2006) identified that grounded theory methodologies consist of systematic, flexible frameworks for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories, grounded in the data being collected. The main aim is to synthesise the data collated and to take it on a journey through incremental steps and develop theoretical analyses from the beginning of the research process. Emphasis is placed on how a symbolically based language does what it does, which is to provide a paradox of social experience or encounters for two sets of people who speak the same language as opposed to two people speaking different languages. The meanings and understandings are extracted from social interactions within particular places, situations and unforeseen events (Hackley, 1998). Based on this premise, the claims argued by Hackley above, can be applied to the Arab revolutions because the semi-structured interviews involved participants who spoke a common language (Arabic), however the social experiences and encounters differed significantly. Moreover, the revolutions in both Egypt and Libya were both contextually different. The first revolution in Egypt was achieved by way of mass protests and demonstrations, whereas the revolution in Libya was achieved by armed conflict. Accordingly, grounded theory allows for emerging concepts and new themes that may arise as the revolutions continue. Likewise, the study sheds light on a new phenomenon, which has not occurred previously and as such, warrants a grounded theory investigation.

From a personal reflection, one may critically appraise the work of Charmaz (2006) as she takes a purely interpretative focus towards grounded theory. Some theorists such as Glaser (1998, 2002) contradicted Charmaz and argued that as a positivist that there should be a researcher bias and one that acts as a variable. However, Charmaz (2006) disputed Glaser's claims and stated that acting as an observer shapes everything you see and allows you to be self-reflective about where you come from to have any formation of your own

values. In contrast, the positivist looks for accuracy and data to test against their own hypotheses (Puddephatt, 2006). Similarly, Glaser (2002) argued that constructivism is used to justify forcing the data. Charmaz contradicted Glaser's view and asserted that a researcher attempts to understand the data the best they can and try to be as subjective as possible. She added that through a constructivist approach, the researcher is able to be fully aware of the check points in their data and ability to view the world through the experiences of others, rather than trying to render their own viewpoints. Furthermore, Charmaz took a strong stand against positivists, claiming that they do not allow sufficient knowledge for their data and that constructivists try to aim for understanding the view of people as best as possible. She also rejected the idea of searching for a representative sample because it would conform to positivist markings (Puddephatt, 2006). Consequently, from a personal stance, Charmaz's analytical assumptions are worthy of critical merit and conform to the foundations of the research question. As a social constructionist, one can duly acknowledge Charmaz's claims to the level of degree that she combines both an interpretivist approach and also social constructionism. Therefore, Charmaz's (2000; 2006) version of grounded theory methodology is strictly followed in this thesis as she uses a 'social constructivist', 'social constructionist' approach to drive epistemological understanding.

There are several drawbacks to using a grounded theory methodology. For example, if the researcher lacks theoretical sensitivity, they may become induced into irrelevant fields that they did not want to initially fall into. The effects of becoming lost in the field may impede the researcher's ability to produce an emerging theory because of too many categories combined into a theoretical framework. This can be either down to rushing the research or indeed expecting plausible results too soon (Goulding, 2002). In relation to the revolutions, the data has to be reverted back and forth as well as being re-examined as the phenomenon develops further. Using a grounded theory methodology corresponds with the intent of this thesis because it requires reverting back and forth between the data. By contrast, returning to the research sites in Egypt, in Libya was not possible due to safety and security concerns in the respective countries. Furthermore, a grounded theory methodology states that the researcher begins with little or no knowledge about the topic in question and so the literature review builds up during and after the phases of data collection (Glaser, 2004; Goulding, 2005; Mills et al., 2006). Additionally, the application of the SLR conflicted with the grounded theory tradition of having little pre-determined knowledge about the topic before doing fieldwork. Several authors have disputed the

clarity of true grounded theory and claimed that some researchers use grounded theory as a shortcut, easy choice methodology and they do not achieve a true grounded theory but simply use the grounded theory label to substantiate theorisations made (Charmaz, 2006; Gibbs, 2012; Suddaby, 2006). The search for grounded theory in its purist form was not possible due to time constraints, difficulties and lengthy procedures involved in gaining access to Egyptian and Libyan participants and the inability to revisit the data diachronically. Therefore, it was decided that a grounded theory methodology would be rejected but grounded theory methods (GTM) would still be relevant and applicable to the research as a means of data analysis (coding, theoretical sampling and also data saturation).

Practically, the researcher used GTM to collect and analyse the data without designing the research according to the research strategy prescribed by grounded theory. There is a literature void with regards to consumption practices and the ME, so the inductive building of themes and discovery of new ones allowed for the application of GTM to establish empirical findings and also new emergent themes. Now that the relevance of grounded theory to the research has been debated, the compatibility of a social constructionist approach and GTM is discussed in the next subsection.

4.3.4 Combining social constructionism and grounded theory methods (GTM)

The fundamental elements of grounded theory complement the mechanisms of interpretive research and social constructionism by allowing one to examine how participants create meaning through social interactions. In order to overlap the social constructionist philosophical stance, there needs to be an acceptance that if social constructionism is not based on a relativist perspective or no absolute truths, then it is compatible with a grounded theory methodology (Andrews, 2012). Both social constructionism and grounded theory are similar in that the emphasis is placed on social interactions between people and how language is used to convey reality. The only significant difference is that grounded theory does not place as much prominence on language. Consequently, the use of social constructionism is compatible with subjectivist grounded theory. In so far as the thesis follows GTM grounded theory methods but not a true grounded theory methodology, then social constructionism overlaps well with GTM. An argument for induction in grounded theory methodologies (Goulding, 2002; Locke, 2001) also compliments a social constructionist approach.

Charmaz (2006) argued that taking a social constructionist approach alongside GTM requires a reflexive trail because subjectivity is not only provided on the part of the participants but also the researcher. Detailed considerations must be clearly made for axiological values. Thus, an epistemic mode of reflexivity was chosen in order to provide a trail of the fieldwork and to address research biases. Epistemic reflexivity has also been termed 'researcher reflexivity' or 'reflexivity' but generally speaking, the main essence is for the researcher to share reflections on the research process with the readers and to justify matters of dependability (reliability) through providing a trail of the ways in which the results were obtained (Gomm and Davies, 2000).

4.3.4.5 Capturing historical data

In order to reproduce strategy data, a narrative approach was taken by capturing historical data in cross-section. To gain insight into the participants' lived experiences of the Arab Spring phenomena, retrospective accounts were necessary to analyse *practices in flux* by gathering citizens' past experiences (prior to regime change), present experiences (time of data collection- March-April, 2013) and also their expectations for the future. The narrative approach used echoes the view of Barley (1990: p. 224) who stated: 'an evolutionary perspective is especially important if one wishes to analyse transformations of action rather than merely identify and examine historical trends'. Hence, change is central to this thesis and the consequences of practices in flux are compared and contrasted according to past experiences, present experiences and future experiences, which lead to transformations of action rather than just identifying historical trends from the past. By using retrospective accounts, the past experiences of citizens could be acknowledged. A number of authors have argued in favour of using retrospective accounts as a method in reconstructing the past (Bizzi and Langley, 2012; Golden, 1992, 1997; Miller et al., 1997). Change over time involves diachronic measures (longitudinal data) and is beyond the scope of this thesis. Regardless of whether longitudinal or retrospective data is captured, significance is placed on the theorising process and explicating how practices in flux affect consumption practices. In the next sub-section, a chapter summary is given.

4.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the three philosophical elements of the thesis in ontology, epistemology and axiology have been discussed. Justifications have been made in relation to the research philosophy, application of the chosen philosophy, research approaches, and modes of inquiry. In summary, this thesis is positioned within the interpretive paradigm and specifically within the sub domain of social constructionism. The research approach is identified as inductive. Furthermore, the research is qualitative and follows grounded theory methods (GTM) to drive the research findings. Reasoning has been given for the use of a social constructionist approach alongside GTM. In the next chapter, considerations are made for the research methods used in this thesis. An epistemic reflexive stance is also taken in order to address the axiological values of the researcher.

Chapter 5 Methods
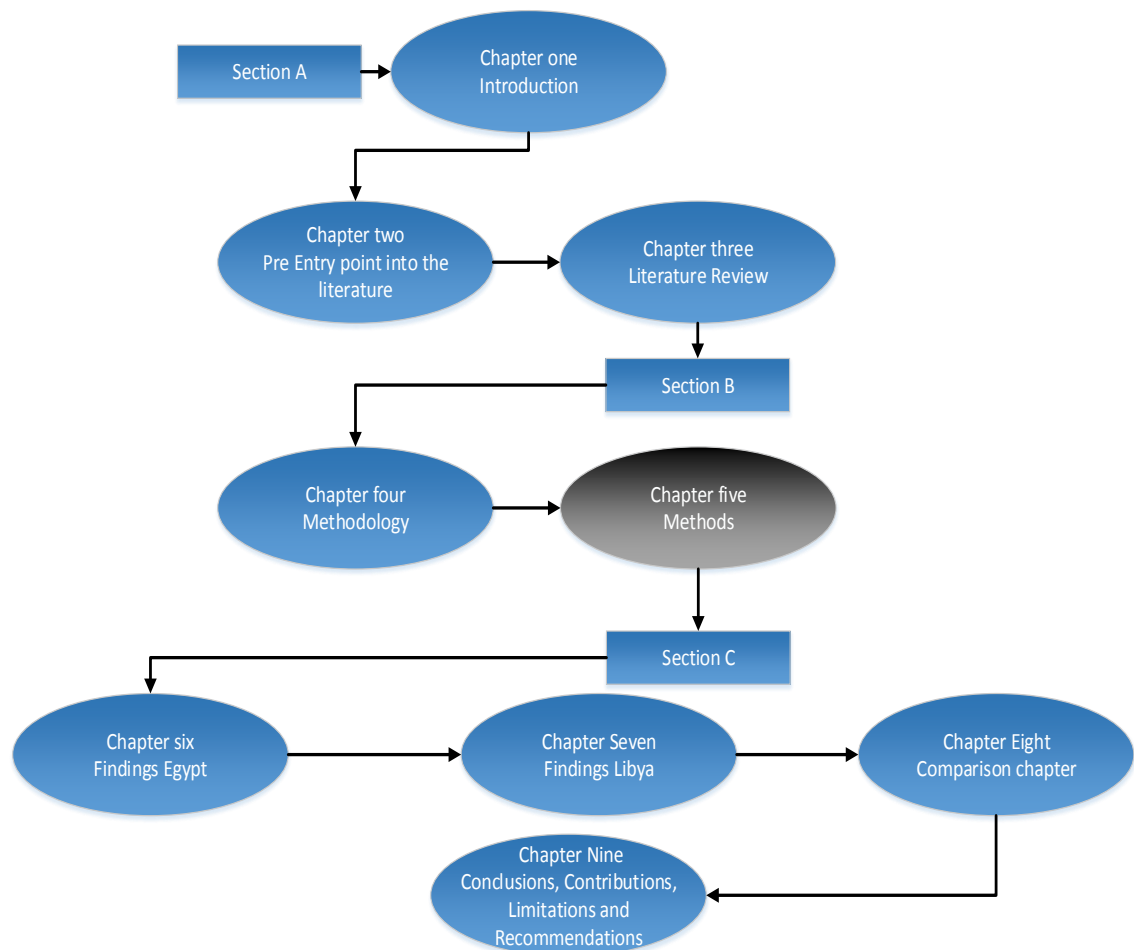
Figure 12: Route Map- The position of the current chapter in the thesis- Source: Author.

5.1 Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, the methods used in this research are discussed at length. Methods are distinct from methodology because they are a set of techniques that are undertaken sequentially to achieve a certain goal whereas methodology is determined as a group of theoretical ideas that warrants the use of a certain method or methods (Midgley, 2000). This chapter is structured as follows: the research objectives refinement and propositions are brought forward, before moving onto the routes involved in determining the objectives, which leads to the final stated objectives of the thesis. Issues of sampling such as the sampling units, sampling method/s and sampling size are then elucidated before progressing onto the data collection methods. Ethical issues are then expounded and then the process of data analysis from the transcription phases to the coding stages is determined.

5.2 Research objectives refinement and propositions

Following a precedent by Nicholson (2010) who suggested the presentation of objectives in path descending order, at the time of submitting the upgrade document, the following objectives were stated:

1) Using a systematic literature review to inspect the literature in respect of marketing in the Middle East and to establish the influences upon that body of literature by way of a series of themes.

2) To review and explicitly identify the methodologies utilised in developing the body of literature examining marketing in the Middle East.

3) Using the themes identified in respect of objective 1, through a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews to assess the impact of the revolutions on the materialised themes.

Following the semi-structured interviews and third phase of coding, the emergent themes were found to be embedded within consumption practices. Therefore, after the data analysis, the objectives had to be refined to propose new ones that would be better suited to investigating changing consumption practices and stand as final objectives of the thesis. These objectives are:

1) To develop a conceptual framework for examining *practice* in a period of environmental flux.
2) To provide an account of how Egyptian and Libyan consumption practices have been *affected* by the Arab Spring phenomenon.
3) To provide an account of how Egyptians and Libyans' consumption hopes/expectations and histories have in turn *influenced* the Arab Spring phenomenon.
4) To provide an analysis of the extent that the consumption practices identified can provide insight into other ME countries or other regions in a high state of flux.

Other emergent themes of interest such as relationship networking, educational reforms and entry modes were omitted due to word limit constraints and in order to maintain the

research focus and answer the research questions. The objectives above are the meta-objectives that are directly fulfilled through the discussion and conclusion chapters of this thesis. In the next subsection matters of sampling are addressed.

5.3 Sampling

5.3.1 Sampling units

The researcher undertook convergent depth interviews with Egyptian and Libyans from Universities in Egypt and Libya. The two countries was chosen for the purpose of comparison and contrast. Further reasoning for choosing these two countries was due to the following: both countries had succeeded in overthrowing their previous governments (Dalacoura, 2012) and the opportunity for consumption was greater now than even before with improved business relations between the two countries on the agenda (Abdellatif, 2012; Daragahi, 2012; El-Essawy, 2011; The Economist, 2012). El-Essawy (also a writer for the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram) suggested that both countries shared common traits and had suffered for years from a lack development, which she argued was due to Egypt's lack of vision and planning as well as Libya's authoritarian rulings, which previously hampered the country's economic progress. Moreover, there is now a greater prospect for marketing opportunities and consumption in the two countries (Dall'Ora, 2012; Egypt State Information Service, 2012). Egypt already had a growing number of shopping malls and modes of consumption (Abaza, 2005) and a number of foreign multinationals and also local Arab firms in the past (Business Monitor International, 2011a; Business Monitor International, 2011b); whereas Libya had very few modes of consumption and called for more foreign firms to internationalise in the country (Kamel, 2011) following the revolution. Some authors have claimed that Libya is willing to give preferential treatment to companies from countries that had supported Libya overthrow the regime of ex-dictator colonel Qaddafi such as France, Britain, the USA and other NATO partners (Kamel,2011; Shane,2011). Kamel also argued that other Arab states who helped aid the Libyan revolution, such as the UAE and Qatar, would also receive a greater welcome.

The sampled individuals are identified as Egyptian and Libyan nationals who had lived through the revolutions and currently live in Egypt and Libya respectively. To narrow

down the sampling units, the capital Cairo was selected as the geographical location for allocating Egyptian participants. With regards to Libya, security and safety issues prevented the researcher from direct travel to Libya. Consequently, a contingency plan was developed and interviews were conducted via Skype with participants from the capital Tripoli (see subsection 5.4.3 on online interviewing).

A distinction needs to be made between target population and sampling size. Target population in this study refers to the population of individuals which the study is interested in and sets to make inferences about them. Sampling size refers to a segment of a population that is investigated. Universities in Egypt and Libya were initially chosen on the basis that the research aimed to gather in depth opinions, views and derived meanings from people who had lived through the revolutions. Rather than using a random sampling technique (Bryman and Bell, 2007), postgraduate students were selected due to the following: to avoid a selection dilemma of participants, refrain from asking a random proportion of Arab citizens, to give scope and pinpoint participants in an academic setting. Universities offered the opportunity to hold individual face to face semi-structured interviews in a relaxed and secure learning environment.

While obtaining access to both Egyptian and Libyan universities, the researcher hit several stumbling blocks. First, from a list of 10 universities in Egypt, only one gave acceptance. Second, from a list of five universities in Libya (Libya has less universities than Egypt) only one responded and granted access. In the case of Libya, online participants emerged through two local charity organisations that had a prominent role each in the Libyan revolution. The remainder of the participants were through referrals and were either employees who had lived through the revolution or university lecturers of Libyan origin. After reviewing the sampling units, the sampling method is discussed in the next subsection.

5.3.2 Sampling method

Sampling methods are fundamental aspects with any chosen methodology (Noy, 2008). Unlike quantitative research where the purpose of sampling is to make a statement or assess the probability of something occurring in a particular situation, sampling in qualitative research attempts to achieve rich and deep descriptions to inform understanding (Thompson, 1999). Thus, qualitative researchers endeavour to reach theoretical saturation (Guest et al., 2006). There was a number of other non-probalistic

and non-mutually exclusive sampling to choose from. These techniques included convenience or purposive, judgemental, quota and snowball sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Malhotra and Birks, 2007; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The main applied method of sampling in this thesis is snowball sampling and theoretical sampling (also known as a branch of purposive sampling). Purposive sampling is seen as non-random ways of targeting specific categories of cases within a sampling population (Robinson, 2014). Selecting purposive sampling was relevant because the researcher had a priori theoretical understanding that only citizens who had lived and currently live in both Egypt and Libya could be selected as a legitimate target population. Moreover, participants own perspectives were critical to gaining fresh insights about the impact of the revolutions on consumption practices. As a sub type of purposive sampling, theoretical sampling was deployed. Theoretical sampling methods are consistent with GTM (Draucker et al., 2007; Goulding, 2005). Clarification is needed to separate theoretical sampling from other purposive sampling techniques - such as stratified sampling, cell sampling and also quota sampling - mainly because it takes place over the course of the data collection period and usually follows tentative sampling and analysis of some of the data (Coyne, 1997). Theoretical sampling entailed drawing emerging theory as the study took place. An added advantage of theoretical sampling was that it continued throughout the process of the research. Theoretical sampling was applicable to the semi-structured interviews because through the course of the data analysis and in line with an inductive approach, the data was reverted back and forth. After the first few interviews, participant referrals were made which gave rise to snowball sampling (Roulston, 2010). Applying snowball sampling based on recommendations from participants increased the level of trust between the researcher and the participants and also accounted for more detailed insights (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). Rowley (2012) argued that as a good rule of thumb, new PhD researchers should aim for around twelve interviews of approximately thirty minutes in length, which coincides with Dick's (1990) suggestion of sampling a minimum of 12 people, or the equivalent, such as six to eight interviews of around one hour each.

In addition, data collection in 'conflict environments' poses a great risk to the researcher and the data collected (Cohen and Arieli, 2011). This is exactly why a snowballing technique had to be applied. According to Kriesberg (1998) a conflict environment is one where people assume their goals or interests are compromised by interests of another side or faction. Group conflict entails disputes over one's territorial space, resources, economic issues, religious and also cultural values (Bar-Tal, 2000). Therefore, Egypt and Libya can

be considered 'conflict environments'. Under the circumstances, snowball sampling simplified the recruiting of participants. Without referrals, participants were uninterested to put themselves forward for interview at the first port of call. A strong rapport had to be developed with each participant beforehand to dispel elements of fear or distrust. Fear was a grounded trait amongst the participants through having lived in authoritarian regimes in less candid eras. However, over the course of the interviews participants were instinctively willing to let others know about the study. As Clark (2006) mentioned, it is the political and cultural concerns of ME participants that impedes data collection within conflict environments. Random sampling could not be considered as this would have meant locating participants at the discretion of the researcher. Each interview was arranged at the participants' convenience and lasted from forty-five minutes to one hour. In the next subsection, the sampling size is discussed.

5.3.3 Sampling size

Sampling selection is motivated either by a theoretical framework which underscores the research or by an emerging theory which is obtained via an inductive approach (Curtis et al., 2000). In the context of this thesis, sampling size is concerned with theoretical saturation. Initially, the intention was to interview a sample list of 15 participants from two universities in Egypt and two in Libya. However, due to barriers to access as well as safety and security concerns, the final list comprised of 26 participants from Egypt and 16 from Libya. The provisional sample size increased through snowball sampling. Egyptian students and staff were from a range of backgrounds within the business and sub-business disciplines. Students were all current MBA cohorts and came from a range of age demographics and cultural backgrounds. Libyan participants were either working citizens, employees or university lecturers. The goal was not to generalise the participants' backgrounds or disciplines and assess their knowledge of marketing concepts, but rather to view them all as consumers and obtain a mix of participants from a range of demographical fields. In doing so, there was the opportunity to gather a plethora of views and narrative accounts which solders together the social constructionist approach to this research. A sampling profile of the participants is provided in Table 4.

Country	Number of Participants	Description	Current education or working status of respondents
Egypt	26	20 MBA students 6 University lecturers	Students University Staff
Libya	16	6 Working professionals private sector 6 charity employees 4 University lecturers	Senior employees Charity employees University Staff

Table 4: Sampling profile of participants- Source: Author.

In terms of the theoretical sampling used, theoretical saturation is only possible once the emerging theory can explain variation/s in the data and no additional information can be extracted (Goulding, 2005; Goulding, 2006). One of the problems associated with theoretical sampling is that it is difficult to fully predict when exactly the saturation point will be reached (Daymon et al., 2011). A theoretical saturation point was reached only when no new themes arose. The point where no new categories of information came up was after the 25th interview for Egypt and 15th interview for Libya. Riley (1996) stated that most grounded theory studies achieved theoretical saturation between 8 to 24 interviews depending on the topic focus. Contradicting Riley's claim, Goulding (1998) stated that this would go against the entire philosophy of theoretical sampling and assume that theoretical sampling directs the flow of the research design from the outset. In agreeing with Goulding's view and from a personal standpoint, it was difficult to fully predict exactly when a saturation point would be achieved beforehand, without going into the field and investigating the data first hand. Neither was it possible to predict a saturation point because this would have encouraged a researcher bias. However, if the saturation point was achieved earlier than intended (intended in this case means before all the interviews were conducted) then the study would have had to look at other contexts, different population samples and/or indeed different places (Goulding and Saren, 2010). Instead of theoretical saturation, 'check rounds' are the terms used in convergent depth interviewing. Both are synonymous terms and strive for the same outcome. Having disclosed the sampling issues, the chosen research methods are justified in the next subsections.

5.4 Data collection method

In the following subsections, the techniques used to gather the data are brought forward. Considerations are also made for other qualitative techniques as well as the issue of contingency planning in light of data collection constraints.

5.4.1 Interviewing

Contrary to positivistic approaches to interviews which are concerned with asking the right questions and arriving at a station of fixed reality that produces generalisations, qualitative interviews are interested in the nuances of spoken language. The role of the interviewer is peripheral while the role of the participants and their described personal accounts is central to interpretive findings (Alvesson, 2011; Josselson, 2013; Kvale, 1996).

For now, it is necessary to justify the reason for choosing semi-structured interviews and discuss how the technique was used for the data collection. The first justification for deciding on a semi-structured interview relates to the SLR which proposed a series of themes that were used to assist in the development of the interview schedule. Using an interview guide ensured that comparable types of data were gathered from the participants. Time was therefore saved and material of less relevance was omitted from the research agenda (Daymon et al., 2011). By eradicating irrelevant themes, the allocation of more significant data was greater than with unstructured interviews. Similarly, unstructured interviews do not follow strict guidelines or a logical order of interviewing (Saunders et al., 2007). Questions were able to be refined further before the commencement of the main data collection. Another advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they do not always have to be followed in a strict manner as with structured interviews (Daymon et al., 2011).

In terms of other qualitative techniques, focus groups were considered for the study, however due to the study context, focus groups may have hindered participants' ability to freely express their views and opinions. Additionally, given the sensitive nature of the topic, a response bias may occur because participants may not be comfortable sharing their personal views of the revolution with other groups of people. Furthermore, a focus group interview may have conjured a contentious debate, as opposed to what the

researcher was striving for in terms of interpreted findings and emerging theory (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). Likewise, questionnaires or surveys would have not formulated empirical in depth findings as answers are often extrapolated. In the next subsection, the convergent depth interviewing technique deployed is discussed.

5.4.2 Convergent depth interviewing (CDI)

Convergent depth interviewing (CDI) draws its name from the *converging nature of data* whereby issues converge in what is known as 'interview rounds' to become key issues. As a result, this technique of interviewing is considered useful for under researched areas and disciplines were there are limited studies (Nair and Riege, 1995; Rao and Perry, 2003). An advantage of CDI is that it allows for key interview themes to surface, which lead to more detailed analysis (Brown et al., 2002). As a procedure made popular by Dick (1990), CDI begins with relatively less structured or unstructured questions and as the interviews proceed, emerging themes are gathered, which progress to the relaying of more pertinent questions. Dick (2002) later claimed that CDI may take about an hour per interview to reach the level of detail needed for the discovery of key issues. Questions in convergent depth interviews typically have three minimum requirements: they should be specific in terms of their focus, appropriately devised to suit the experiences of the interviewees and the wording (but not the meaning) should be adaptable to the experiences of the participants. The questions in the initial stages of the interviewing process are quite broad and open ended. As the interviews progress, questions are refined and focussed. To leverage more detailed responses, the interviewer should create a trusting environment, set the context and shape the scene so that the participants feel more relaxed and inclined to answer questions. Doing so is likely to also build a greater rapport and trusting relationship between the interviewer and the participants (Jepsen and Rodwell, 2008). One disadvantage of using CDI includes the inclination for a potential researcher bias; the selection of participants is orientated towards participants with prior knowledge of the subject in question and may consequently affect the way the interview is shaped as well as the eventual building of emerging theory (Rao and Perry, 2003).

CDI complemented the search for emerging themes in the data and therefore, coincided well with GTM. A novel approach was followed that integrated CDI through online interviewing. Online interviews were conducted with Libyan participants because of

barriers to data access. Therefore, in the next subsection the use of online interviewing is discussed.

5.4.3 Online interviewing

Before embarking on primary fieldwork in Libya, the researcher had reservations about going to the country due to safety and security concerns. As such, a contingency plan was kept in mind but it was only after finalising the data collection in Egypt that a decision was made because of the ongoing unrest in the country. As a result, the researcher had two choices: to either abandon the data collection in Libya (which was undesirable) or find an online mechanism that would facilitate an online interviewing platform. The latter option was adopted and the most coherent option was Skype. A number of recent studies have used Skype and recognised the program as a legitimate technique of interviewing (Booth, 2008; Deakin and Wakfield, 2013; Hanna, 2012; Sullivan, 2013; Weinmann, 2012). An MP3 audio recorder that linked synchronously with Skype was used to record the interviews. The next step was to apply the same CDI technique, which was used previously with Egyptians, but with Libyan participants. No further changes were made to the format of the interview or indeed the duration.

Several authors have pointed out that participants may feel more relaxed, at ease with expressing their own opinions and less intimidated sitting in front of a computer rather than directly facing the interviewer in person (Cooper, 2009; Gruber et al., 2008; James and Busher, 2006; Jowett et al., 2011). Gruber et al. (2008) described the disadvantages of online interviewing and concluded that a rapport can be difficult to establish and the interviewer may not able to fully interpret participant facial expressions and gestures. These factors may encumber the denotation of the meanings extracted and understanding of the participants' narrative experiences. Telephone interviews were acknowledged as another contingency technique. However, due to the intent of the research in understanding feelings, perceptions and experiences, telephone interviews would not have offered any face to face interaction (Shuy, 2003). Thus, important gestures, facial expressions and nuances could not be observed. Carrying through a homogenous CDI agenda via Skype posed several obstacles. Distortions in the webcam and temporary disconnections meant that once a reconnection was re-established, the MP3 recorder had to be stopped and restarted. Interview questions had to be simplified in more abstract sentences to accommodate for aberrations in speech or a brief loss of audio. In spite of

the disadvantages of using Skype, participants were still happy to provide responses. To an extent, an argument could be made that interviewing via Skype was in some respects, less intimidating than interviewing face to face and therefore, a greater virtual rapport between the researcher and the participants was developed. On the flipside, viewing the participants through a webcam can also falsify denounced expressions, an issue which was less evident in the face to face interviews. Face to face interviews showed increased tangibility while the use of Skype denoted the opposite. Nevertheless, in the midst of security concerns, Skype provided a flexible alternative interviewing technique. After disclosing the interviewing techniques, the interview schedule and protocols used are discussed in the next subsection.

5.4.4 Interview schedule and protocols

In line with a CDI technique, the interview schedule was flexible which meant that questions could be adapted to meet the direction of responses. Participants were provided with details of the study and a few example questions to help them settle and build a consistent rapport. Questions were designed to allow the participants to express their own historical narrative (phase 1). Acknowledgment the past, led to questions about the present (phase 2) before asking questions about future expectations (phase 3).

Opening questions included:

1. Tell me a bit about your own personal background?
2. How did you feel before the Arab Spring?
3. How did you feel during the Arab Spring?
4. What kind of lifestyle did you live before the Arab Spring?

The three phases of interviewing are shown in figure 13 below. The phases of questioning were an iterative process (hence the opposite direction of the arrows) and therefore allowed for enhanced flexibility and the opportunity to revert between the different phases. Applying an iterative flow to the interview phases allowed participants to reflect on the three phases on their own terms. Occasionally, participants drifted away from speaking about the past and straight to future expectations, which is why it was important to then trigger responses for the present (the time of data collection: March-April, 2013). Analogously, the researcher had to refrain from asking too many questions in a particular phase in instances where participants showed signs of restlessness. For example, when

emotional accounts of the present (phase 2) became too overbearing for some, questions about future expectations (phase 3) were asked before returning to phase 2 at a later stage in the interview.
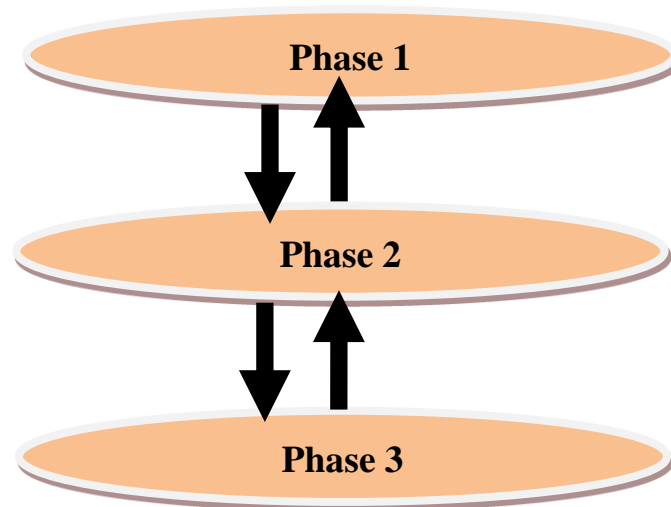
Figure 13: The iterative three phases of the interview schedule- Source: Author.

There were some limitations with using an interview guide. As Witzel (2000) contested, heavy use of an interview guide can indicate an over-pragmatic understanding of how to cope with the interview situation. As an alternative solution, Witzel suggested using introducing questions to begin building a narrative rapport, a statement that echoes the use of introductory interview questions in this thesis. Similarly, McNamara (2009) stated that the strength of the interview guide depends on the ability of researcher and his/her experience. Nevertheless, he argued that the same general areas of information should be collected from the participants. By doing so, it provides a rigid and focussed framework and is likely to elucidate more responses from participants. Thus, McNamara's guidance was taken into consideration before the commencement of the interview rounds. The researcher also attempted to follow Creswell's (2007) guidelines of maintaining a flexible approach throughout the interview rounds. Participants sometimes answered questions that were saved for later in the interview. Similar to Creswell's suggestion of follow up questions, interview prompts were deployed throughout the interview rounds. After providing the reasoning behind the interview schedule, a discussion of practical considerations concerning the interviews is required in the next subsection.

5.4.5 Practical considerations when conducting semi-structured convergent depth-interviews

In the following subsections, the practical issues that influence the data, data analysis and data presentation are evaluated.

5.4.6 Access and rapport

Achieving access to the primary data proved a challenging task and the search for participants lasted several months. The complexities of conducting fieldwork in the ME have been documented in previous years (Carapico, 2006). Clark (2006) contended that the experiences of researchers carrying out qualitative studies in the ME are imperative to understanding the personal accounts of citizens who live in authoritarian regimes. She also identified that the main concerns for researchers studying the ME are issues of political sensitivity and the restrictions on speaking freely because of political repression. Another concern is the dilemma of *mistrust* and *fear* of voicing an opinion and facing political repercussions. In contradiction to Clark's claims, participants were happy to provide their own opinions voluntarily. Similarly, listening to participants' views and opinions with impartiality was important in *bracketing* one's own predispositions (Moustakas, 1994). That is to bracket ones pre-conceived ideas and biases as much as possible. Bracketing also had an influence on the rapport building process because the stance taken allowed the researcher to listen carefully to the participants own narratives. Follow on questions such as 'please could you elaborate 'and 'tell me more' were neutral questions that initiated participants to continue their discussion. Only when participants were convinced with their own responses and signalled to progress to another question via moments of silence or a sustained pause in their speech, were subsequent questions probed. Joshi et al. (2008) proposed that Arab participants would prefer to delicately suggest an alternative opinion or move the discussion to another topic than show any objection. To a partial extent, this proposition is credible because there were cases where participants non-verbally hinted to move onto another topic of discussion by the drop in intonation in their voice, change in body language and also by shifting in their seats. The researcher duly acknowledged the signs of discontent and moved onto another topical area.

Locating interviewees in the ME is regarded as a troublesome task due political restraints, legal factors, a lack of contact information or who to interview, a lack of system information (organisational ignorance), cultural differences (traditions, language barriers), technical assistance (e.g. limitations to navigating around the research zone) and also an atmosphere of fear and distrust (Cohen and Arieli, 2011; Fujii, 2010). Prior to designing the data collection, the researcher had very few contacts who resided in Egypt and Libya. A quest therefore began by determining Egyptian and Libyan universities that would potentially grant access. Many universities took several weeks to respond and often made referral requests to other academics as they were either on research leave or unable to explicitly refuse access. Typically, polite and subtle email referrals or stated obligations can be a tentative reason for saying no. Implicit feedback is a characteristic of ME culture and has been well documented (Abbasi and Hollman, 1993; Attia et al., 1999; Joshi et al., 2009; Khakhar and Rammal, 2013; Moran et al., 2011; Rice, 1999). From the list of Egyptian universities, only one gave acceptance while for Libya, only one university from a possible five permitted access. Supplying details of the study for access purposes had to be prudent and specifics of the study had to be outlined but with relative caution given the topic's sensitivity. In establishing a better rapport with the participants, the researcher was able to communicate in their native language (Arabic) and also held similar cultural traits. However, there was some uncertainty before each interview because the researcher was seen as a slight *outsider* due to accent differences and variations in local customs. On arrival in Egypt a pre-dialogue in the form of a *social chat* took place in order to build a relaxed and trusting atmosphere. The notion of being an 'outsider' shifted more towards being an 'insider' as a result of building trust between the two parties.

Similarly, for Libya, the same rapport building steps were followed. Achieving a strong rapport via Skype was constrained by the physical distance between the researcher and the participants. However, the relationship between the two parties improved as the interviews progressed. On the contrary, the less contravening nature of Skype interviewing placed the participants in a more comfortable and less intimidating position. Unlike the face to face interviews with Egyptian participants, Skype provided a *comfort zone*, which in turn may have contributed to an enhanced rapport and fluent interview. Before disclosing any details about the study, participants assumed that a survey would be administered. Instead, participants were more willing to take part when told they would be interviewed. According to Tessler and Jamal (2006), surveys that request respondents

to answer in a yes or no fashion can be considered discourteous and rude. Asking closed ended questions can limit the interest of the participants, particularly if they express a desire to narrate their own story. This is especially true in the case of the Egyptian and Libyan participants because they wanted to talk in detail about their own experiences. The type of phenomenon under investigation can sway the use of appropriate data collection methods but the argument raised against survey research in the ME (especially when the goal is to understand personal experiences) gives greater pertinence to the use of CDIs. Additionally, as CDIs were used, a stronger rapport was established with the participants, something that falls short with survey research. Rapport building in the ME was an area which Tessler and Jamal (2006) disputed as the 'missing dimension' in the ME. Only a limited number of studies had focussed on rapport building (Farah; 1983; Palmer, 1982; Tessler et al., 1987) but such studies followed quantitative surveys, favoured generalisations and, alike Clark's (2006) study, were carried out in a less candid period of time. Thus, a lacuna in relation to rapport building was located from the interview rounds of this research. If it is accepted that a void has been filled with regards to rapport building, then greater relevance is given to a qualitative approach. A problem with developing a strong rapport was that some participants viewed the researcher as a status symbol and someone who could help them access power within their own university (i.e. by praising their academic record to higher members of faculty, or by putting in positive appraise for prospective jobs).

For the Libyan participants, Skype interviews were conducted from the researcher's home, while the interviewees had the discretion of choosing their own Skype location. On the other hand, with Egyptian participants, the research site had to be pre-determined and also had to encompass safety and security, hence the interviews took place on university grounds. Universities are considered *neutral* (Herzog, 2005). Privacy is another aspect that helped develop trust and rapport which is why the interview room curtains were closed and room door was locked during the course of interviews. According to Herzog, there is a paucity of studies that explain the reasoning behind choosing the location for interviewing. Adler and Adler (2002) contested that the subject of the interview should be the determining factor in deciding the location and that sensitive topics are best covered in a discreet location. Acceptance of Adler and Adler's view assisted in the organisation of the interviews at the Egyptian University. After bringing forward the issues related to access and rapport, matters of researcher sensitisation are covered in the next subsection.

5.4.7 Researcher sensitisation

In line with Charmaz's social constructionist stance, the issue of *epistemic reflexivity*, first underpinned by Bourdieu and Waquant (1992), holds particular significance in harnessing research sensitisation. As a term, epistemic reflexivity concerns the researcher's own personal attitudes and beliefs and it is used to expose casted assumptions (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). Understanding extraordinary change in the context of this thesis requires much critical thinking. To move forward on the critical level, critical thinking is crucial to the questioning of what might be hidden behind an assumption. Holmes et al. (2005) stated that the main objective of epistemic reflexivity is to reach a stage of emancipation by using critical thinking to justify assumptions. Epistemic reflexivity also overlaps consistently with a social constructionist approach because reflexivity is considered a socially constructed reality (Sandywell, 1996).

The philosopher Maxine Greene (1995) introduced the metaphor *cloud of giveness* to denote how people relate themselves to a social world that is littered with invisible and odourless entities yet overshadowed by a *motionless cloud*. Interpreting the metaphor leads to the assumption that without acknowledgement for epistemic reflexivity, researchers are unable to reflect on their own theoretical, methodological and philosophical assumptions (cloud of giveness), therefore leading to an increased personal bias (motionless cloud). Remaining reflexive is often understated or partially mentioned. Knowledge generation requires epistemic reflexivity (Henwood, 2008) to inform readers about the researcher's values and assumptions that frame the research. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stressed that reflexivity is the cornerstone of either good or bad research and to give greater dependability (reliability), the reader must be able to establish a connection between the researcher's reflexivity and the narrated social world. In so far as the notion of epistemic reflexivity has been explained, the disclosure of the researcher's own values are addressed next.

Similarities shared with the participants exhibited a common theological school of thought, spoken language and to a certain extent cultural practices and traditions. However, being of Iraqi origin with a hybridised identity (British Iraqi) perhaps in some ways gave a sense of impartiality to the research. Consequently, there was the opportunity to offer greater subjectivity and a reduced bias than if an Egyptian or Libyan national had conducted the study with participants from their respective countries. On the contrary, the

hybridised social upbringing of this researcher may have brought a slight cultural bias. Maton (2003) argued that more often than not, researchers hide their own values and assumptions or do not reflexively explain them. Acknowledging such factors is fundamental to readers' wishing to contest the credibility of the findings of this thesis.

The extent to which 'bias' is controlled depends on the sensitising instruments used by the researcher to eliminate personal influences. A lack of researcher sensitisation presents a threat to trustworthiness if appropriate time has not been spent in the field, little attention given to reflexivity or if everything is accepted as an absolute truth (Poggenpoel and Myburgh, 2003). Clarification must be given to the applicability of the term 'bias' in a qualitative context as the term has various meanings. Sometimes quantitative terms of bias such as response, social desirability and construct bias are used interchangeably even within qualitative research. Bias in the quantitative sense refers to *systematic error* and *measurements* of a particular phenomenon; whereas, bias in this research is used in the form of determining the researcher's *conscious* or *unconscious tendency* to produce, interpret and derive data conclusions in line with one's own commitments (Hammersley and Gomm, 1997). Having an international marketing background and growing up with similar cultural traits to the participants raised several problems. First, there was a tendency in the preliminary phases of the research to try to spot a marketing problem that was previously non-existent prior to the research. Second, cultural closeness with the participants created a sense of hegemony. In other words, the assumption is that being of *Arab origin* gives rise to *Arab nationalism*. The bracketing of one's own assumptions was achieved during the designing of the interview protocols where a decision was made to design questions that did not directly convey marketing terms to the participants.

An assessment of interpretive validity (Maxwell, 1992) was performed by testing the meaning of keywords both during and between the interview rounds to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. Interpretive validity served the purpose of recognising that interpretations were not based solely on the researcher's own perspective but that of the participants. 'Conformability' (Walsh, 2003) and 'justifiability' (Auberbach and Silverstein, 2003) have also been used as synonymous terms instead of interpretive validity. Direct engagement with the participants was disconnected after the round of interviews. Transcriptions were sent for dependability (reliability) and the voice recordings were made available on request to respondents. Qualitative software via Nvivo 10 provided a coding platform and not only assisted in the construction of coded themes

but also reduced the level of personal bias. After reviewing the aspects pertaining to researcher sensitisation, the next section will bring forth a discussion of ethical issues.

5.5 Ethical issues

Research ethics deal with what is considered morally right and what is morally wrong (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The comprehension of ethical issues is important to assessing the trustworthiness of the research (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). When submitting the proposal for ethical approval, strict rules were followed in accordance with the ethical guidelines supplied by Hull University Business School. A number of ethical issues were at play during the course of the research, which is why the ethical issues at various stages of the research process are highlighted in the next subsections.

5.5.1 Research design ethics

During the design phase of the research, the snowball sampling strategy had to be geared towards participants who had lived through the revolutions and also resided in an academic setting due to safety and security concerns. Anticipations at the beginning of the research were to identify potential participants from a range of geographical locations and demographical backgrounds in Egypt and Libya. Unfortunately, practicing these criteria would have entailed a random sampling strategy which was not possible because of access, safety and security restraints. Some ethical issues were apparent with the snowball sampling because referrals were made to further participants within the same target population and the researcher could not independently verify the integrity of the referrals. Despite a certain level of uncertainty with referrals, the researcher still had a moral duty to ensure that the research was fully debriefed and explained.

5.5.2 Research access ethics

Negotiating access to the data posed several ethical obstacles. Once the ethics application was approved by Hull University Business School, the University in Egypt enlisted the graduate research director (GRD) who sent an announcement to staff and postgraduate students to inquire about their prospective participation. The invitation to participate also included a document which laid out the specifics of the study and a consent form declaring the participants' rights as well as assurance that the participants' confidentiality and

anonymity would be preserved. The GRD devised an interview timetable once replies had been returned. As Lofland and Lofland (1995) argued, when access is needed to a particular research site, an instrumental initial contact can be useful for building trust and lowering barriers to entry. The GRD in this case was a key figure, but not a 'gatekeeper' in the strictest sense (Atkinson and Flint, 2001; Cohen and Arieli, 2011). Rather, the GRD served as a 'recruitment gatekeeper' (Devers and Frankel, 2000) and was not present at any of the interviews or influenced them in anyway. From an ethical stance, sometimes gatekeepers are used to directly influence the data collection process, which can give a bias to the research (Mauthner et al., 2002). This is precisely why the GRD was only called upon in a recruitment capacity and not as an influential gatekeeper. The Egyptian university had originally requested participatory incentives but on arrival at the university, any incentive was withdrawn and considered an offence as participants wanted to take part voluntarily. The interviews took place over a two day block period because of the availability and work/study commitments of the participants and also safety and security uncertainties for the researcher, which limited extended stay in the country. In contrast to long-term observational ethnographic studies (Berg, 2004) where more time is spent in the field, the block period of interviews prevented the researcher from becoming a part of the participants' own community.

A risk assessment provided by Hull University Business School was completed in order to ensure that the researcher's safety was not compromised. At the time of data collection, both Egypt and Libya were considered high risk zones because of the state of unrest in both countries. The University of Hull's health and safety officer provided security alerts via www.travelsecurityonline.com. A designated driver was also responsible for chauffeuring the researcher to the university campus and back to the hotel of residence. On arrival at the campus, security members had been made aware and granted immediate campus access, where the GRD was waiting in attendance. The procedures to maintain privacy in the interview rooms were shown (e.g. how to close the automatic blinds and how to lock the door). Thus, greater confidentiality and discretion was maintained. In the case of Libya, to uphold ethical consistency, specifics of the study as well as a consent form were sent to online Libyan participants before each Skype interview.

<u>5.5.3 Interviewing ethical issues</u>

When conducting the interviews, the purpose of the topic was thoroughly debriefed. A consent form was presented to verify the participants still wished to take part. Participants were made well aware of what was involved and nothing was hidden from them and they were free to suspend the interview at any time. The researcher pointed out that the anonymity of the participants would remain preserved at all times and under no circumstances would the research compromise their confidentiality. Although the vast majority of participants did not mind their name being mentioned, their identities had to be concealed and therefore each participant was referred to as a number (e.g. 1, 2, 3 and so on). The Egyptian university wished to have their identity stay anonymous, to which their wish was duly accepted. Participants were made clear that the research was towards a PhD, but the information may be used to produce journal articles. No objections were raised to using information for future research endeavours, although some participants requested to have a copy of the interview transcript and interview tape for their own records. Otherwise, transcripts were only seen by the researcher and hard copies and recordings were securely kept. In the next section, the processes involved in the data analysis are covered and the coding phases of the data are illustrated in detail.

<u>5.6 Data Analysis</u>

As a comprehensive process, the data analysis phase was an integral component to theory building and developing conclusions. Through following CDI and GTM, an inductive approach to the data analysis was applied to encourage the formation of emerging themes. In the next subsection, matters of data transcription are presented.

<u>5.6.1 Data Transcription</u>

Transcription is an influential act of representation and can impact on how the data is conceptualised (Oliver et al., 2005). Atkinson and Heritage (1984) stressed that the compilation of transcripts are research activities and they should not be seen as just technical detail or in other words, a routine job just before the data analysis. Aligned with a social constructionist stance, transcribing is argued to be a process of construction as opposed to just noting down what the participants actually said (Hammersley, 2010).

Several authors also concurred with the fact that interpretivist perspectives also treat transcripts as theoretical constructs and bring about decisions on what to transcribe and how (Green et al., 2007; Lapadat, 2000; Mischler, 1991).

Interviews (face-face) were recorded using a Dictaphone and an MP3 recorder for the Skype interviews. Recordings were then transferred to specialist transcription software. Transcripts were written using Microsoft word and were crafted using both denaturalised transcription (Charmaz, 2000) (which translated the text verbatim, using traditional orthography) and naturalised transcription (which involves linguistic devices, speech devices and intonations). Denaturalised transcription was pursued in line with GTM because of the interest in shared meanings and perceptions as well as a starting point for the pre-coding phases. Unlike denaturalised transcription, naturalised transcription (Oliver et al., 2005) was only used with regards to maintaining continuous prose and grammatical commas, full stops and capital letters (Bucholtz, 2000). Transcription approaches taken in this thesis complement Duranti's (2007) claims that most researchers develop a hybrid system of transcription to suit epistemological concerns. Where interviews expressed the Arabic language, an orthographical check was made to ensure the correctness of spellings, grammar and punctuation. Similarly, proof reading of the translations ensured the accuracy of the translations. Due to the specificity of the Arabic language, some words could not be directly translated because of a lack of an equivalent term in the target language (English). To maintain and preserve their meaningfulness, such words were maintained in their original form but noted in a Latin script format with a literal translation in parenthesis accompanied alongside the word/s. For example, the phrase *regul dein*, literally translates as *a man of religion*. Nuances, intonations and other speech disfluencies such as *uhh's* and *er's* as well as gestures and expressions were kept and believed to have significance to the context of the interview. A traditional *play script* format was used for the transcripts in chronological order, with the interviewer's question first and the participant response below. For consistency, further questions were only pursued once the interviewee felt they had answered the previous question. The order of the questions in the transcripts was irrelevant because sometimes participants gave responses for questions which were asked at a later stage.

Reverting back to Hammersley's (2010) argument that transcription is a process of construction, he contested that there is no single approach for transcribing. In addressing matters of trustworthiness, the researcher read over the transcripts several times and sent them to the participants for verification purposes. Easton et al. (2000) pointed out three

problems that affect transcription: These are equipment failure, environmental errors and transcription errors which can all hinder the trustworthiness of research. Yet, Easton et al. argued that limited research addresses these issues. To overcome environmental hazards, quiet rooms were allocated and participants were requested to put any electronic devices (e.g. mobile phone) on silent for the duration of the interviews. Transcription errors such as punctuation and spelling mistakes were amended after proof reading the transcripts. Once finalised, transcripts were exported to Nvivo 10 to begin the first phase of data analysis. In the next subsection, a discussion on manual vs. computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) and the justification for using Nvivo 10 is given.

5.6.2 Manual vs. CAQDAS packages

Nvivo is a program for handling qualitative data. Unlike quantitative software such as SPSS, the purpose of Nvivo is to act as a storage database for primarily qualitative information and has functions to help guide the researcher in the direction of queries and techniques for illustrating qualitative data (Richards, 1999). An array of qualitative theorists have praised the use of qualitative data software packages and argued that they add rigour to the quality of qualitative research (Berg 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Krueger, 1998; Merriam, 2001; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Morse and Richards, 2002; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2001). On the other hand, some authors have expressed concerns about the paucity of articles available that discuss the actual use of CAQDAS software (Bringer et al., 2004; Davidson and Jacobs, 2008), the uncritical evaluations given (Macmillan and Koening, 2004; Richards, 2002a; 2002b; Weaver and Atkinson, 1995) and the assumption that such programs are a methodology in their own right (Bazeley, 2013; Richards, 1999; Thompson, 2002).

The researcher had some general knowledge about using Nvivo (Nvivo 9) from his master's programme and other work with focus group transcripts. In this thesis, Nvivo was used to apply GTM for the purposes of coding. Nvivo 10 was chosen because it could handle multiple data sources and was compatible with a range of methodologies (Wiltshier, 2011). Creswell (2013) stated that the process involved in data analysis whether manual or via CAQDAS packages is identical, because both techniques require the researcher to locate codes, assign labels and formulate coding hierarchies. On the contrary, Saldana (2013) argued that manual data analysis may be lengthier but provide

a hands on grasp of the data, whereas with qualitative software, there is a tendency to focus more on the software than the actual data (Saldana, 2013).

Socially constructed narrative depictions could be pinpointed (via phases of coding) and reverted to back and forth as the program allowed for the seamless retrieval of data. Nvivo also allowed for the integration of secondary sources via imported documents (e.g. Euromonitor reports and social media feeds). A memo trail was constructed within Nvivo. An advantage over a manual approach is that memos were written and could be easily found (Richards, 2002a, 2002b). Furthermore, memos served as trail of intellectual thoughts and reflections and were developed into analytical memos as the coding phases progressed. Memos are also an integral part of GTM and matters of *memoing* could be practically followed, whereas with a manual approach, memos can become confusing because of bureaucracy, lost in the data analysis journey and cannot be instantaneously linked to coded themes.

A further problem arises when it is assumed that using grounded theory methodologies with CAQDAS packages will automatically bring about emerging theory. Many researchers often claim to be using grounded theory but in fact they are applying a coding paradigm, which is neither inductive nor deductive, but a mixture of the two (Bazeley, 2013; Kelle, 1997). Coding is made easier done from a screen than manually chopping and cutting pieces of paper and sorting them into coding piles. Therefore, CAQDAS packages offer a flexible approach to coding in a way that a manual approach simply cannot keep up with (Basit, 2003; Bourdon, 2002). Using models, charts, coding hierarchies and demonstrating a clear application of GTM (Richards, 2004) reduced threats to credibility. In addition, coding structures (see appendix A and B) give greater transparency (Bringer et al., 2004; 2006, Siccama and Penna, 2008) and show how the software was practiced, an area which is underrepresented in qualitative research (Hutchison et al., 2010). Several other authors have claimed that Nvivo gives greater transparency to a research project (Bringer et al., 2004; Hutchison et al., 2010; Johnston, 2006).

Some of the problems with using CAQDAS software are addressed below. First, the researcher needs to have a proficient understanding of the software's key commands. Researchers may also be tempted to use all of the program's functions (Mangabeira et al., 2004) instead of the key ones that are purposively useful for answering the research question/s. On the other hand, CAQDAS packages cannot cater for manual notes or

informal discussions. To individuals who may be sceptical about the use of CAQDAS software, the decision should be based upon how the researcher follows a particular methodology and prescribed methods. In the next subsection, the coding methods used are described and justifications are made for the choice of coding techniques.

5.7 Coding phases: a theorising approach

Coding is a fundamental element of this thesis. Echoing Charmaz (2006), coding is argued to be the backbone of analysing qualitative data and the skeleton for the analysis. In agreement with Charmaz, coding processes formed the backdrop for the theorising process. During the remaining subsections, reflections are made on each phase of coding. Contrary to misinterpretations of qualitative research texts about *coding for themes*, Saldana (2013) argued that themes are the end products of coding, categorisation or analytical reflection. Thus, Saldana's perspective is adopted.

5.7.1 Phase one coding

Following Charmaz's approach to GTM, she determined a number of questions to help with initial or open coding. These included: what process/es are at issue here? How can the issues be defined? How does this process develop? How does the research participant act while involved in this process? When, why and how does the process change? These questions remained in mind during the pre-coding phase. The first phase of coding involved attaching meaningful labels and assigning free coded themes and was consistent with an inductive approach applied with *epoche* or *bracketing* (Moustakas, 1994). 'Initial', or 'open' coding, are synonymous terms that denote the first cycle of coding. From here onwards, the term 'initial' coding will be used as it was coined by Charmaz (2006) and because Charmaz's version of GTM is followed. Several coding methods exist within initial coding including line-by-line coding which codes sentences and even paragraphs. The author of this thesis contends that coding processes are often understated, a view that complements Saldana's (2013) concerns over a lack of appreciation for coding processes. On the contrary, this thesis attempts to explicitly outline the sub-coding methods within each cycle of coding. Free codes comprised the first phase of coding. Through the process of initial coding several sub-methods of coding were followed. These methods were provisional coding, line-by-line coding, simultaneous coding, values

coding, attribute coding, descriptive coding, versus coding and in vivo coding. The sub-coding methods are detailed next.

Provisional coding was evident when coding the data for the first time. A problem occurred when trying to fit participants' responses with the themes from the SLR. Such an approach became deductive. Therefore, the first phase of initial coding was repeated afresh. Provisional coding was instrumental in shaping the coding phases and prevented the risk of premature coding disclosure. Line-by-line coding involved highlighting sentences or in some cases small paragraphs and assigning free codes. Charmaz (2008) noted that line-by-line coding advocates a more trustworthy analysis and lowers the risk of personal bias entering the coding process. Concepts were derived from key events in the data (Corbin and Holt, 2004) by taking the transcripts line-by-line and paragraph-by-paragraph and assigning free codes to each. In some cases, codes, phrases and passages were all attributed to the same code/s. Therefore, this can be summarised as simultaneous coding. However, codes were not assigned on the basis of coding similarity but on differences between the codes. Values coding guarded a sense of bracketing pre-conceived ideas and assigned *marketing* codes to the responses. For example, one participant stated: *'For hook or crook I would not buy Israeli products' (7)*. This came under the free code of *consumer boycotts*. Values coding was used to apply free codes to theoretical concepts but not to force codes that did not fit within the thematic categories. Attribute coding was only applied for the purposes of recording demographical information about the participants (e.g. age, nationality, occupation). Descriptive coding enabled questions to be asked about what was going on within a particular interview passage. Versus coding was used to juxtapose concepts (e.g. foreign consumption and local consumption) and allowed for the comparing of two opposite codes. In vivo coding was used to record codes verbatim and preserved participants' own spoken discourse. Coding sub methods were iterative and were used simultaneously in the first phase and in no particular order. For example, line-by-line coding and descriptive coding was deployed at the same time to ask questions about what the participants were saying in a particular sentence or paragraph, why they said what they did, and the nuances behind what was said. Memos were important in the data analysis and are discussed next.

In the coding phases, memos enabled clarification, explanations on coded themes, category saturation, theoretical development and transparency. Neglect for memos is likely to hinder the conceptual density, integration and transparency (Strauss and Corbin,

1998), because a trail of the work does not exist. Hence, memos provided a trail of the research journey and the researcher's thoughts and ideas. Throughout each of the three coding phases, a memo was attached to each code and in the second and third phases memos were affixed to higher level codes. Memos also assisted in the selection of passages and the naming of codes. Therefore, thematic names were clarified, passages compared and merged or dropped accordingly. The next sub-section highlights the second coding phase of the data.

5.7.2 Phase two coding

In the second phase of coding some codes were dropped because they did not fit into the sub-categorisation of themes or within the analytical memos. Hundreds of free codes from the first phase had to be reorganised into sub categories. This required a consistent *metasynthesis* of the data. Before categories were recoded, the data had to be re-examined to check if the codes belonged to the appropriate categories and if the labels given were suitable. Some codes were merged with other codes because they contained conceptual similarities. Codes that seemed relevant during the first phase of coding but did not contribute significantly within the second phase were discarded. Unrequired free codes from the first phase complimented the view of Lewins and Silver (2007) and Boeije (2010) who claimed that conceptual development in a second phase of coding requires rearranging the first phase codes and dropping redundant ones.

Focussed coding was used to develop sub categories and conceptual themes. Charmaz's (2006) approach to GTM was maintained as she suggested focussed coding to build thematic categories following a first phase of initial coding. Undergoing a process of focussed coding gave rise to the most frequent codes and synthesised the initial codes from the first phase that were analytically compatible. Contrary to other forms of GTM adopted by Glaser (1978; 2005), and Strauss (1987), Charmaz's version of focussed coding was adopted in this thesis as a variation on axial coding. Memos from the first phase were not subordinated in the second phase. In synchronising the data analysis with GTM, analytic memos were served as a heuristic device for linking codes and categories together. Dey (2007) remarked that travelling through the theory-building process calls for the connection of codes by categorising and not the opposite.

In line with Charmaz's constructivist stance on GTM, the construction of categories maintained the individuals' own narratives and because participants' feelings were

interpreted in contextualised settings (revolutions in Egypt and Libya), the presentation of a rich abstract account of the data was more important than locating core categories. Therefore, rich descriptions drove the conceptual categories and not the arrangement of themes into categories as advocated with axial coding. After a thorough process of reviewing the codes and positioning them into categories and subsequent sub-categories, a hierarchical structure developed. Transitioning to the next coding method of theoretical coding required an exhaustive synthesis of the categorical codes, sub codes and linkages to the memos. It is the memos that drove the foundations of conceptual development. The term 'theoretical coding' is used interchangeably with 'selective coding' or 'conceptual coding' (Saldana, 2013). For simplicity and to use Charmaz's adopted term, theoretical coding is used from here onwards. Theoretical codes assisted in positioning the categories and subcategories to a central core category. Charmaz viewed the theoretical code as the spine of the skeleton and the codes as the bones. At this stage, the inductive loop emerged and saw an incremental shift from construction to theoretical abstraction. Memos as well as coding, relationship and matrix queries run in Nvivo helped manufacture interconnections between linked concepts, ideas, and categories. The Venn diagram below highlights the linkages between the macro, meso and micro levels at the end of phase two.
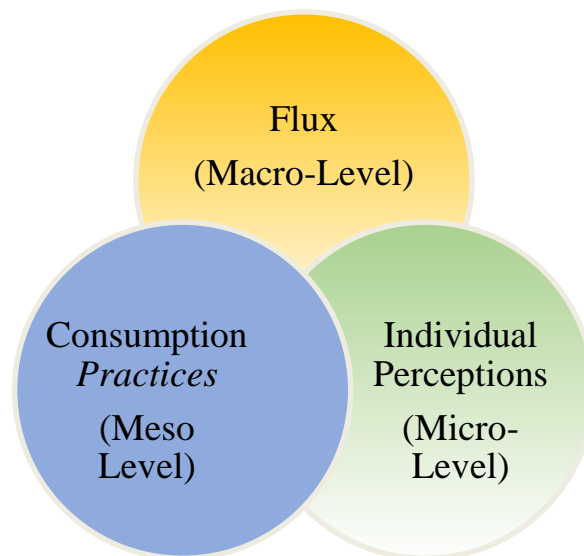
Figure 14: A trinity of concepts as a Venn diagram (based on Soklaridis, 2009) and demonstrates the configurative associations at the end of phase two.

At the macro-level, the revolutions have a direct consequence on the state of consumption practices. At the meso-level, consumption practices are relative to political, societal and cultural influences, while at the micro-level, the individual perceptions projected by the participants have implications on the direction of extraordinary change, which in turn

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shapes consumption practices. In the next subsection, the third phase of coding is illustrated.

5.7.3 Phase three coding

Theoretical coding compounded the discovery of a 'central' or 'core' category, consistent with GTM. Theoretical coding acted as the vehicle for moving from phase two to phrase three. Categories and sub categories were scrutinised alongside analytic memos to produce a set of emergent themes. The final coding structures for Egypt and Libya are presented in appendix A and B. In figure 15 below, an overview of the data analysis process is shown.
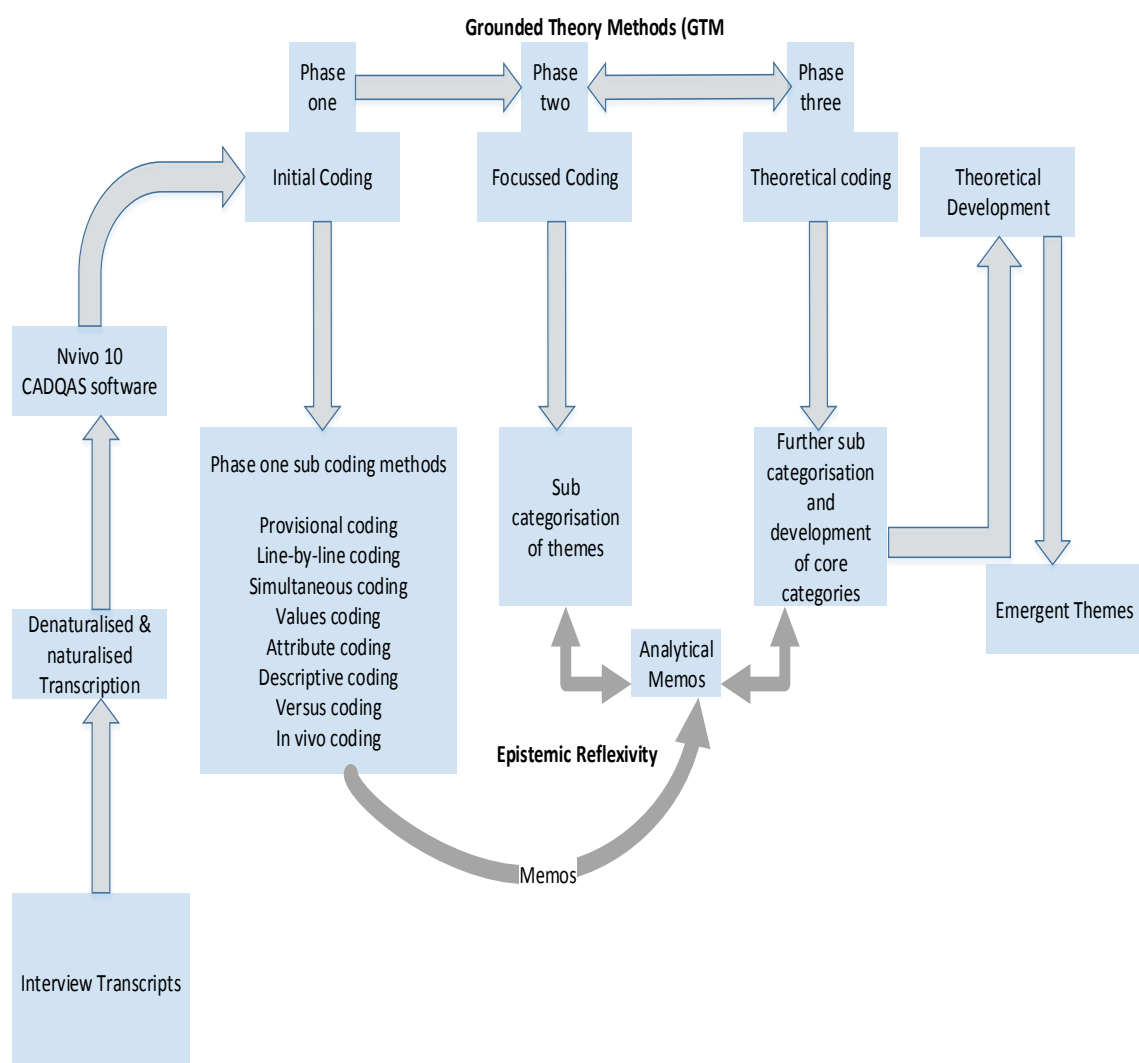
Figure 15: An overview of the data analysis process- Source: Author.

In the next subsection, matters of trustworthiness (the equivalent of validity and reliability) in qualitative research are discussed.

5.7.4 Trustworthiness: Qualitative research's equivalent to reliability, validity and generalizability

Quantitative based research studies are often assessed by criteria such as validity, generalisability and reliability. However, for qualitative research this criteria is often not applicable (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln and Guba (1984). Therefore, Guba and Lincoln proposed 'trustworthiness' criteria for evaluating qualitative research. Within the trustworthiness dimension are four elements: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity). Seale (1999) also labelled the four elemental criteria as 'interpretivist criteriology'. In Table 5 and 6, an attempt is made to illustrate the four elements of trustworthiness in relation to the various stages of the research process leading up to the data analysis phase.

Stages of Research	Credibility (internal validity)	Transferability (external validity and generalisability)	Dependability (reliability)	Confirmability (Objectivity)
Stage 1 Introduction				
Literature review	Systematic Literature Review (SLR) reduced researcher bias.	SLR criteria transferrable to other studies.	High level of dependability if specific criteria is matched.	Inter-subjective approach.
Research problem and context	Ongoing phenomenon through eyes of participants	Context specific exploratory study.	Revelatory findings in a state of unrest not possible during times of stability.	Extraordinary change is not static hence an exploratory study.
Stage 2 Methodology				
Philosophical Position-social constructionist	Discerned meanings from participants.	Social constructionist stance observed socially constructed realities and may be adopted in future studies.	Limited to a subjectivist perspective.	Interpretive subjectivity required to unravel meanings and perceptions.
Research Approach (Inductive)	High level of credibility due to identification of emergent themes.	No prior studies on Arab revolutions from a marketing perspective, thus inductive approach is warranted.	Inductive approach may be replicated but a different period of time will produce dissimilar results.	Verified by 'provisional coding'
Research Strategy (GTM)	New phenomenon calls for grounded theory methods (GTM).	Can be transferred to other contexts.	Dependent upon GTM followed (e.g. Glaser or Charmaz).	Can be corroborated by others if a similar philosophical stance is taken.
Stage 3 Methods				
Sampling Units and Population	Population investigated both experienced revolutions (Egypt and Libya).	Context Specific, restricted to the sampled individuals that lived through the revolutions.	Low level of replicability because of extraordinary changes.	Participants proof read transcripts.
Sampling Size	Cross sectional sample, high niche credibility.	Context Specific, historical narrative and personal accounts gained that are not generalisable.	Not observable consecutively due to the ongoing phenomenon.	Can be corroborated by members of the same target population but only in a state of unrest.

Table 5: The stages of the research process in relation to the trustworthiness criteria- Source: Author.

Stages of Research	Credibility (internal validity)	Transferability (external validity and generalisability)	Dependability (reliability)	Confirmability (Objectivity)
Sampling method (Snowball)	Referrals made give enhanced credibility.	Referrals may not be available at another point in time.	Referrals may be obtained but via different gatekeepers.	Represented by participants involved and referrals.
Data collection methods(CDI)	In depth interviews gave greater credibility. CDI did not disregard themes until last interview rounds.	Accurate at the time of interviews, relevant in a state of unrest and may not possible in another time frame.	CDI technique can be repeated using interviewing criteria but protocols will differ.	Unique interviewing technique converged key issues, thus increasing confirmability.
Access and Rapport	High level of credibility. Only participants that had lived through the revolutions were examined.	New insights into rapport building suggests Egyptians and Libyans prefer in depth interviews.	First study to exclusively examine methodical issues in the ME.	Assessed by authorised access and gatekeeper assistance in determining available participants.
Researcher Sensitisation	Documented using epistemic reflexivity.	Transferability possible through epistemic reflection.	Maintaining sensitivity and rapport building before interviewing.	Consistent rapport building process relative to subjectivist position.
Ethical Issues	Consent form supplied, ethical approval gained from the University and risk assessment completed.	Thorough debriefing of subject context, consent form signed.	Dependability ensured through ethical guidelines and maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.	Secure handling of the data, ethical guidelines may be corroborated by others.
Stage 4 Data Analysis				
Data Transcription	Reflexive account of transcription process shared in detail.	Transcripts are unique to participants' responses.	High dependability-transcripts were cross checked with participants.	May conflict with objectivists because of subjective transcriptions.
Manual Vs. CAQDAS Software	Reflexive account of Nvivo is shared and not just briefly touched on.	Nvivo 10 is standardised but tailored by the researcher's commands.	Detailed audit trail of researchers' use of Nvivo 10.	Greater confirmability because CAQDAS software keeps a record of the data analysis journey.
Coding	Coding phases can be subject to the variability of interpretation by different researchers.	Coding methods are unique because of the use of GTM and sub coding methods. Transferrable coding methods.	Dependability ensured by illustrating coding practices. An external person could not code a data sample.	Bracketed researcher assumptions, beliefs and personal values added confirmability as well as an audit trail of the coding journey.
Secondary Data	Credible sources used (e. g Euro monitor GMID reports and broadsheet newspaper reports.	Secondary data used to bolster primary findings and increase transferability.	Dependability ensured by cross checking authenticity of sources.	Supplemented to the primary data to aid the confirmability of the findings.

Table 6: The stages of the research process in relation to the trustworthiness criteria- Source: Author.

The reasoning behind providing an assessment of the research stages in relation to the trustworthiness criteria is important in order to maintain research integrity. Another reason is because the researcher noticed that some qualitative studies tend to briefly mention the trustworthiness criteria or document it as an overall analogy of the research but neglect to reflexively evaluate individual stages. Credibility (internal validity) pertains the extent to which the findings are believable. Transferability (external validity) denotes the extent to which the findings can be generalised to other situations and contexts at different times (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Contradicting quantitative research generalisations, qualitative particularisations may be used to describe the transferability of the study to a particular context or setting (Creswell, 2007).

Secondary data was used to augment issues of credibility and transferability. Credibility is also achieved in thesis by way of meaningful insights into the Arab revolutions during a state of unrest. The timing of the data collection was crucial because the phenomenon continues to unfold and therefore the same findings are unobtainable during a state of stability or any other period in time. Similarly, discussing the research approach amongst academic colleagues and the research topic with participants of the research helped address confirmability issues. Feedback and suggestions helped enhance the dependability (reliability) of the results. Transferability (external validity) is also strengthened by *thick descriptions* of narrative accounts provided by the participants. Dependability (reliability) is achieved by adopting an epistemic reflexive approach and a documented trail of the data analysis. Maintaining a sense of *epoche* or *bracketing* assisted in reducing a researcher bias.

Research authenticity is another important component to the assessment of quality and rigour in qualitative research and concerns the impact of research and the emancipation of the research subjects (Scheurich, 1997). Authenticity was achieved by examining the perspectives of the participants that had lived through the Arab revolutions and who were able to narrate their own accounts (past, present and future expectations). However, contrary to Guba and Lincoln's (1989) authenticity criterion the author of this thesis concurs with Porter (2007) who stated that in establishing authenticity, the research journey not only involves members in the interpretation but also in the research design. A contradistinction may be argued that the participants were sufficient for the purposes of the investigation and for the beginning of a future longitudinal study. Due to data access issues, random sampling would not have been feasible. Extending the trustworthiness criteria further, Williams and Morrow (2009) suggested three categories

of trustworthiness which qualitative researchers must strive to meet: These are integrity of the data, balance between reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of the findings. Integrity is closely affiliated with dependability and was ensured by the researcher's sensitisation, closely abided ethical issues and through the maintaining and presentation of the participants' voices in the findings. Preserving participants' own quotes also epitomised a social constructionist approach. In the next subsection, the application of secondary data is discussed.

5.8 Secondary data

Houston (2004) argued that researchers using secondary data can benefit from new sources of data to shed new light on or provide important supporting evidence to established bodies of research that have relied on a limited variety of methodological approaches. To support the primary data and in light of Houston's argument, secondary data was used to reinforce participants views. The main sources of secondary data were demographical figures, consumer expenditure figures, consumer trends and behavioural patterns, all of which were obtained from resource databases such as GMID, country profile reports (available from Euro and Business Monitor), international data monitor reports. Additional documentary analysis and media convergence in the form of news broadcasts, reports and commentary articles, provided further evidence to support the primary data findings. Resource databases can be considered to have dependability (reliability) because they were constituted of factual representations and were derived from critically appraised and trustworthy sources that are well recognised in academia and are therefore likely to be reliable.

5.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the methods have been discussed at length. Matters of sampling, data collection and methodical techniques have been covered. CDIs were used to gather the data and GTM were used for the data analysis to drive emerging theory. Moreover, issues of access, rapport, ethical issues and the trustworthiness criteria of this research have been reviewed. An epistemic reflexive approach was purposely designed and indented in this chapter to both reflect the researcher's journey through the data collection and analysis and also to augment issues of trustworthiness. Attention now shifts to the findings for Egypt, which are presented in the next chapter.

Section C: Findings, conclusions and contributions

Chapter 6 Egypt
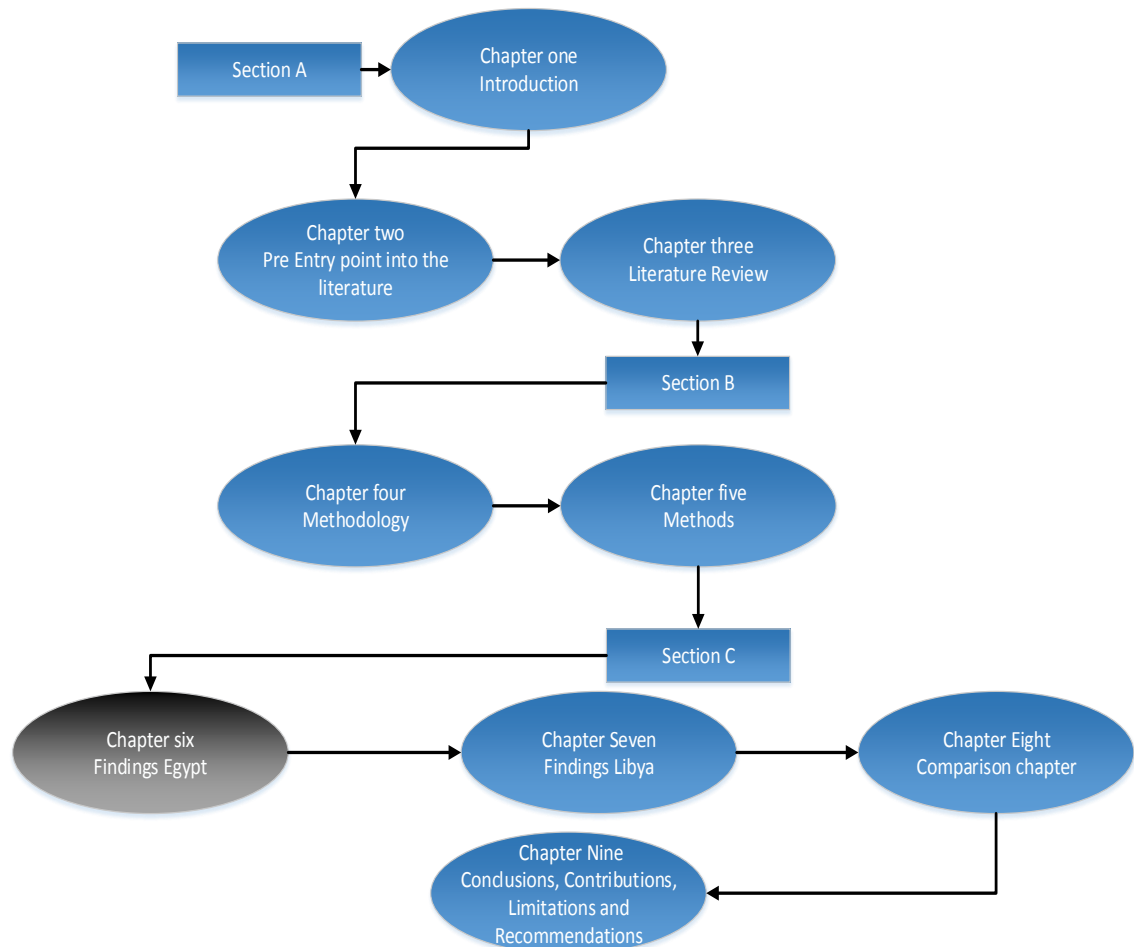
Figure 16: Route Map- The position of the current chapter in the thesis- Source: Author.

6.1 Introduction

In section C, the findings are discussed for Egypt in chapter six, Libya in chapter seven and a comparison/conclusions chapter in chapter eight. Secondary data reports are used in chapters six to eight to augment the credibility and transferability of the primary findings. Following chapters six to eight, the conclusions and contributions made in this thesis are presented in chapter nine. The narrative strategy used to derive the findings in chapters six and seven makes references to direct quotations from the interviews. In line with objectives one and two, the narrative structure for each theme is divided into past experiences, present experiences and future expectations in order to assess changes in consumption practices. *The structure for each theme reflects the period of the data collection during March-April 2013. Therefore, past experiences imply inferences*

towards historical incidents before regime change (i.e. before the removal of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, present experiences capture the cross sectional point of data collection and future expectations entail what citizens want to happen in the future. It is important that the following chapters are not read as before, during and after the revolutions because this would assume that the revolutions have finished, when indeed the phenomenon is still ongoing.

Quotations are viewed as empirical in qualitative inquiry and act as supplementary evidence in discussing the findings. The use of quotes should be viewed as commensurable and not quantified in terms of frequency. Quotations from respondents are referred to *'as such'* to differentiate them from quotes used in the literature. To preserve the anonymity of the participants, numbers are used (e.g. 13) in parenthesis to indicate where the source of the quote/s is derived from and under no circumstances are participants identities compromised. Similarly, quotes are noted as verbatim to retain participants own words. Where arguments are constructed, they are observed inter-subjectively. Researcher's sensitisation is maintained throughout the following chapters in order to uphold neutrality and avoid a particular political stance. In the first section of chapters six to eight, the impact of flux on consumption practices is discussed, before moving onto more pertinent themes that have been found to affect consumption practices.

Appreciation must be given to the focused code of *flux* discussed in the next section. Until this point in the thesis, the term used to describe the state of change was 'extraordinary change' and the term used for the turbulence that has happened was 'unrest'. However, the phrase flux emerged through the findings as a more suitable term to describe unrest. Flux describes the state of continuous change and therefore replaces the term 'extraordinary change' (Collins Dictionary, 2014). Revolutions are episodic (Huy, 2001) and as such, the term that was used to describe different phases of flux now connotes what may emerge as an epoch in a period of a *punctuated equilibrium*. Based on Darwinian Theory of evolution, Niles Elredge and Stephen Gould in 1973 developed the term as an alternative view of evolution. They suggested that lineages existed in a static manner termed *equilibrium*, whereas abrupt situations giving rise to new species were known as the *punctuations* (Gersick, 1991). Consequently, in the context of societies in what is termed flux, there are incremental changes in the punctuated equilibrium that give rise to new environmental variations and change. In the first section that follows, past and present experiences as well as future expectations for consumption and the state of flux are discussed. The environmental issues that have caused flux are important to

understanding consumption practices because citizens have been through substantial upheavals and their lives have been affected by the events to date.

6.2 A state of flux

6.2.1 Consumption and flux: past experiences

In the past, citizens were growing restless with the old Mubarak regime because of decades of uncompromised rule, corruption and a lack of social, economic as well as political equality. As emphasised in the following quote:

> *'Somebody* [Mubarak] *was controlling everything, taking and stealing everything and treated citizens badly, so you try to protect yourself and protect others with a revolution.'* (2)

The above quote is indicative of the build-up of flux in the lead up to the revolution. A state of flux would seem to have taken place when citizens were motivated to call for reforms. While citizens demanded a multiplicity of reforms, the impact of globalisation in Cairo was one of the main reasons for significant marketplace development because citizens demanded global exposure. As part of such exposure, the internet witnessed a technological explosion. Globalisation assisted in modernising citizens and encouraged them to engage in social exchanges. The marketplace was well established and populated with diverse sites of consumption such as shopping malls, entertainment venues (e.g. cinemas, bowling alleys, and nightspots), souks and bazaars (Abaza, 2005). Although citizens could freely express their consumption choices in the marketplace, the government had implemented tightly confined boundaries and ensured that citizens could not directly speak out against them. One participant expressed past indicators of fear:

> *'Our parents, they were raised in the reign of Nasser* [Gamal Abdel Nasser, former Egyptian President] *and on the reign of fear. Whoever said no in one way or another went to jail* [...] *I was personally raised not to freely speak up for my opinion so if your teacher said so, you have to respect them. If the manager said so you don't argue because you don't want to lose your job. This was the kind of mentality we had.'* (11)

In interpreting the quote above, expressing discontent against the previous Mubarak regime had to be conducted very carefully in order not to attract unwanted attention. One

of the drivers of the revolution that helped citizens voice their discontent was the internet. In the last decade, the number of Egyptian internet users has risen substantially. According to media sources, the number of users now exceeds 36 million (Ahram online, 2013a). Citizens were well attuned with social media, blogospheres and such online platforms allowed information to be disseminated to the masses. However, state censorship impacted the extent to which information could be published publicly. The tightly confined boundaries could explain why in the past, protests and demonstrations were largely contained. A further explanation for why mass scale protests did not occur previously is because outbreaks of discontent were deemed to conflict with regime ideologies; a point supported by Frantz (2012). A delicately articulated metaphor by one participant expanded on the notion of growing discontent:

> *'When the government is keeping soft oppression, it is sometimes soft, sometimes hard. It adds to the steam inside. It's like a boiling steaming pot. When you keep closing ways of expressing, I think the Egyptian government was thinking to let people speak online to steam out and we* [the government] *will close all other ways of airing opinions.'* (18)

The inference to *'soft oppression'* refers to measures that the regime used to placate citizens such as providing state benefits. The *'hard'* (oppression) refers to the actual oppression felt by citizens. *'The boiling steaming pot'* connotes the extent to which dissatisfaction and a state of flux were building up. The argument is that government retaliation against the protestors added to the *'boiling steaming pot'* and motivated Egyptians to take further action. Another participant mentioned:

> *'I think that people had years of built up frustration of not being able to express personal feelings and seeing other western countries having civilised democracies and everyone having the right to vote.'* (19)

Interpreting the above quote leads to the view that citizens were exposed to a global consumer culture and wanted to emulate the stability found in western countries. A point can be made that the 'relative' state of Egypt was known because of access to information. Despite the internet facilitating comparison and highlighting contradiction, the combination of constraint on thought and comparisons made against other developed nations exacerbated citizens' call for change and contributed to a state of flux. The state censorship seemed to have a reverse effect and actually motivated citizens to rebel against

the regime by creatively navigating around internet blockages and accessing websites via proxy servers and was underpinned by the following quote:

> *'The day that they* [Mubarak regime] *cut off the communication, everyone* [citizens] *was going crazy because you couldn't even communicate through social media so that actually emphasised how important it* [the revolution] *is.'*
> (8)

By challenging the regime, citizens were able to keep the momentum of the revolution going. Extending the argument further, citizens utilised different drivers such as social media and activist marches to bring about change. The use of these drivers can also be considered as marketing activities deployed by the citizens, even if they were using marketing in a subconscious way. The marketing activities had not been exercised in the same enterprising manner previously, which suggests that citizens took on new roles by reacting against the regime. The following quotes spoke of marketing activities in the past:

> *There were banners dotted everywhere. Merchandise symbolising the revolution were being sold by street vendors. Art, music and sarcasm painted a masterpiece of illusions to advocate the protestor's messages. We have something in Egypt called Mawalid* [celebration of the Sufi saints]. *These celebrations took to the streets [...] many* [citizens] *took it in shifts, so some would exchange with others and to go sleep and vice-versa.* (18)

A further participant commented:

> *'They* [citizens] *used very effective marketing and even if it was subconscious, it worked. I saw that their organisation, their persistence, desire and coverage of the situation. They were on top of marketing activities and* […] *presented themselves as peaceful protestors and the cameras took notice of them.'* (19)

To an extent, the actions that led to regime change provided a new mode of consumption as citizens camped in Tahrir square and constructed their own marketplace facilitated by the offering of patriotic merchandise and goods in support of the revolution. The merchandise sold could also be considered as symbols, which demonstrates that consumption was used to help signify the revolution. Political marketing was also present as citizens strived to achieve global coverage of the events. Moreover, silent protests for "Khaled Saeed" (a young man beaten and alleged to have been killed by police in the Sidi

Gaber area of Alexandria) (Ahram Online, 2014) motivated citizens to press on with their desires for change. Of the twenty six participants, only eight actually took part in the demonstrations. The consumption practices of the remaining participants became conservatively concerned about looking after their families and not missing work.

Past experiences indicate that consumption in the build-up to flux was revolutionary in itself, because merchandise such as Egyptian flags, emblems and patriotic accessories were sold to publicise the events. Thus, it can be argued that marketing was important to achieving regime change. In the next subsection, present experiences in relation to consumption and the state of flux are discussed.

6.2.2 Consumption and flux: present experiences

Even though citizens have achieved regime change, present experiences suggest that the flux has been driven by consumption but it is also an outcome of it as witnessed in the consumption of Egyptian merchandise in the lead up to regime change. The multiplicity of consumption options is underpinned by an established global consumer culture and citizens are well acculturated with foreignness (i.e. foreign products and services) (Abaza, 2005). However, the ongoing flux has prompted reconsiderations for consumption practices as citizens are trying to fill a void and find a way to escape uncertainty and instability. As captured in the following quotes:

> *'Almost 80-90% of what I and my family consume are foreign products […] buying things does not excite me as much as it used* [in the past] *because there is so much suffering […] but buying products, socialising in western and traditional restaurants helps us forget about our current worries.'* (15)

Another participant remarked:

> *'When it comes to decorating my house it's all foreign products. When it comes to phones and laptops, it's all foreign products and even coffee. Even when we go to the supermarkets and buy products, it is either imported or the products are from a foreign multinational company that operates in Egypt. So Heinz for example or Mars, their products are manufactured in Egypt.'* (3)

Interpreting the above quotes leads to the view that foreign consumption is acknowledged as a means for escaping the state of flux. As participant 15 suggested, there is the

perception that partaking in foreign consumption leads citizens to forget about their worries. This statement would imply that foreign consumption in particular is important in overseeing change. Engaging in both foreign and local consumption is also necessary to attract stability and redevelop the marketplace. Stability is never fixed and is dismantled in a state of flux. Moreover, stability is also affected by change, a process which is guided by Egyptian citizens but also an outcome of their choices made. The contention that citizens used consumption to navigate around the flux resonates with wanting more from the revolution. Citizens have always had the ability to choose in the marketplace. Since overturning the Mubarak regime on the 25th January 2011, citizens are able to vocalise their choices of consumption in a way that was not possible under the old regime. In the next subsection, citizens' future expectations with regards to consumption and flux are documented.

6.2.3 Consumption and flux: future expectations

Citizens expect further protests and demonstrations because many are dissatisfied with the changes so far. On the other hand, some citizens want to try and avoid mass protests in order to increase the productivity of the country and find new consumption opportunities. As articulated in the following quote:

> *'They* [citizens] *have to be organised. Even if there are protests going on or road blocks or any other kind of obstacles, they have to overcome it so that the productivity of the country will increase. Of course, the income will increase and the salaries will increase and people will live more prosperous lives.'* (12)

In interpreting the above quote, citizens expect that by avoiding mass protests, further change is possible. However, the opposite has occurred and since the data collection (March-April 2013), former president Mohammed Morsi was ousted in July 2013, an act some called a second revolution, while others labelled it a coup (Knell, 2013; Marcus, 2013). Despite regime change and the *epiphenomenal* (phenomenon after a phenomenon) state of events, citizens have grown restless with the progress of change. This is because the latest round of events has intensified civil conflicts which have affected consumption practices by displacing the close social exchanges between citizens.

Former army Chief Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi is now the new Egyptian president after winning the presidential elections by popular vote (Aboulkheir, 2014; Vick, 2014). An accustomed way of life under a particular regime may explain why the participants felt politically ignorant, as most were born just before the rule of ex-president Hosni Mubarak and they could not conceive the concept of having a change of power. Participants expect further change to continue as illustrated in the following quote:

> *'I think we can't all consider it a revolution. We took the head off the old regime and changed a few people. There is still no permanent stability. There are big figureheads that took the istaa* [cream] *of the country and many of those* [Mubarak regime members] *were affected, some went to prison. At the same time, your average everyday citizen were treated as minors and they just wanted to have a say in the changes.'* (24)

A metaphor articulated by one participant summarised expectations for the state of flux in Egypt:

> *'Egypt can be imagined as a series of bumpy waves that are crashing back and forth at the moment. Hopefully things will stabilise but the picture is definitely so fuzzy and sometimes you feel frustrated.'* (13)

The *'bumpy waves'* can be interpreted as the progress of change and they are *'crashing back and forth'* as the folding and unfolding of flux has brought instability. An additional metaphor used by another participant described anticipations for stability:

> *'We have something called a reflex* [body reflexes] […] *like when a doctor puts a hammer or taps on your knee and your reflex will jerk* […] *the reflex went from the extreme of one side to the extreme of the other side. Somehow the pendulum has to stay in the middle and stabilise again and this will take years. So we are going from one extreme to another. There is a complete imbalance and disturbances everywhere.'* (13)

The core meaning behind the above quote is that Egypt is transitioning through change but the existing changes are not meeting citizens' desires. However, the findings suggest that the state of flux is anchored by consumption because citizens capitalised on consumption in the past and present and are now using it as a means to escape flux.

Citizens also expect foreign products to dominate in comparison to local products. The following quote is indicative of future aspirations and foreign consumption: *'I might be getting less of them* [foreign products] *but I won't stop'* (6). A bidirectional relationship is emerging whereby Egyptian consumption practices appear to be becoming heavily impacted by the revolution. However, the opposite is also the case. Consumption has also helped shape a revolution.

The presence of foreign products is considered to be important to the Egyptian market and something that needs to emphasised, especially to lift local consumption. As one participant told: *'Having foreign products in the Egyptian market is something healthy because it gives us* [and local products] *an opportunity to compete and get better'* (2). The availability of both foreign and local consumption options is considered to simultaneously assist the progress of change. Importantly, citizens acted reflexively as agents of their own consumption practices in the past, have carried this ethos through in the present and are expected to do so in the future. Thus, being in charge of their own consumption practices allows citizens to be considered agents of change because their choices in the marketplace determine the state of consumption and extent of change. In the next subsection, the findings for consumption and flux are positioned within the current literature.

6.2.4 Consumption and flux: positioning the findings within the current literature

Existing literature concerning flux and consumption practices is scarce. To the researcher's best knowledge, this study is the first to propose the theme of consumption and flux. Past experiences of consumption in flux are very different from the present and may well be so in the future. Historically, the impact of globalisation in Cairo was one of the main reasons for significant marketplace development (Ali, 1999; Schwarz, 2008) because citizens wanted to experience foreign consumption. Coupled with the rise in globalisation, technological expansions such as the internet have skyrocketed in recent decades (Markham, 2014). To a certain extent, globalisation assisted in modernising citizens and encouraged them to engage in social exchanges. The marketplace as a hub for social exchanges was well established and populated with diverse sites of consumption such as shopping malls, entertainment venues (e.g. cinemas, bowling alleys, and nightspots), souks and bazaars (Abaza, 2005). However, in contrast to the past, citizens can presently take part in protests and demonstrations and desire consumption

reforms. In the past, most protests and changes were usually about changes in government policies, labour reforms or consumer boycotts (Abou Aish et al., 2013; Al Shebil et al., 2011; Knudsen, 2011). In the line with the current literature, a desire for additional modes of consumption was not explicitly on the agenda in the call for changes as Egypt already had an established market based economy (Attia, 2013; Shechter, 2008a). By sparking mass demonstrations, citizens have used consumption as a way of calling for greater consumption opportunities in the marketplace. It is this desire to spark new consumption opportunities that enables citizens to be agents of change. Coping in a state of flux has been underpinned by citizens wanting more foreign products to fill a void. Consequently, consumption is important in reducing citizens' worries and the state of flux. In the next section, matters of consumer segmentation are probed.

6.3 Consumer segmentation and consumption practices

Egypt's growing population is expected to reach 90 million by 2015 and is currently the largest market in the ME with the population in Cairo exceeding 15 million. As a whole, Egypt's youth population stands at about 80 million (Chande, 2012). Euromonitor International (2012a) suggested that young adults (aged 18-29) are the largest consumer segment followed by the middle youth (aged 30-44). These young consumers in particular, have a strong appetite for foreign consumption. Moreover, Egypt's population is expected to surpass 100 million by 2021 and is predicted to reach around 116 million by 2030. There is a growing middle class (around 43% of the total population) that has the propensity and desire to spend on foreign products and services (Euromonitor International, 2014). In line with objectives two and three, consumer segmentation is important to better understand changing consumption practices. Although consumer segmentation can encompass a wide variety of sub themes, only sub themes of consumer segmentation that emerged from the data are discussed. Therefore, in the sections that follow, matters of social class, corruption, cultural values, religious values, polarised communities, desired vs. desirable effects, consumer ethnocentrism, country of origin effects, consumer animosity and conservative vs. conspicuous consumption are discussed.

6.3.1 Social classes and consumption: past experiences

Participants noted how Egypt's social structure operated around a three tier class system. This consisted of lower, middle and upper class. Lower class citizens were believed to be

poorer members of society and usually resided in rural areas and urban slums within Cairo. The middle class comprised of working citizens who could afford to consume a range of products and services. There was also a tendency to lean towards foreign consumption as a sign of achievement and status. Moreover, the working upper class could afford to spend lavishly and their consumption practices reflected social status and achievement through having luxury products. A problem in the past was that the social classes were growing further away from each other in terms of their consumption practices because of alleged preferential treatment for wealthier citizens and allegations of corruption amongst upper class citizens. The social class divide is important in relation to consumption practices because the class standing determined what kind of products and services could be bought in the marketplace. A sense of social class divide in the past is articulated in the following quote:

> *'There was a very big gap between the poor and the rich people. The gap was huge; there was no chance for a poor person to progress towards a middle level. Even in the old regime, the middle sets of society started to disappear. You were either rich or poor.'* (25)

Given the disparity between the classes, lower citizens could only afford to consume within the boundaries of their class and were predisposed towards domestic products and local Egyptian brands out of necessity and not out of choice. As underpinned in the following quote:

> *'The lower class people from lower socio-economic backgrounds would be more inclined to want to put more money back into Egypt by buying Egyptian brands. Whereas the wealthy are more in contact with foreign markets through travelling and business affairs [...] there is a big class divide, socio and economic divide [...] the wealthier act within their own interests than the lower classes. They are more inclined to buy because they can afford to purchase western goods.'* (20)

The widening class divide was cited by the participants as one of the required reforms for change. Attempts by citizens to spark change saw a class convergence and this was evidenced by the marketing activities such as selling Egyptian made merchandise (e.g. flags, banners) to promote the revolution. One participant who belonged to the upper middle class underscored the call for greater equality:

'Although I might have belonged to a category that is not suffering much from the situation in Egypt [upper middle class]*, we believed in the need for change and the residents, the people should have fair opportunities to live with dignity and have enough money to eat and spend on medication and health.'* (2)

In the context of consumption practices, the calls for greater equality would seem to concur with wanting to achieve more fluid consumption opportunities across the social classes and in particular, poorer segments of society. Another participant emphasised this point:

'I was looking for changes like reducing corruption, more focus on the poor segments in the society [...] Egypt has around 7% GDP growth every year but no one felt the growth except the high level and middle level segments of society. The poor were getting poorer [...] I wished for a greater standard of living because when you are not corrupted, you are not stealing money from the country.' (15)

As much as the citizens were aware of their own call for reforms, they took the opportunity to engage in consumption by socialising and camping in Tahrir square. Citizens who may not have normally mixed with each other converged with one common goal; to achieve change. Therefore, it is plausible to propose that consumption influenced the Arab Spring phenomenon in Egypt by bringing the social classes together for the purposes of pushing for change via the use of symbols such as Egyptian made merchandise and social media platforms to promote the revolution. The process of change was enacted by the coming together of different social classes and anchored by consumption. Thus, for citizens, the actions taken to promote change became almost like a new consumer culture. The premise of this argument may be aligned with supporting objective three because past experiences of consumption practices directly reinforced the desire for change. In the next subsection, present experiences regarding social class and consumption are brought forward.

6.3.2 Social classes and consumption: present experiences

In the present epoch, consumption practices have been affected by a widening social divide, civil conflicts and a rise in poverty, all of which have contributed to the state of

flux. A report commissioned by Euromonitor International (2013) stated that more than 40% of Egyptians live below the poverty line and around one in five citizens cannot meet basic living needs (e.g. food, shelter, warmth). Social dilemmas caused by the revolution have introduced local consumer cultures as each citizen's circumstances are different to the next. However, there is the perception that the upper class citizens are less buoyant about achieving a revolution:

> *'They* [upper class] *accumulated and preserved wealth in a specific economic and political system […] who actually accumulated big wealth during Mubarak's time will want more of Mubarak. They* [the upper class] *can save themselves from any suffering or any political or social oppression. They are sort of safe and happy in their inclusive and their exclusive circles. They made their lives prosper during Mubarak's time so why would they want to change him?'* (23)

In interpreting the above quote, prosperity is important to upper class citizens because they have been able to show off their materialistic possessions via consumption. Upper class citizens are also perceived as being immune from any suffering, political oppression or social oppression experienced by other classes. As the revolution conflicted with many upper class citizens' own political ideals (and many rejected regime change), their appetite for foreign products has grown while on the other hand, their consumption of local products has decreased.

Remaining content with the old regime is grounded in the participants' own narratives, who stressed that friends from upper class backgrounds are struggling to come to terms with the revolution because the events had *'opportunistic ideals that they* [upper class citizens] *could not conflict with'* (22). Supporters of the revolution appeared to be in favour of ideals that entailed security (national security, job security and better social welfare), safety and prosperity whereas many upper class citizens now feel that their own wealth, security and well-being are no longer protected. As articulated in the following quotes: *'The revolution to some upper class individuals […] painted a picture of social violence rather than a peoples' inspired revolution' […] (23).* Another participant commented:

> *'A few ethical people* [within the upper class segment] *had struggles with the revolution. Most of them really don't care about morals; they care only about their convenience in and their own wellbeing and wealth, to be protected […]*

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the revolution has attacked their own personal security and personal wealth [...] these people have changed their consuming patterns, because they already choose their quality, have choices and can pay for what they want.' (21)

Based on the participants' narratives regarding the state of upper class citizens, the present experiences of the social classes contradict past experiences because citizens are growing apart from each other whereas the social classes seemed to have converged in the events that led to regime change. Similarly, the consumption practices of upper class citizens in the present epoch mirrors the past as citizens are returning to consuming foreign products and services in abundance. As underscored in the following quotes:

'The high class have a very strong appetite for foreign products as part of their so called prestige and elegance. They are a very small percentage in relation to the rest of society. The majority of them reside in Cairo, Giza, Alexandria and the bigger counties.' (23)

'In Egypt there is a massive divide between the wealthy and the poor. I think the wealthy are less biased towards Egyptian goods because they can afford to. They enjoy luxury items and are more travelled; they can afford to go to other foreign countries.' (19)

In the past, brand names and more expensive luxury fashion items were and still are traditionally advertised in the wealthier districts of Cairo such as Heliopolis and Zamalek, which could explain the disparity between the social classes acculturation towards a global consumer culture. The following participant illustrated how different social classes have reacted to consumption in the present epoch:

'If we talk about the high class people, they always go towards the foreign products. They also look for the foreign chains such as Costa. The middle level class is in between. They are looking to be handsome and have prestige with their clothes but in a reasonable way. They make a balance so they will buy some cheaper Egyptian products and some more expensive foreign products. This depends on their overall budget. The lower class or poor people have money for [only] *the essentials.' (24)*

Compared to the past, upper class citizens are finding themselves in a predicament because they feel alienated from society. On the contrary, their consumption practices

still point in the direction of foreign products and services. Similarly, poorer citizens are struggling with the flux and are compelled to go for cheaper local alternatives. An emerging trend indicates that there is a shift in the middle class due to a decrease in unemployment and a rise in incomes. According to a report by Euromonitor International (2014b), unemployment was 13.3% in 2013 and is predicted to fall to 12.9% in 2014. On the other hand, the report also revealed that 69% of unemployed Egyptians are under 30 years old. Given that the revolution was catapulted by technologically savvy young people and there is a strong demand particularly amongst the youth segment for foreign products and services, the class system is useful as a means for consumer segmentation. In the next subsection, future expectations are brought forward.

6.3.3 Social classes and consumption: future expectations

In contrast to past and present experiences, the middle class is expected to grow in the future. The following quote reflects this sentiment:

> *'The rich will not become middle class immediately. What the prime minister or new regime is trying to do is to encourage the poorer people to move forward and into the middle set of society. This movement will take years to complete.'* (25)

A further report by Euromonitor (2014a) supports the anticipated rise of the middle class in Egypt, in part due to the fall of political structures but also because of different consumer needs and wants. Moreover, middle class citizens are demanding more consumption choices in terms of dining, entertainment and shopping in air-conditioned malls. The same report has also claimed that Egyptian commercial districts suffer from a lack of venues in which to engage in consumption. Therefore, there is a need to provide new retail outlets and amenities, especially since citizens are attempting to fill a void and want to use consumption as a way to escape the flux. In the next subsection, the findings for social classes and consumption are positioned within the current literature.

6.3.4 Social classes and consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

In the literature review, consumers in the ME were seen to be familiar and knowledgeable about products due to the widespread coverage of pan-Arab satellite television,

international travel and the internet (Fry, 2001). Fry also noted how there is a substantial middle class demographic with a hunger for global products and services. The findings support Fry's claims as Egypt's middle class is growing and citizens (particularly the youth) have grown up around the internet and are therefore familiar and passionate about consuming foreign products and services. Alike upper class citizens in the Gulf region who tended to spend profusely on high end products and services (Mehta, 1999), upper class Egyptians have followed a similar trend.

Traditionally, Egypt has had a recognisable class system comprising of lower, middle and upper class consumers (Al-Sayyid, 1993; Shechter, 2008a; Singerman, 2006). The social divide in the past widened because the rich elite was affiliated with the old Mubarak regime and was adjudged to have neglected the classes below. A contradictory finding was found while citizens were protesting for change as the social classes appeared to have converged together to aspire for change. However, present experiences suggest the class system is converging, while future expectations anticipate the middle class to increase in the coming years because of a decline in the rich elite. In contrast to previous findings (Al-Khatib and Sutton, 1993; Saddik, 1973), poorer segments of society want to consume foreign products and services but are unable to do so because of the flux. A predicted rise in the middle class concurs with the views of Thompson and Tambyah (1998) and Peterson (2010) because citizens within this class adopt a mix of both local and global consumer cultures and are therefore considered as hybridised consumers. Since the *infitah* period beginning in 1973, where Egypt effectively opened up its markets to the rest of the world, there was a progressing global consumer culture in the country. In comparison to the past, Egyptians across the three social classes are well acculturated with modernity and foreignness and perhaps even more than their family's generation. In the next section, the theme of corruption and consumption is put forward and is relevant because the consumption practices of many upper class individuals were believed to have benefitted from nepotistic ties with the old Mubarak regime. Therefore, in the next section, the theme of corruption and consumption is discussed.

6.4 Corruption and consumption: past experiences

As a term, corruption has a variety of meanings. However, in the study context, corruption is viewed in terms of the exploitation of others and the abuse of wealth for the purposes of consumption. In the past, the unequal distribution of wealth and political corruption

had a considerable impact on consumption practices because, according to the participants, citizens affiliated with regime figureheads were criticised for money laundering. Having nepotistic ties also meant that citizens could obtain extra benefits based on relationship networks. The practice of networking in the ME is known as *wasta* in Arabic. By definition, wasta is a form of favouritism whereby individuals are provided with advantages into relationship marketing networks or into securing a job because of their affiliations or connections (Mohamed and Mohamed, 2011). Under the Mubarak regime, wasta carried significant political weighting and consumption practices were built around individuals sharing similar political ideologies. Due to nepotistic political ties, some citizens benefitted by having more disposable income and could afford to spend on products and services. As mentioned in the following quote:

> *'They* [the upper class] *could afford to drive the latest cars and were frequently having dinner with the old Mubarak regime. I am not saying that all the high class were corrupt […] some were very hard working and deserved to live lavish lifestyles* [but] *the government used to own so many businesses and you didn't know how money was getting passed around other than when you saw them with the latest gadgets. So you had the poor people starving to death, the working class doing their best to balance work and family time and these high class people laughing at the rest of us.'* (20)

The tensions raised in the quote above are indicative of corruptive consumption in the past. The notion of being affiliated to the old regime was not just for maintaining relationship ties and for profit. Instead, upper class citizens were believed to have used corruptive ties as a way to leverage personal status and their own image in society. Corruption was a widespread problem and affected all social classes within Egyptian society. Bribery was common between government officials and citizens with whom nepotistic ties were shared with. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, Egypt ranked 112th out of 183 countries in 2011, down by 14 places since 2010 (Euromonitor International (2012a). To an extent, an argument can be made that other classes in society such as the lower and middle, saw the upper class in a negative light not only because of their alleged affiliations with the regime but also because of their consumption possessions and symbols that were used to project image and status in society. Consequently, other social classes wanted to emulate the upper class and partake in similar consumption practices. The tensions that brought the revolution about would seem to reflect this stance and thus, other segments of society wanted to see a drop in

corruption and greater transparency with regards to greater equality in consumption practices. As underscored in the following quote:

'Before the changes I could see and smell the corruption everywhere. I could find it in universities, I could find it in government agencies. You can smell it, you can touch it, you can feel it so we all as Egyptians wanted to remove the Mubarak regime.' (19)

Corruption impacted consumption practices by prioritising the rich and neglecting other segments of society. This provoked jealous and envious perceptions as citizens from the lower and middle classes wanted to emulate and see reforms in equality. Hence, in the call for change, equality was on the agenda for the citizens and in this context it would seem reasonable to assume that consumption had a part to play in demanding reforms. The lack of equality amongst citizens in relation to consumption affected the social exchanges in the marketplace as the class system divided citizens. One participant described how the people united against the nepotistic suffering felt under the old regime:

'All of the Egyptians suffered except the cream people or the cream faces, the yogurt that were around one hundred concentrated families that influenced the Egyptian resources. They took these resources for themselves and their families. [...] we all shared the same suffering. Maybe I was suffering economically, others suffered politically, and others suffered financially and from human rights.' (21)

In interpreting the quote above, the cream people or the cream faces and the yogurt was in reference to members affiliated with the old Mubarak regime. The reference to *cream faces* also implies that ordinary citizens were less corrupt. For citizens to find a way out and attempt to reduce corruption, the regime had to be subjugated. To a certain extent, the wider implications of desiring a reduction in corruption tied in consistently with the idea of changing consumption practices and reducing the social distance between the people. That is to say that citizens wanted greater consumption opportunities across the three main social classes. In the next subsection, present experiences of corruption and consumption are discussed.

6.4.1 Corruption and consumption: present experiences

In light of the corruptive practices in the past, attempts have been made to tackle the issue of corruption in the present epoch. However, one participant pointed out that the political weighting has shifted into segregated political streams. When the Muslim Brotherhood were in power, their supporters were believed to receive preferential treatment and favouritism. As one participant noted: *'Now* [post Mubarak]*, It's a different kind of "wasta" [...] the level stays the same but now you must have a Muslim Brotherhoods wasta'* (3). Wasta is culturally and historically embedded within Egyptian citizens and the present experiences have strengthened wasta rather than reducing it. Wasta used to affect consumption practices because relationship ties were built around nepotism. The greater the level of wasta, the more affluent the individuals became and this was demonstrated by the ability of the citizens to signpost their status with consumption. However, participants' present experiences suggest that the upper class have become more ethically conscious towards classes below them and in particular, poorer members of society:

> *'People did their best to take money from each other but now they have started to understand* [being ethically conscious] *[...] no one used to share feelings for them* [poorer people] *but now I think they* [upper class citizens have] *started to better understand them and pay more* [to] *charity organisations.'* (25)

A sense of ethical consciousness is believed to be reducing the level of corruption in the present epoch. In the next subsection, participants' aspirations may explain better the extent to which corruption may be reduced in the future.

6.4.2 Corruption and consumption: future expectations

Early indications suggest that the expected rise of the middle class will lead to a subsequent decrease in the upper class because the former were empowered following regime change and committed to try new consumption practices. On the contrary, the latter were exposed on grounds of corruption which have caused many upper class citizens to reveal their finances behind their own consumption. A future expectation with regards to social class and consumption is demonstrated in the following quote:

> *'Hopefully, it* [the social divide] *will get smaller if the new regime takes action regarding the bad salaries and helps those people from the lower levels […] All of the investments were in their [upper class] hands and they were a few a people* [who] *were despicable and corrupt […] I think this* [to reduce corruption] *will take a long time and perhaps around 20 years to complete taking into account that the previous corruption lasted for over 40 years.'* (22)

The sentiments reflected in the above quote can be interpreted as positive steps towards reducing corruption and the social divide. To comprehend a change in corruptive practices, it must be understood that consumption is a driver in tackling corruption, especially since the lower and middle classes want to see greater equality in consumption practices and be presented with the opportunity to consume foreign products and services (like the rich elite). In addition, participants wish for a more equal marketplace and a better standard of living as underscored in the following quote: *'I wish for a greater standard of living because when you are not corrupt, you are not stealing money from the country'* (15). To date, present experiences indicate that citizens' perceptions towards corruption are changing and empowering them to strike further changes in the marketplace. The findings also suggest that the social classes are becoming more transparent in their consumption practices, something that used to be unclear in the past. At the same time, caution is advised against trying to achieve a sudden reduction in corruption particularly since a complex class system has prevailed in Egypt for a long time. Therefore, gradual rather than sudden steps are required to increase the transparency of consumption practices. A carefully expressed metaphor by one participant described his future expectations regarding corruption:

> *'I am a doctor so someone who is having cancer […] this cancer is infiltrating you in every part of your body. If you want to remove this cancer* [corruption] *right away then probably the person will die […] the only way to remove it is piece by piece gradually to give therapies in different places to correct, remediate or to cure hopefully that disease.'* (13)

The meaning behind the above quote is that corruption has to be reduced incrementally in stages because sudden radical reforms could punctuate society and cause extended chaos. Corruption has relevance for consumption practices because citizens from different social classes, whether they are consciously or sub-consciously engaging in corruptive practices, distort the extent of consumption in formal (e.g. shopping malls and districts) and informal (e.g. souks or market bazaars) marketplaces. Thus, the premise of

this argument is grounded in the view that consumption may be a way to reduce corruption because the revolution is believed to have reformed citizens' mind-sets and liberated them to the extent that they can now voice their own opinions publicly. In the next subsection, the findings for corruption and consumption are positioned within the current literature.

6.4.3 Corruption and consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

There is currently a dearth of empirical studies that have examined corruption and consumption and, indeed, the implications of corruption on consumption practices. Therefore, this emergent theme can be positioned within the corruption and consumption literature (Chandler and Graham, 2010; de Monthoux, 1977; Kennett and Matthews, 2008; Yuksel, 2012) as it advances knowledge of how corruption effects social classes in a revolutionary epoch. In a similar vein, the findings build on the political corruption literature (e.g. Hashemi, 2011; Sakbani, 2011). In the past, corruptive consumption was commonplace especially amongst the rich elite. The notion that consumption can be used to reduce corruption is apparent because there is greater transparency between consumption practices across the different social classes. Ethically conscious perceptions have also improved and are indicative that citizens (particularly the upper class) have become more conscious of the poor. Future expectations suggest that corruption may be reduced further if ethical steps are made towards consumption in the marketplace. To better understand how other forms of segmentation can affect consumption practices, cultural values are discussed in the next section.

6.5 Cultural values

Culture is an integral part of Egyptian tradition (Najar, 1992) and an important component of consumption practices because citizens adhere to their own cultural values as a means of guidance in the marketplace. In the following three subsections, an attempt is made to show how cultural values have affected consumption practices according to individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption practices.

6.5.1 Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption (family buying units): past experiences

In the past, Egyptians were well accustomed with engaging in consumption on both an individual and group level. Participants expressed how they felt safe and could demonstrate their own consumption practices without worrying about insecurity. As one participant stated: *'There are some things that I liked about the country which was the safety and security'* (11). The above quote is representative of Egyptian participants' views towards past experiences of consumption. Citizens did not hesitate to go out at night alone or in a group, return late from friends' or drive home at night. As one participant commented: *'It* [safety and security] *was more secure than some parts of the USA'* (3). The youth population was very familiar with shopping individually and collectively (Abaza, 2005). A sense of security and stability enabled citizens to exercise their own cultural values in public. To an extent, authoritarian control maintained safety and stability and prevented civil conflicts. Such a state of stability explains why citizens used to enjoy consumption and spent excessive time in the marketplace with family and friends. Alike other ME states, the closely knitted collectivist community in Egypt was illustrated by participants' family obligations which were considered as very important to citizens. A sense of strong collectivism is indicative of Egyptian cultural values and is reflected in the following quotes:

> *'Egyptians love their homes. In past decades the social personality was affected by their nearest families. The man will not eat food until his family is with him for example and always meet for dinner in front of the TV.'* (4)

While another participant commented:

> *'We used to enjoy going out in groups and especially the weekend […] the weekend was family time, we used to love going to the malls* [shopping malls], *visiting friends and sometimes for short trips outside the city.'* (25)

As witnessed in the above quotes, the importance of the family is integral to Egyptian cultural values. Although younger segments of society tended to evoke individualistic patterns of behaviour in the marketplace, it was uncommon to see citizens spending social time alone in the marketplace. Similarly, Egypt was identified as being very much heterogeneous. The heterogeneous composition of Egypt is demonstrated by adapted marketing practices. As noted by one participant:

> *'People are not homogenous in Egypt […] it is a very heterogeneous country. Egypt is a Mediterranean country, an African country and a Middle Eastern*

country [...] Egypt is a very difficult country and there have been a lot of different civilisations there.' (14)

The ethnic population of Egypt comprised of mainly Arabs followed by smaller minorities such as Bedouins and Berbers (Zoubir, 2000). Another issue in the past was that citizens either consciously or sub-consciously attempted to fit in with western norms and traditions. The execution and adoption of western consumption practices and values are emphasised both in the perceptions and consumption of western products. As one participant retrospectively told: *'we wanted to look modernised and that's how our parents used to do it* [consume] *and so we followed that kind of attitude' (7)*. Historically, the consumption of western products has been interpreted as modernity, something that Egyptians have become accustomed to since the *infitah* era, where the marketplace opened its doors to the western world.

A further issue is that a reduction in power distance united citizens in the call for change, and could explain the convergence of the social classes and collectivist ties as citizens were tasked with protecting friends and family. As captured in the following quote:

> *'I had to look after the family by protecting the local neighbourhood [...] some friends from the neighbourhood joined me and we took it in turns to guard the place. We were not going to allow the thugs to hurt our loved ones [...] the local women in the neighbourhood used to get together and cook huge meals for everyone to share. It was nice to see everyone come together.'*
> (17)

Protecting friends and family and having gatherings and meals with neighbourhood members personified a sense of strong collectivism. Although family consumption was restricted to the boundaries of the home and the community, citizens still emulated the collectivistic desire to consume in large numbers. This finding suggests that collectivism became more prominent, particularly since neighbourhood members got together in a way that they had not done so previously. In the next subsection, present experiences in relation to individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption are discussed.

6.5.2 Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption (family buying units): present experiences

With respect to present experiences, participants expressed how they are dissatisfied with marketplace reforms and have wondered what has gone wrong since the revolution. As one participant told: *I didn't know how precious they* [security and security] *actually* [were] [in the past] *until what has unfortunately happened now'* (11). Western influences have grown in the present epoch as citizens are drawn towards western goods and see them as novelties; yet at the same time, the flux prevents excessive spending on non-necessities. Although citizens enjoy shopping groups and collectively with friends and family, the flux has washed away the social circles that used to exist and constrained consumption practices because citizens are cautious about spending excessive time in the marketplace. In contrast to the past, citizens have used their own cultural values to steer consumption practices at home rather than outdoors in the marketplace. As underscored in the following quote:

> *'This* [flux] *affects Egypt negatively these days, but in my opinion, social personalities will improve. People were shocked by the revolution, in their thoughts, in their personalities. From them, some lost their roots and some others like me and my thoughts found their best way to stay attached to family norms and values.'* (4)

The family environment has become something of a safe haven for citizens and a chance to regain traditional values. Within the family environment, citizens are exposed to a plethora of marketing messages on pan-Arab satellite (which is broadcasted throughout the ME) and recommendations from friends and family. A secondary data report commissioned by the McKinsey's Africa consumer insights centre supports the findings and suggests that in Egypt, consumption recommendations from friends and family are three times as important as they are for consumers in the UK and US (Hattingh et al., 2012). Moreover, collectivistic consumption practices have provided a solution around the flux. As citizens are trying to avoid protests, they are resorting to spending more social time at home which suggests that Egyptians are trying to recapture tradition as a way of making family ties stronger.

In the present epoch, marketplace developments have been sporadic and have taken place mostly in the retail sector than other segments, which raises several key issues: first, the

retail environment and multiplicity of shops and cafe outlets coincides with the traditional consumption practices of Egyptians who have been accustomed with a vibrant shopping culture (Abaza, 2001) and were pulled closer local consumption sites. Second, Egyptians have still demonstrated their desire to consume even if their consumption practices have been restricted by the flux and they are more conscious about spending. Third, the increased popularity of retail outlets (in particular cafés and restaurants) is seen as a counter mechanism to alleviate many personal worries about the lack of permanent changes that have occurred so far. However, the findings also suggest that despite the rise in cafés and restaurants, traditional marketplaces (e.g. local market bazaars or 'souks') are disintegrating rapidly because local businesses are struggling to cope with the flux conditions. The local marketplace is important for consumption practices because citizens grew up around it and have used it as a place for maintaining traditional cultural values. Participants noted that a quick visit to the local marketplace and one of the most famous bazaar style markets in the world, *Khan El Khalili* which was once considered a shopping utopia and home to a myriad of shops, is now experiencing an unforeseen decline. As captured in the following quote:

> *'I went to Khan El Khalili* [large Egyptian Bazaar Market] *like a month ago or so and many shops had closed. It used to be like a live area, even some of the most famous cafes are not there anymore.'* (6)

The bazaar was an incredibly thriving tourist hotspot in the past, but in the present epoch, the local marketplace has struggled to attract the same local and tourist numbers that used to frequently visit it to buy goods and souvenirs. Even during the author's data collection visit to Cairo, traders were reluctant to bargain for items. Previously, bargaining was a must and a central component of the buying process. Traders expected people to haggle with them before negotiating a final price (Beattie, 2004). Therefore, the flux can be considered responsible for the local traders' reluctance to bargain as well as the worsening of individuals' incomes. Traders are also caught in a quandary because they want to safeguard their families and provide for them but at the same time they are not prepared to bargain and reduce their profit margins.

The findings also suggest that by demanding greater modes of consumption and choice, citizens traditional cultural values have come under threat from the desire to ardently keep in touch with a global consumer culture. Nonetheless, participants claim that the family environment is projected through traditional values but the social environment is heavily influenced by western consumption. As exemplified in the following quote: *'Western in*

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terms of consumption for products and service, they [citizens] *follow them a lot. But in terms of the lifestyle and social environment, it is very much Egyptianised'* (13).

The influence of western consumption appears to be embedded within Egyptian cultural values and citizens choose which values they want to disseminate depending on the context. For example, in the family environment, there is a tendency to resort to tradition, whereas in the marketplace, citizens are attracted towards western consumption. As demonstrated in the following quote:

> *'We have some good and reputable local brands like Juhayna [...] personally me and my family, we still believe in brand names and most of the brand names are foreign brands, so we perceive them as higher quality products and we would pay premium prices for them.'* (3)

An additional change is that citizens have turned to buying in bulk in order to not spend extended time in the marketplace. As one participant mentioned:

> *'I started buying whole bunches and purchasing in bulk instead of buying 4 or 5 per day like I used to. I would have to buy like 10 fresh products every other day to make sure that I have covered the next day.'* (7)

Similarly, visits to friends and family used to take place several times a week. Whereas now, they may only happen one or two times a week. A report by Euromonitor (2012) complemented the findings and indicated that the ongoing flux has affected consumption practices by restricting traditional collectivist activities (e.g. meetings, dinners, social gatherings and weddings) which used to take place during the evening but have now changed to daytime hours. The family unit is still very important in the present epoch and is the main reason that Egyptians have fallen back onto tradition and have become more collectivistic in their consumption practices. In the next subsection, citizens' expectations for the future are given.

6.5.3 Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption (family buying units): future expectations

In terms of future expectations, citizens anticipate the retreat to tradition to continue as well as an emphasis on trying to build strong family relationships, particularly given the substantial upheavals that citizens have been through. Moreover, closer family ties

suggest a sense of collectivism. Although Egyptians are spending less time outdoors, they still consume leisure time by devoting time to the family. Similarly, citizens are collectively proud of what they have achieved and it is the satisfaction of coping together as a family under turbulent conditions that is making Egyptians proud and is expected to do so in the future. As explained in the following quote: *'Egyptians in particular are very proud, especially since the Arab Spring, are very proud of what they have done'* (19). In comparison to the past where citizens used to follow individualistic consumption practices, future expectations denote that citizens aspire to use family buying units to steer consumption practices in the marketplace. The desire to strengthen family ties is also anticipated to reduce social conflicts and bring individual family members closer together. While in the present epoch, citizens are individual agents of change, future expectations predict that the agents of change will be collectively known as the family units. In the next subsection, the findings for individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption are positioned within the current literature.

6.5.4 Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

In the past, the closely knitted collectivist community in Egypt was almost a prerequisite and it was expected that family looked out for each other. In the present epoch, citizens are trying to remould family ties. The flux is helping family members to come closer together both in the family environment and in the marketplace. Even though the flux has reduced time spent in the marketplace, citizens now feel safer going out shopping together as a family. An explanation for the remoulding of family units is because citizens have resorted to the anchor of tradition in the present epoch in order to make sense of consumption and the future. Citizens' retreat to tradition can be attributed to the concepts of honour and reputation which are very important within Egyptian cultural values because the actions of one individual can affect the entire family (Uskul et al., 2010). Reverting back to tradition underpins the importance of local sites of consumption as citizens were brought up surrounded by traditional local shops. Until this point in the chapter, an understanding has been made that citizens in the present epoch are trying to make sense of everything that has happened. Consumption choices were and still are dependent on the heads of households and mostly father figures, who in line with religious values, protect and provide an income for the family. In the present epoch, the findings complement the current literature (Parnell and Hatem, 1999; Rice, 1984) and have

revealed that the family unit is still very important for informing consumption practices. In the literature review, Al-Kandari and Gaither (2011) were noted as authors who criticised the literature for lacking ME based studies dealing with cultural values and that studies frequently examined the most economically advantaged ME states (e.g. the UAE and Saudi Arabia). The findings add to a growing literature on cultural values and make a bold attempt at contextualising how cultural values influence consumption practices.

Another point is that since the *infitah* period, Egypt has been exposed to a wealth of foreignness. Egyptians have historically desired western products because they were perceived to be of a reputable quality and because western culture was an emblem for modernisation (Al-Khatib and Sutton, 1993; Boyd et al., 1961a; Saddik, 1973). Americanisation and western values have embedded Egyptian culture and consumption practices in recent decades (Abaza, 2001; 2005; Shechter, 2008a) and Egyptians have tried to blend their own traditional values with western ones. Consequently, there is a considerable tolerance of foreign products and services which explains why a global consumer culture has strengthened its grip in Cairo in recent decades.

In the past, citizens were satisfied with the stability and security and this allowed them to disseminate their cultural values and enjoy shopping together with friends and family. Likewise, citizens were well acculturated with foreign products and services. The difference in the present epoch is that citizens are initiating marketplace reforms by remoulding the family units and emphasising collectivism. The findings corroborate Hofstede's (2001; 2005) view that Egypt is a close collectivist society. Collectivism is still very much an embedded part of Egyptian society and the family unit is still considered important (Hawass, 2013), especially with regards to consumption because citizens tend to shop in groups and gather recommendations from friends and family before making consumption choices. Within the family social environment, citizens are exposed to a plethora of marketing messages on pan-Arab satellite.

A further contention raised in the literature review was that Hofstede grouped the Arab countries together as having high collectivism. de Mooij (2013) echoed that cultural values are one of the most important concepts for segmenting consumers and as such, it is important to comprehend them in marketing decisions. Egyptians are also heavily influenced by religious values which are just as important as cultural values and more often than not the two are interlinked with each other. Thus, in the next section, the theme of religious values is discussed.

6.6 Religious values

In Egypt, Sunni's (denomination of Islam) make up around 94% of the total population. The remaining are Coptic Christians and Jews (Zoubir, 2000). Religious values dictate consumption practices depending on the level of religiosity (Abaza, 2006) and in most cases cannot be avoided as they are spread through schools, the home and social environment, the dilution of language (with religious expressions) and the openness of religious practice (Parnell and Hatem, 1999). In the following three subsections, past and present experiences as well as future expectations regarding the impact of religious values on consumption practices are discussed.

6.6.1 Religious values and consumption: past experiences

In the past, religious values were an integral part of Egyptians and accounted for everyday life. In the marketplace, religious values served as principles for what to do and what not to do. As mentioned in the following quotes: '*In Egypt, religion is a way of everyday life, I can consume as I like [...] when I go abroad to non-Islamic countries, I always look to find the halal products'* (18). Another participant commented:

> '*Our religion is part of us, of who we are [...] Egypt is so mixed and different people believe in their religion differently. For me, I would say I believe in my own way and respect my religion but for others [...] sometimes the ultra-hard line believers are destroying religion and trying to force their own laws.'*
> (21)

While Egypt has a relatively heterogeneous make up, there are also varying degrees of religiosity. The following quote is representative of a more liberal sense of religiosity: '*There was a nightclub downtown that I used to go during the weekends'* (15). Citizens following a conservative stream of religious thought may argue that nightclubs are frowned upon by religion, but more liberal individuals such as the one quoted above, have religious values that permit them going to nightclubs. Varying degrees of religiosity were apparent across the round of interviews, with each participant offering their own interpretation of religious values. The majority took the view of religion in an egalitarian light but argued that religious values imposed boundaries within everyday consumption and provided citizens with guidance in the marketplace.

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In the build up to the revolution, the protecting of communities and the sharing of food by local members suggested a united collectivist spirit. This spirit also resonates with religious values which advocate the distribution of resources and promotes considerations for helping each other. Thus, the tensions between different religious groups were reduced during the call for change. As illustrated in the following quote:

> *'We have had some tensions between different religious groups in the past but when we were out in the square, everyone came together [...] it was beautiful to see all religions and people respect each other and share a common goal'* (24).

In the past, the congregation of the masses and ethical considerations for other citizens suggested the acceptance of religious values. According to the Islamic religion, citizens' fate is fatalistically determined by God. By going against macro-level political structures, citizens seemed to contradict fatalistic norms. In the next subsection, present experiences of religious values are brought forward.

6.6.2 Religious values and consumption: present experiences

In the present epoch, citizens are considered to have *'one Egyptian voice' (17)* and are united in having toppled the old regime. However, there are civil conflicts regarding the governance of religion. Traditionally, Egypt has incorporated a mix of both *Islamic Sharia* (religious law) and civil law. Participants argued that an increase in Sharia would imbalance the political arena and also society. By contrast, other religious groups such as Islamists and Salafist parties are desiring stricter Sharia law. One participant commented how too much Islamic governance would not be well received by the wider heterogeneous Egyptian society:

> *'The country's governance cannot be run on religious traditions [...] I do support the utopian idea and utopianism of Islam [...] in this idea that if the whole world is Muslim, it would be a peaceful place. That's utopianism, if the whole world is Buddhist it would be a peaceful place but the world is so vast and different.'* (23)

The dominance of one religion over a heterogeneous society has caused conflict and differences between citizens with contrasting views towards religious values. The ongoing conflicts are contributing to the flux and distorting the marketplace by creating

religiously motivated opposition groups. The implications of such groups have a negative impact on consumption practices. Citizens are compelled to avoid social exchanges with others and because they are embroiled in civil conflicts, there is a tendency to overlook the prospects of further change. In the next subsection, future expectations with respect to religious values are covered.

6.6.3 Religious values and consumption: future expectations

While participants were against Egypt becoming a totally Islamic state and imposing total Sharia law, a neutral stance by one participant described how differences should be embraced rather than separated: *'I would like to see it* [Egypt] *remain in a state of liberalism but still in a certain sense of control against particularly the west, USA and Britain' [...] I would like it to just very much gain independence'* (22). Interpretation of the above quote indicates that Egypt's independence is as important as a state of control against western countries. An additional participant provided a philosophical viewpoint:

> *'Very much like this popular Karl Marx phrase the opium of the masses, even*
> *though he meant that phrase in the sense of totalitarianism and with the opium*
> *of the masses, you give people the religion and hope that they have a certain*
> *sense of control. It shouldn't be that way but it should be kept for the masses*
> *right to choose which kind of spiritualism they want [...] religion should be*
> *kept separate from politics.'* (26)

The findings reveal that religion should be a source but not the main source of rule. In terms of consumption practices, religious liberalism would coincide consistently with a global consumer culture, whereas religious fundamentalism would appear to conflict with freedom of choice in the marketplace. Religious values firmly guided consumption in the past, continue to do so in the present flux and are anticipated to do so in the future. In so much as some citizens abided by religious values and avoided taboo products such as alcohol and pork, religious governance provided designated venues (usually tourism hotspots) where the sales of forbidden consumables such as alcohol were permitted. In the present epoch and in terms of future expectations, the extent of religious governance on consumption is still unclear. A mix of civil and Sharia law would maintain the religious governance set by the old political regime, while increased Sharia law may impede a global consumer culture if major restrictions are placed on foreign consumption. In the

next subsection, the findings for religious values are positioned within the current literature.

<u>6.6.4 Religious values: positioning the findings within the existing literature</u>

In agreement with the current literature on religious values (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000; Cleveland et al., 2013; Hashemi, 2011; Karatas and Sandikci, 2013; Rice and Al-Mossawi, 2002; Steenkamp, 2001) the findings illustrate that citizens have contrasting views towards the level of religiosity. The variation in religiosity levels represents the heterogeneous make up of Egyptian society. Contradicting the literature in other ME religiously conservative countries such as Saudi Arabia (Assad, 2007), Egyptians were found to have more diverse levels of religiosity. However, religious groups have intensified because of disputes over political leadership and religious governance. Consequently, polarised communities have emerged, bridged citizens apart and given rise to segregated consumption; similar to a point alluded to by Engelland (2014). He argued that religious stimuli can either promote change in two directions: radical change where a society is pushed into a new direction and conservative change, where a society returns to a previous state of affairs. Nonetheless, religious values were and still are very important in steering consumption practices in the marketplace; a point echoed by Khraim (2010). These findings concur with the current literature on religious values and confirm that such values guide citizens on what is ethical right and wrong in the marketplace (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000; Attia et al., 2011; Cleveland et al., 2013; Hashemi, 2011; Karatas and Sandikci, 2013; Rice and Al-Mossawi, 2002; Steenkamp, 2001).

Another issue is the idea of fatalism. In the past, citizens followed fatalistic desires that were designated by religion. However, fatalism would seem to have been compromised as citizens challenged the status quo to call for change. Therefore, the findings do not support previous literature (Sidani and Thornberry, 2009; Tuncalp, 1988b) on religion and fatalism. In contrast, the findings can be explained by the fact that in the past, citizens adapted to state norms and many viewed religion as being embedded within the state and thus, it was difficult to distinguish between the two. On the other hand, in the call for change, citizens proved that they could break away from the state and in doing so, broke away from fatalistic norms.

As forms of consumer segmentation, consumption choices made by Egyptians are still very much centred on religious and cultural values. A number of authors have argued that

Islam and globalisation are in opposition (Izberk-Bilgin, 2012; Vertigans and Sutton, 2002; Wong, 2007) which means that modernity is frowned upon by some religiously conservative members of society. Those conservative members who express discontent against rapid changes and the spread of western values may find comfort in religious fundamentalism (Gökariksel and McLarney, 2010; Rice, 1984; Sandikci and Jafari, 2013). However, the findings contradict the existing literature and suggest that Egyptians position religion and modernity in an egalitarian light and argue that religion is separate to modernity. Possible reasons for this finding are because citizens rebelled against political structures and contradicted traditional norms of seeing the status quo as a function of divine destiny in order to call for change. In the next section, the theme of polarised communities is discussed because they have come about as emergent themes in the present epoch.

6.6.5 Polarised communities and consumption: past experiences

In the past, polarised communities were not very common because the regime had a firm grip on society and had tightly defined boundaries which could not be crossed. Polarisation was contained because citizens did publicly display their admiration for a specific political party. As a result, political issues did not explicitly affect consumption practices or cause segregated consumption. State censorship and the extent to what could be said publicly further prevented civil disturbances taking place. In the next subsection, present experiences of polarised communities are discussed.

6.6.6 Polarised communities and consumption: present experiences

In comparison to the past where polarisations in society were very uncommon, divisions between citizens have increased and given rise to polarised communities in the present epoch. The unity between citizens in the call for change thwarted the rise of different political and religious groups, each of whom now have a different stance towards the progress of change. For instance, participants argued that an over emphasis on religious values by the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is damaging citizens, particularly the younger generation. As one participant stated:

'Under Mubarak, I could teach my children what I wanted to teach them. Religion really was a choice and no threats [not a threat]*, I wouldn't see anything on TV that I would think is bad for my kids'* (10).

Participants expressed how they feel their children are now exposed to radical Islamic messages that are being forced upon them rather than by choice as demonstrated in the following quotes:

'Religion is something between you and your god [...] a government should not be run by any religion because religion is something completely separate to politics in my eyes. Christians, Jewish people, Muslims, everyone should [all] *be entitled to live in their country.'* (24)

When a man that calls himself regul dein [man of religion-in reference to former Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohammed Morsi] *comes on TV, yells and screams and offends you and your family and everything you are living for and the kids are there, this is what is dangerous, not the movie scenes that they see on TV [...] I cannot deal with a mosque when my husband takes my kids to the mosque on Friday and the guy* [imam- leader of the mosque] *screams rubbish. This is the mosque! It is the holiest place so what an earth are you doing! How are you going to explain this? Is this Islam? (10)*

Another participant commented: *'They* [religious political parties] *are hurting religion more than anything I have ever seen in my life'* (16). For some participants, a move towards embracing western values is seen to increase certainty and stability as western values are widely known and boundaries are familiar. However, tradition and religious values are perhaps the most influential of values as citizens have always used their faith as a means of reducing uncertainty and a way of guidance in the state of flux. Hence, the responsibility of putting faith in the hands of God coincides with deep rooted beliefs in fatalism. Due to ongoing conflict between secular and more religiously conservative Egyptians, religious and political polarisations (often intertwined) have had negative implications on the social and family environment as some citizens have been *'easily be swung by notions of religion'* (8). Consumption practices have been affected and made citizens attribute specific modes of consumption based on political or religious beliefs. For instance, members of the MB and other political factions are believed to have gained from the revolution by setting up new businesses, cafés and restaurants and are backed by popular support.

Present experiences illustrate that citizens who are against particular religious or political communities have avoided shopping from opposing community districts. Differences in religious and political opinion are significant to consumption practices because to support a particular religious or political party has become something of a materialistic status. To an extent, when citizens navigate around the marketplace, their choices for consumption are guided by their own political beliefs. Consequently, the social fabric of Egypt is being destroyed and the *'gap is widening and conflicts have increased'* (15). A further problem is that polarisations in Egypt have created hostility within the family environment and led to what the participants termed as *'social surprises'* (10) and *'hidden identities'* (12). The meaning behind the two terms refers to family members who support opposing religious and political communities, much to the surprise of the rest of the household. Consequently, family members have felt betrayed and disappointed. As articulated in the following quotes:

> *'You have lost a lot of people along the way who are against the revolution and saw the bitterness in that. Anyone who is still supporting this criminal madness* [reference to Muslim Brotherhood] *is off my list. Of course the surprise is when you find family members and friends that are MB's* [Muslim Brotherhood supporters] *and you never know. You know this kind of erm social surprises. You feel betrayed or you feel disappointed with someone you know. Hiding their identity I mean and then still liking what is happening.'* (10)

> *'Nowadays the social community is divided between political thoughts, which control everything in our life [...] political thoughts affect deeply, the social relations, even in the family. We don't have the culture of how to be diversified in our thoughts and respect ourselves so we struggle to reach a common position where we can achieve our aspirations together.'* (4)

The implications of social surprises and hidden identities have impacted consumption practices by destroying social family units built around sincerity and loyalty and caused segregation. As a result, families have eliminated family members from their group consumption sessions in the marketplace. Looking after family members is an obligation rather than a choice, but due to the collectivistic nature of the family unit, segregation from the family unit spells loneliness, as citizens have been accustomed to being surrounded by relatives and friends. In addition, the emergence of social surprises and

hidden identities conflicts with honour and reputation, two important aspects in Egyptian culture as the actions of one individual affect the entire family. While cutting back on foreign consumption, citizens have not eliminated foreign products entirely but a stronger focus is placed on being conservative within the home environment and strengthening politically and religiously polarised family members. In the next subsection, future expectations are brought forward.

6.6.7 Polarised communities and consumption: future expectations

To manage polarisations in society, participants anticipate that experts must be brought in to manage the flux. As demonstrated in the following quote:

> *'You need a good doctor again to run a hospital. A religious doctor would not fix a hospital whilst a good doctor would fix a hospital. A religious engineer would not fix a bridge, whilst a good engineer would fix a bridge. My personal understanding of religion would be to bring the experts in to fix the situation.'* (11)

Based on the participants' narratives, Egypt is said to have benefitted from being exposed to many different cultures from the *'pharaonic, to Coptic (denomination of Christianity), to Islamic'* (12). Diverse Egyptian personalities exist in the marketplace and it is this diversity that is expected to help tackle the issue of polarisations in society. As one participant reported: *'We deal with a lot of cultures so Egypt has no problems in dealing with any other social background'* (4). Tolerance of other existing cultures in Egypt is considered to be of paramount importance in shaping future consumer cultures and is exemplified in the following quote: *'it* [Egyptian culture] *has absorbed every single culture that has invaded it, traded with it, dealt with it in any sort of way and then it emerges into something new'* (8). Given historical and cultural encounters, Egyptians' consumption practices are expected to evolve and give rise to new consumer cultures and assist in overseeing a reduction in polarised communities. Moreover, polarised communities have not originated from historical ties but from political and religious disputes. In a sense, a balkanisation effect has occurred in so far as communities have been split up into opposing factions. On the contrary, the findings propose that if citizens take part in consumption and use it as a mediator to diffuse polarisation then civil tensions may decrease. By acknowledging Egypt's rich heritage and heterogeneous demographic,

diverse ethnicities can be promoted to aid new forms of consumption. In the next subsection, the findings are positioned within the current literature.

6.6.8 Polarised communities and consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

The issue of polarised communities and consumption was frequently discussed during the round of interviews and converged as a key issue. Thus, it is an emergent theme to come out of the findings. Traditionally, Egyptian consumption practices have been built around the notion of tradition and are firmly grounded in the family environment. The impact of polarised communities has affected the social environment as there are tensions between opposition groups. However, the findings would seem to contradict the current literature where family units have been built around sincerity and loyalty (Barakat, 1993; Inhorn, 1996) because social surprises and hidden identities have given rise to segregated consumption. Consequently, families eliminated the family member from their group consumption sessions in the marketplace. Present experiences suggest that the alienation of a family member spells loneliness; similar to a point stressed by Hopwood (1993). Individuals are highly connected with the family unit (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) and in an honour culture, individuals and their family are inextricably linked. Family reputation arises from the family and the individual so the failures of one family member can diminish family honour. In contrast, the successes of the self can bring the family closer together and enhance the self (Uskul et al., 2010). A closer focus on being conservative, maintaining a sense of tradition within the home environment and strengthening politically and religiously polarised family members agrees with Abaza (2001; 2005; 2006). She argued that Egyptians preferred to demonstrate their traditional identity through the consumption of foreign products and services because they are symbols of wealth, prestige and quality.

Additionally, the findings have also indicated that Egyptians are still proud of tradition and they have returned back to it to make sense of consumption practices. Cultural and religious values have both contributed to reorganising family units in the present epoch. At the same time, families have become reliant on collectivism as a means of navigating family consumption sessions in the marketplace. The heterogeneous nature of the Egyptian society also indicates that the tolerance of diverse cultures is important to advancing a new consumer culture. This finding is in agreement with previous literature

(Al-Khatib and Sutton, 1993; Mahajan, 2012; Saddik, 1973) and especially because Cairo has a history of being a metropolitan society (Dennis, 2008; Kuppinger, 2005). Thus, citizens need to capitalise on the shared unity from past and present experiences and advocate consumption to bring others together. In the next section, desired and desirable effects are discussed and are important to consumption practices, especially in the context of desiring change.

6.7 Desired vs. desirable effects: past experiences

Due to the state imposing tightly confined boundaries, the desirable (in terms of what the citizens wanted) was secondary to what the state desired. This caused constraint on thought because citizens could not freely criticise the old regime publicly for fear of being punished. As much as citizens had to become accustomed with the desired, they found innovative ways of navigating around it. As one participant told:

> *'When I was delivering a lecture to my students, I found someone* [from the Mubarak regime] *standing from behind the glass monitoring what I was doing. He used to see what the students would say and how they would respond [...] I got closer to the door and eventually found out that he was part of the government security [...] this is a prime example that there is limited freedom and they tried* [the Mubarak regime] *to expose anyone who spoke against them.'* (23)

The implementation of the desired appeared to have affected citizens as consumption practices were confined within the boundaries of the state. Egyptians had to praise regime status and consume without compromising their political image. Consequently, mind-sets were politically conditioned to suit the norms and ideals of the state. By engaging in social gatherings and consumption activities such as the selling of Egyptian merchandise, citizens appeared to use consumption as a catalyst for driving their own aspirations and the desirable forward. The premise of this argument infers that consumption helped in reconfiguring mind-sets in order to achieve change. As one participant told:

> *'There was a frozen rule* [under Mubarak's regime] *and this facilitated people's mind-sets for change [...] towards the end of their rule* [Mubarak regime]*, the people were awoken and this sparked the beginning of the revolution amongst majority of the sets of society.'* (22)

Interpreting the above quote indicates that citizens were subject to constraint on thought and could not direct their own desired choices. It is the lack of diversified thoughts that was believed to have burdened citizens in the marketplace as they were unable to speak for desirable changes under the old regime. Consequently, consumption practices suffered as citizens could not advocate new consumption choices without being politically correct. Past experiences have been proof that Egyptians can independently stand up for themselves and it is this independence that has given rise to a new wave of openness. It is this openness and new found freedoms that are instrumental in driving change in the present epoch. Present experiences of the desired vs the desirable are further discussed in the next subsection.

6.7.1 Desired vs. desirable effects: present experiences

The manner in which Egyptians are initiating a process of change is enabling them to act reflexively and advocate greater freedoms. As underscored in the following quote: *'Freedom did not exist* [in the past]*, at least during the time that I lived in Egypt for around 50 years'* (14), while another noted how freedom was more of a *'philosophical idea'* (20) that was desirable but limited by the desired conditioning of the old Mubarak regime. The various types of freedom citizens wished for pertained to the extent of expressing opinions freely, in different places, in writing and to be able to *'critique any sort of abnormal situations in government'* (14). Moreover, freedom also extended to better human rights and equality between the social classes. In the present epoch, participants expressed the importance of voicing the desirable. As another participant stated: *'The bottom of any system is you need to eat and feel safe and express your opinions as a human being'* (13). Therefore, in a bid to achieve the desirable citizens need to feel safe and be able to express themselves in order to consume independently.

In contrast to the past, the regime's tightly confined boundaries have become more fluid meaning that citizens have greater flexibility in navigating around the marketplace and demanding reforms. However, participants have seen little change from regime replacements. As one participant told:

> *'They did not do anything* [the Muslim Brotherhood regime] *to increase the freedom or support freedom but by nature of the revolution, people wanted to speak and wanted to be heard.'* (4)

Thus, the above quote implies that citizens can no longer be denied the right to voice their opinions. The implications of freedom of expression are considered irreversible and not affected by further regime change. A case in point, is the most recent removal of the MB from the political scene. Supporters of the MB were quick to voice their discontent as were the anti MB supporters. Nevertheless, citizens can now converse with one another with less worry and have matured in their ability to establish gatherings and protests in a way which was not possible under previous regimes. As one participant explained:

> *'At the moment* [in the present epoch]*, the awakening and maturity of the freedom has allowed people to create various movements such as gatherings and protests.'* (24)

The meaning behind this quote demonstrates that citizens have the opportunity to rebuild the marketplace and signpost it with consumption. Consumption was a call for the revolution but also a cause of it, yet it is only now that Egyptians have been able to action the desirable and are able to initiate marketplace reforms. Even though flux has curtailed consumption practices, citizens are adapting by reverting back to tradition in an effort to strengthen the family environment. However, the longer the flux continues, the more anxious citizens *'feel guilty for starting a revolution'* (16). Furthermore, as much as citizens are using family consumption sessions as a way to feel united and also to fill a void, consumption is also making citizens feel guilty because they are not sure what the future holds. To an extent, the desirable has been achieved in terms of voicing new found freedoms. Citizens expect further changes in the future, an issue that is discussed in the next subsection.

6.7.2 Desired vs. desirable effects: future expectations

Building on from present experiences, participants expect further changes to occur and acknowledge that the flux is a learning process as exemplified in the following quote:

> *'The learning also has a cost* [it] *is like going to school, but how expensive are the fees? So there are very high prices that are paid for this learning.'* (20)

The core meaning behind the above quote is that citizens' mind-sets have been reformed since the removal of Hosni Mubarak in 2011. The *'very high prices'* are in reference to the current flux but have to be paid to steer change. In line with achieving some aspects

of the desirable, participants also expect flux to reduce as the ability to achieve the desirable is helping to oversee:

> *'Civil education about the rights […] human, civil and equality rights* [via turbulent flux] *which is something priceless'* (19).

In light of regime change:

> *'Many people are challenged to develop themselves, become more active and more involved in politics.'* (22)

Thus, citizens have achieved the desirable (via starting a revolution). On the other hand, social surprises and hidden identities have also distorted citizens' desirable wishes for the future, because some families are entangled with trying to deal with members who have betrayed the family by supporting other religious or political factions. Moreover, there is also a conflict between what the family desires for its family members and what individual family members desire for themselves. This conflict is expected to continue in the future unless further efforts are made to tackle political and religious issues. In the next subsection, the findings for desired vs. desirable effects are discussed.

6.7.3 Desired vs. desirable effects: positioning the findings within the current literature

In the literature review, desired and desirable effects pertained to what "is desired" and "what is desirable" (Hofstede, 2001). The findings agree with Hofstede's (2005) notion that issues concerning the desired do not necessarily match up with the way people actually act when they have to choose. Hofstede's notion of the desired vs. the desirable explains why citizens' beliefs concerning the desirable did not match up with the desired in the past. The state had conditioned citizens with how to act and citizens did not have a say in the development of the marketplace. Consequently, there was a large power distance between the state and the citizens and boundaries which could not be crossed. On the other hand, citizens had little opportunity to express the desirable. Similar to the view of De Mooij (1998), a gap exists between the desired and the desirable as long as the state and citizens continue to have contrasting views towards what is desired and what is desirable.

Desired vs. desirable effects are important to understand because they can implicitly or explicitly skew consumption practices depending on individual and collective forms of consumption. On an individual level, consumption choices are made. In the case of

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collective consumption, when there are social surprises and hidden identities, the individual family member is eliminated from the wider collective family unit and their consumption sessions in the marketplace. Another issue is that an individual's belief of the desirable may conflict with the wider family unit's belief of the desirable and this is what permits the occurrence of social surprises. In a similar vein, individuals' belief of the desirable may conflict with the wider social arena. Hence, polarisations occur as a result of contrasting views towards the desirable.

The desire to redevelop the marketplace through consumption coincides with Zineldin's (2002) assertion that globalisation is the desirable object for many Arab states, (such as Egypt) but its desired effects can cause problems and crisis, particularly in relation to individual and group identities, traditional norms and cultural values. Zineldin's view echoes the findings of this study that polarised communities and segregated consumption were not the desirable to many, but they were desired by some. At the time of writing (February 2015), the majority of citizens had achieved the desirable in terms of greater freedom of expression and they are able to make informed consumption choices. Citizens can also think openly with less criticism. It is the capacity to speak freely and demand further change that is expected to reconfigure notions of the desired and the desirable and allow citizens to negotiate change through consumption. By attempting to capture traditional aspects of Egyptian cultures, some citizens have become ethnocentric towards their own national products and services. This is reflected in the next subsection, which discusses the theme of consumer ethnocentrism.

6.8 Consumer ethnocentrism: past experiences

In the past, participants articulated how Egyptians had firm admiration for their country but many citizens were persuaded to consume foreign products and services because they were available in abundance. However, past experiences also indicate that there was an absence in regiocentricity which meant that citizens held negative perceptions of regional products from neighbouring Arab states. This sentiment is reflected in the following quotes:

> *'It was very clear* [in the past] *that if you entered any grocery shop or shopping mall that you can easily find products from Europe, products from the states* [USA] *and you cannot find anything from Libya and Sudan.'* (22)

Another participant concurred and stated:

'They [citizens] *think it* [foreign products] *are better quality. They* [foreign products] *are more modern, more updated, more useful than all the Arab countries [...] we all are consumers of foreign goods. No Arab country is producing anything, even a simple piece of clothing. We would rather go for Marks and Spencer's for example.'* (14)

One of the reasons which could help explain a lack of regiocentrism is the hegemonic perception of western countries. Egyptians seemed to uphold the view that local products lagged behind their foreign counterparts in terms of quality. It is the hegemonic perceptions of western countries' products that have contributed to negative perceptions of neighbouring Arab states' products: As articulated in the following quotes:

'Some people never trust the Arab or Egyptian products because they think that they feel they have more experience than to make or buy local products.' (18)

While another participant commented:

There are Egyptian brands but they are not up to the same standard [with foreign products]. *That is why you resort to the foreign products.* (1)

A further explanation for the absence of regiocentricity is because foreign consumption has historically embedded the Egyptian way of life. As one participant commented:

*'Presidents like Nasser [*Gamal Abdel Nasser, former Egyptian president] *went to Russia for all its products and the people hated that. So always foreign and in particular western products are very highly viewed in Egypt and considered to be much better than local products.'* (14)

Given the acculturated state of citizens, both formal and informal marketplaces were frequently populated. Citizens respected the influx of foreign products but wanted to have their say on the development of the marketplace and greater availability of local products. Extensive gatherings in Tahrir square and neighbourhood districts were the main sites of consumption in the call for change. The following quote explains the state of local consumption sites in the past:

'We used to love going to local markets but during the protests many businesses suffered. In Egypt, bargaining is a part of our culture. I remember going to Khan El Khalli [largest market in Cairo] *and the local traders were reluctant to bargain because they had seen a huge drop in their sales [...] customers were too occupied with keeping safe and tourists had vanished.'* (17)

Local marketplaces provided a place where citizens could keep in touch with tradition and consume local symbols and artefacts that symbolised Egyptian culture. Therefore, clinging onto tradition contributed to greater ethnocentrism. For example local food such as *Koshari* (a pasta dish mixed with rice and lentils) was very popular amongst locals and especially in the call for change as the number of street vendors multiplied. Even for citizens who could not sacrifice leaving the home to take protest action, family members still wanted to be involved in local consumption. Egyptian food retail chains were very popular and allowed the family unit to escape the flux. As underpinned in the following quote:

'While the protests were going on, many businesses shut down completely or closed early. It was hard to find ones that were still open. Most people were either out in the square or locked up at home [...] there came a point where we [family] *had enough and wanted to get away from everything we went to local Egyptian chains such as Mo'Men, Wesaya, Cook Door and Gad.'* (21)

In comparison to the past, a desire for change saw a shift in citizens' consumption practices from visiting foreign sites of consumption such as shopping malls to more traditional outlets such as bazaars, souks and local retail chains. An explanation for the shift is that Egyptians were already modernised and acculturated with foreign sites of consumption but they wanted to embrace tradition.

A further point relates to Egyptians' concealment of Egyptian identity in the past. The identity refers to the extent that citizens felt in terms of individually and collectively belonging to the country. It is the identity and how it is perceived that assists in shaping a person's character. The findings suggest that citizens, and in particular the younger generation, used to deny their identity. As one participant explained:

'[in the past] *it was very obvious, we all wanted to look Americanised and wanted to look modernised and that's how our parents used to do it so we*

followed that kind of attitude. At home or outdoors citizens used to converse with friends and family but with bil tabaruq [looking away from] *their origins.'* (10)

This quote highlights that in the past, Egyptians needed modernity and to take part in foreign consumption. Hence, looking Americanised helped distance citizens from the oppression felt under the old Mubarak regime. Participants felt that their identity was neglected. As one participant told: *'The previous system played a very important role in putting down the Egyptian identity and karama'* [dignity] (13). Consequently, consumption practices were guided under the pretence of satisfying global consumption. As much as Cairo had become a mecca for global consumption, the global consumer culture was actually threatening national identities and damaging patriotism but citizens had not realised this until after the change of regime. On the contrary, the older generation of Egyptians (such as the participants' parents) was very proud to be Egyptians, believed to be more patriotic (than the younger generation) and held a higher level of ethnocentricity towards the country because they had lived through several political eras and had seen several regimes come and go. On the other hand, the younger generation had only grown up around one regime which could explain the difference in ethnocentricity amongst the older and younger generations. As explained in the following quotes:

'The true understanding of happiness, loyalty and identity of Egyptians degraded between my father's generation and our generation. I am not sure if it even exists amongst the new generation' (11).

A supporting view is provided by participant 4:

'Under the Nasser [Gamal Abdel Nasser, former Egyptian President] *regime or Sadat* [Anwar Sadat, former Egyptian President] […] *they* [young citizens] *only saw the reign of Mubarak* […] *younger members of society did not really see the best part of Egypt.'* (4)

Linked to the level of ethnocentrism is patriotism. There was a perception that the younger generation did not experience the same level of patriotism as the older generation did. The notion of identity and sense of belonging amongst the youth was understood as

coming from the family unit and not from being Egyptian. In the next subsection, present experiences of consumer ethnocentrism are discussed.

6.8.1 Consumer ethnocentrism: present experiences

In the present epoch, citizens are reorganising themselves around the collective theme of change. Based on the discussion so far in the chapter, the reliance on local symbols and artefacts reflects a sense of ethnocentrism. Those citizens who did not take part in the protests escaped the flux by consuming from local consumption sites and embracing tradition, both of which reveal ethnocentric tendencies. Egyptians were always proud of their country but the key argument here is that it was only when call for change happened that citizens realised a greater affiliation for their country. In comparison to the past, citizens have become highly ethnocentric in the present epoch. The change in ethnocentricity is because citizens have called for a national awareness to promote local products. As emphasised in the following quote:

> *'If there is a national exchange calling for the support of local products, then I will buy them without hesitation. Not because we have to, but because we want to.'* (5)

Citizens were jubilant about having achieved regime change and this exacerbated the level of ethnocentrism further.

Another important finding is that participants believe that a sense of national identity has been reinstated through present experiences as this identity was overshadowed by the previous ruling party. The findings indicate that Egyptian citizens are more enticed by local Egyptian products in the present epoch. As indicated in the following quote:

> *'I am a little biased towards the national products, the Egyptian products when they are of the same quality* [as the foreign products] *because I believe that purchasing something Egyptian would push the economy and drive the people living in Egypt more than products of western or foreign origin for example.'* (2)

Present experiences denote that Egyptians prioritise Egyptian products as a way to aid the redevelopment of the marketplace. However, ethnocentric tendencies are only apparent if local products match up with foreign products in terms of quality.

An additional issue relates to the transformation of identity in Egypt. In contrast to the past, citizens feel closer to each other and have a new desire to help the local cause. According to participants, the identity was never in doubt but was rediscovered through the revolution. As one participant articulated: This (rediscovered identity) was known as a reformed identity and *'citizens wanted more than anything to look to look as Egyptian as possible'* (13). Based on the premise of having a reformed identity, it can be argued that the revolution was also call for a new identity and sense of belonging. To reposition the identity, families have begun to emphasise the Arabic language at home and tried to educate their children with Egyptian history as one participant stated: '*A rediscovered identity has resulted in the desire to capture everything that symbolises Egyptianism'* (7). Not having the desirable only allows for what is desired, so if rediscovering the national identity was the desirable, the desired in the form of authoritarian rule prevented the desirable from being actualised and restricted a new sense of self. That is to say that citizens could not freely express their own identities in the marketplace. Hence, why participants stressed that the revolution has brought a new '*sense of belonging'* (11). Citizens have started revisiting historical and cultural sites in a bid to embrace the new identity and recapture tradition. As one participant told:

> '*Me and all my friends were like I want to talk in Arabic. We need to reinforce that* [with our children] *and [...] I want to go to the "Qalaa"* [castle] *and show the kids or take them to the pyramids, I have never been to "Kahun"* [Pyramids village] *because you want your identity* [back].' (10)

When there is a strong sense of national identity, citizens are more likely to feel patriotic and carry ethnocentric tendencies, which pushes them towards national consumption via products, services and domestic tourism. This is underscored by the following quote:

> '*For the most part I am proud to be an Egyptian [...] there are some problems, some administrative problems, some corruption but I am an Egyptian and I like being an Egyptian.'* (9)

For many young Egyptians, the rediscovery of national identity has meant a return to the safety of tradition, creating a new sense of 'Egyptian-ness', eschewing western values and capturing a new sense of self. Consumption practices are severely affected by a change in the national identity, because individual personalities help shape consumption. In the next subsection, future expectations regarding consumer ethnocentrism are put forward.

6.8.2 Consumer ethnocentrism: future expectations

In terms of future expectations, participants anticipate that local companies should take note of citizens' desire to consume local products. As exemplified in the following quote:

> *'We fully support local products, to support my countries economy, to see the growth of my country and see more competition internationally. If they* [Egyptian companies] *envisage the propensity of our consumerism then they are more likely to do better in the Egyptian market.'* (17)

There is a relationship between achieving the desirable (marketplace reforms) and a desire to achieve change and this is driven by greater freedom of expression and a new sense of identity. Additionally, citizens can provide the fertile grounds for change by spending greater time consuming and socialising in the marketplace. The findings support that Egyptians are using consumption perhaps unintentionally, as a vehicle for steering change. For instance, one participant stressed that promotional carriers are encouraging citizens to *'ishtiri al masri'* [buy the local Egyptian products] (2). A second aspect that participants envision is tackling poverty. An increase in ethnocentricity is found to be linked with reducing poverty via consumption. As there is still a recognisable class system in Egypt, there is much societal diaspora. Poverty rose by 15% since 2011 and continues to rise. Over 3.5 million citizens in Cairo alone live below the poverty line (Brown et al., 2011). Participants identified helping the local cause by consuming as a way to help decrease poverty levels and flux. As emphasised in the following quote:

> *'To lift the Egyptian economy, we need to buy Egyptian products to help others such as farmers, poorer people, help the workers to do more work.'* (19)

The key argument here is that the present epoch is causing citizens to reconsider their ethical values towards the poor and poverty and have the desire to use consumption as a poverty mediator.

Another finding is that in the past, citizens were prepared to choose lesser quality Egyptian products. However, in the midst of political uncertainty, the desire to support the local cause is decreasing. As one participant argued:

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'*Even if I bought less quality products and gave them away, I bought local products to encourage the manufacturing of Egyptian products and the regeneration of the economy […] for example encouraging flags, bags and badges and anything that was Egyptian made […] but now not until we have a proper president*' [in reference to the MB]. *(10).*

Inferences made towards a decline in the consumption of local products can be attributed to the polarisations in society, which to an extent, are reducing citizens' ethnocentric tendencies. In the next subsection, the findings are positioned within the current literature.

6.8.3 Consumer ethnocentrism: positioning the findings within the current literature

In the literature review, consumer ethnocentrism was discussed as differing by countries and regions and is an important theme in consumer cultures because it pulls consumers towards their own national products over foreign options (Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2007). The findings suggest that polarised communities have affected the level of ethnocentricity in the present epoch and have created a sense of scepticism towards supporting the local cause. From another angle, citizens have resumed past consumption practices but with a lot of caution. At the same time, citizens have merged foreign and local consumption practices. This finding corroborates the literature (Abaza, 2001; Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Varman and Belk, 2012; Westjohn et al., 2012) as the greater the progress of global consumer culture, the more likely it is that consumers become familiar with global consumption, making them more acculturated (Lysonski and Durvasula, 2013) and less xenophobic (Kipnis et al., 2014). On the other hand, the findings also contradict the current literature on consumer ethnocentrism (Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Klein, 2002; Klein and Ettensoe, 1999; Shankarmahesh, 2006; Shimp and Sharma, 1987) as citizens have aspired to support the local cause but have not become entirely ethnocentric. Instead, citizens have been able to reassert their misplaced individual and group identities and have discovered a new sense of belonging to the country. This is different from becoming ethnocentric and nationalistic towards Egyptian products. The basis for supporting local products is not a cause of ethnocentrism but a ploy to support the local marketplace. On the contrary, foreign products are still perceived in a more positive light than local products due to quality aspects. Even though the level of ethnocentrism has been curbed by the flux, citizens have reasserted their identities and

become more patriotic towards their country. The theme of national identity and patriotism may be considered an antecedent of consumer ethnocentrism because citizens had to rediscover their own sense of identity in order to have a better desire to help the local cause. What is surprising is that the findings refute any linkages between rediscovered identities and an increase in local consumption because the flux is distorting citizens' identities once again. Nonetheless, the findings correspond with previous literature on national patriotism (Ahmed et al., 2010; Balabanis et al., 2001) and confirm that the revolution has made citizens more patriotic regardless of the outcome of change.

In the past, the marketplace in Cairo was progressively developing towards a market based economy and was edging closer to a global consumer culture. Advancements and a range of consumption modes and choices resembled other developed metropolises (Kehrer, 2007; Kuppinger, 2005; Singerman and Amar, 2009). Given the multiplicity of both local and foreign sites of consumption, citizens were well acculturated and attempted to blend tradition with foreignness in their consumption practices. However, citizens wanted to have their say on the development of the marketplace and greater availability of local products. This finding contradicts what is currently known about local sites of consumption with respect to ethnocentric tendencies. Additionally, this finding advances an understanding of how Egyptians have demanded greater local consumption sites. The lack of availability of local consumption sites could be explained by the fact that after the transition from the *infitah* (opening of the marketplace) Cairo moved from a planned to a market based economy and brought marketing orientated philosophies with it. Modernisations in the marketplace brought foreign products and services, which were interpreted as luxuries by Egyptians since governments had resisted globalisation in the decades leading to the collapse of socialism (Adham, 2005; Shechter, 2008b). In the past, many global companies had set up their operations in the capital and provided manufactured global brands such as Marks and Spencer, Carrefour, Debenhams, Gap, Mango, Pizza Hut, KFC to name a few (Ramzy et al., 2011). Therefore, local consumption sites have had less opportunity and support to become established as foreign consumption sites. The level of ethnocentricity in the past can be attributed to the less significant development of local consumption sites in comparison with foreign ones.

An additional issue is the absence of regiocentricity because the quality of local products in comparison with foreign products is also linked to the level of regiocentricity. Consequently, citizens have trusted foreign products and questioned the quality

procedures of local options. The findings advance an understanding of what is currently known about regiocentrism. Several authors have investigated regiocentrism in relation to the EPRG (ethnocentrism, polycentrism, regiocentrism and geocentrism) framework (Shoham and Rose, 1995; Wind et al., 1973). However, little attention has been given to the consumption perspectives towards the absence of regiocentrism. Country of origin (COO) effects are often associated with consumer ethnocentrism, as consumers can choose products based on various product cues (such as where the product is made, manufactured or designed). Thus, in the next section, the theme of COO is discussed.

6.8.4 Country of origin effects (COO): past experiences

In the past, a growing number of foreign companies was indicative of citizens' positive perceptions towards foreignness and the consumption of foreign products and services in the marketplace. As one participant expressed: *'[…] All the brands are foreign such as McDonalds, Hardees. Even restaurants like Chilli's, Rubi Q's, Papa John's are foreign products'* (1). However, citizens were disappointed that there were not many Egyptian alternatives. The main problem pertained to quality issues which pushed citizens away from local consumption as underscored in the following quote: *'Egyptian products are […] hard to endure at times'* (10). Aside from quality, the second most important aspect for consumption choices was price. One participant argued that *'prices of both foreign and Arabic products […] have risen by almost 30%'* (8) while another stated:

> *'If you have two products people sometimes say that it does not matter if the products are Egyptian or non-Egyptian. The most important thing for me are two factors: The price and the quality.'* (26)

Secondary data corroborates the findings and suggests that at the end of 2013, 54% of the population still lived on only $2-4 US dollars per day and the price of basic necessities has risen sharply (Business Monitor International, 2011b). The spread of western values was evident as citizens consumed political messages, consumption trends and popular culture from the west. As one participant commented:

> *'We get the social patterns of consumption from the states* [USA] *and follow their economic* [and social] *patterns […] this was very non-useful because we don't have their economic and social context.'* (19)

The view that consumption practices emulated from western countries is understandable given modernisations in Egyptian society in recent decades. However, participants acknowledged that western consumption practices posed dangers and neglected tradition to the extent that citizens, and particularly the younger generation, were attracted to foreign products and services as a way of projecting status. Perhaps this is why Egyptians had lesser ethnocentric tendencies in the past because citizens were pulled towards products from western sources of origin. In the next subsection, present experiences of COO effects are discussed.

6.8.5 Country of origin effects (COO): present experiences

In the present epoch, there has been little change with respect to COO. The quality of both foreign and local products are found to be aligned with brand origin. Citizens are more prepared to pay more for branded products that are manufactured outside Egypt because of concerns over local manufacturing processes and quality issues. As articulated in the following quote:

> *'They [Egyptian products] are of a very poor quality and don't meet your expectations. Find an Egyptian phone that you can really use or nice clothes you can get your kids? It's quite challenging because you have gotten used to certain standards of living and because the country has been buried for years with Mubarak and Co, we have not been able to advance in doing a very simple mobile phone or nice outfits.'* (10)

Similarly, participants shared a similar negative sentiment with regards to products from China: *'If I am buying electrical products for example, if I see that it is made in China, I try to avoid them because I know that traders in Egypt import the cheapest electrical devices from China and they are not reliable'* (15). While another participant commented: *'For some products it would be the origin, for special products such as appliances for example. You know I wouldn't go for Chinese made products'* (5). Citizens still seemed to view western countries products in a better light than eastern countries products (with the exception of Japanese products, which are better viewed than Chinese products for electronics, cars and devices). On the other hand, low involvement Chinese products are

viewed more favourably in informal marketplaces and particularly amongst the lower social classes. This view is reflected in the following quotes:

'In my opinion [in the past] *the Japanese* [products] *had a very good quality not only in Egypt but everywhere [...] people found them very expensive in comparison with Chinese products which had a lesser quality but there was a significant gap in the price.'* (18)

'They [middle class] *will prefer to use the Egyptian products. But if there are no other options as with cars, there are no Egyptian cars, I would have to acquire a car [...] I would look for Japanese car that has been imported or* [a car] *from China and Germany. [...] if we have options, I prefer to use the Egyptian product. If it is in the same quality and a little bit similar in quality then why not!'* (25)

In the above quotes, Egyptians prefer to opt for Japanese, Chinese and American products. However, inferences towards purchasing more Egyptian products are indicative of ethnocentric perceptions. On the other hand, the issues pertaining to quality are believed to push citizens away from consuming Egyptian products. Similarly, citizens are wary of products from Asian countries as they are generally perceived to be of a better quality in western markets than the same ones in Egypt. Participants explained why quality issues are not of a great concern from western countries:

'If the product [is made] in one of those progressed countries like the west or Europe, then you would much more prefer it than if it was made in one of the Asian countries or one of the African countries. They [Western and European countries] *have a better view of making and producing goods.'* (12)

This perception has not changed as the concept of *western superiority* seems apparent in both conscious and subconscious forms of Egyptian consumption practices. The conscious form refers to the act of consumption whereas the subconscious, relates to the influences of global consumer culture on citizens in the marketplace such as advertising and branding. Durability is another factor associated with COO and when products carry high durability, brands take a frontline role in consumption choices. Subcategorising COO further, in the electrical goods market for instance, *'the most preferred are Japanese, Korean and German products' (19)*. Whereas with high involvement such as cars, citizens

prefer German brands, but reduced incomes mean that many citizens are only able to purchase cheaper brands such as Kia and Hyundai (Korea) and Opel (Germany). In comparison to the past, citizens have become less concerned with COO and more focussed on the brand, price and quality aspects. As one participant stated:

> *'Personally me and my family, we still believe in brand names and most of the brand names are foreign brands, so we perceive them as higher quality products and we would pay premium prices for them.'* (3)

This finding was unexpected and suggests that consumption is skewed by what is available and most accessible in the marketplace as opposed to spending extended time choosing products.

According to the participants, foreign brands abroad are of exceptional quality compared to the same foreign brands manufactured in Egypt. Citizens believe that products in western countries such as the USA and UK undergo robust manufacturing protocols to ensure quality standards. Whereas, the same cannot be said with the same foreign brands that are manufactured in Egypt. In contrast to Egyptian products in the home country, citizens hold more positive perceptions of the same Egyptian products in foreign markets because modifications are believed to be made in the production process. An alternative view is that quality local goods are produced to sell in international markets, whereas the locally sourced products are downscaled in terms of quality for the Egyptian market. Accepting the stance that quality is enhanced for exported Egyptian products overseas complements the idea of international markets providing a unique selling point. Conversely, national products abroad may find a unique selling point by giving the products a novel status, especially if the product is not widely available in other markets. Foreign products abroad are unable to substitute traditional Egyptian products in which case, local substitutes are more popular. For example, in the USA, local traditional Egyptian products manufactured in Egypt or neighbouring Arab states are highly sought after. As one participant pointed out: *'There is no pastirma* [local salami sausage] *made in the USA, no traditional Egyptian beans that are made in the US [USA] and so on'* (12). Such local products cannot be substituted and citizens are pulled closer to them in Egypt and in international markets. An alternative explanation to holding favourable perceptions of Egyptian products overseas is national patriotism which drives citizens to national products. As one participant noted:

'It was very interesting to find something made in Egypt. It gives pride, it gives some sort of loyalty and I am happy that some Egyptian products are sold there and they are of a good quality.' (10)

The reference to patriotism in this case is directly aligned to ethnocentric tendencies and COO perceptions of Egyptian products in foreign markets. In the next subsection, future expectations regarding COO are documented.

6.8.6 Country of origin effects (COO): future expectations

Participants expect polycentric perceptions of foreignness to skew consumption practices towards foreign consumption. In a similar vein, the lack of trust with regards to the manufacturing procedures of foreign branded products made in Egypt indicates that citizens are focussing on country of brand origin and country of manufacture in great detail. However, pending iterations in the flux environment, Egyptians still uphold the desire to consume local products. As captured in the following quote:

'I think nowadays [in the present epoch] *the people started to not only look to buy the Japanese, Chinese or American products but also moved towards buying more Egyptian products.* (18)

At the same time, COO deliberations are still dependent on matters of segmentation such as social class, cultural and religious values. In augmenting the progress of change, COO effects are important in swaying consumption practices because citizens are familiar with an established marketplace that contains multiple sites of consumption and are therefore able to make informed choices. In contrast to the past, COO effects have perhaps become more important because citizens as agents of change are important catalysts in helping to reshape the marketplace. In the next subsection, the findings are positioned within the current literature.

6.8.7 Country of origin effects (COO): positioning the findings within the current literature

As reviewed in the literature, country of origin effects (COO) are defined as the stereotype that consumers may have about foreign products (Darling and Wood, 1990). In agreement

with earlier findings (e.g. Amine et al., 2005; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2011; Chao, 1998), COO is of pertinence in consumption practices in the present epoch. An additional explanation for this unexpected finding is because Egyptians are attempting to rebuild their lives and locate modes of consumption that provide the best quality products but do not exceed expectations. That is to say that because citizens are consuming for necessity and do not compromise their own and families' safety and security, COO is useful for making quick consumption choices in a turbulent marketplace.

The finding that citizens have aspired to support the local cause but still retain polycentric perceptions towards foreignness contradicts the current literature on COO (Amine, 2005; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2011; Sharma, 2011) and CE (Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Klein, 2002; Klein and Ettensoe, 1999; Shankarmahesh, 2006; Shimp and Sharma, 1987). It is the negative perceptions towards the quality of Egyptian products that has allowed citizens to retain positive perceptions regarding the quality of western products in the present epoch. In a similar vein, the findings suggest that citizens enjoy subcategorising COO options. In the case of high involvement products, German and Japanese cars are preferred but the consumption choice is directly relative to the level of disposable income. To an extent, brand origin is also found to affect citizens' consumption choices, especially with high involvement products such as cars and electronic gadgets (e.g. mobile phones, computers and tablets). This finding is consistent with that of Ahmed et al. (2012). Foreign brands are still superior to local brands and are seen as a benchmark of quality. With high involvement products, citizens are pulled more towards the brand than the country of design (COD) or country of manufacture (COM) (Chao, 1998; 2001; Essoussi and Merunka, 2007; Hamzaoui and Merunka, 2006). Hence why participants stressed that they trusted the quality of Asian products manufactured in western countries than the same products manufactured in Egypt. On the other hand, with low involvement products (e.g. food products, everyday perishables), Egyptians have a tendency to inspect the 'made in' label, especially with health products such as creams, detergents and diapers. While COO has been found to sway consumption practices towards particular products, Egyptians are also affected by the theme of consumer animosity because of resentments towards a particular country/company's product or service. Therefore, in the next section, the impact of consumer animosity on consumption practices is discussed.

6.8.8 Consumer animosity (CA): past experiences

In the past, consumer boycotts (CBs) were usually practiced in reaction to political issues or affairs (e.g. boycotting of American products during the Iraq war in 2003) (Knudsen et al., 2011) and were commonplace in Cairo. For instance, when a Danish writer depicted the prophet Mohammed as a cartoon in a local newspaper, a public uproar occurred as illustrated in the following quote:

> *'At certain events you may have a little aggressiveness towards distinct made in orientations [...] during that period* [Prophet Mohammed cartoon controversy] *we tried to avoid Danish products mainly because we wanted to influence and have a level of controlling power in making them* [Denmark] *know that if you hit, I will hit back.'* (2)

As is the case with many CBs, the whole country i.e. 'Denmark' was considered responsible for causing offence and *not* the Danish cartoon artist. Participants also contended that the level of animosity and action taken against countries or their products depended on the social class level and depth of education. As one participant suggested:

> *'I would say the more extremists* [religiously conservative] *are more influenced [...] by these sort of occurrences* [in reference to the prophet Mohammed cartoon] *than the wealthier, more educated [...] lower class citizens seem to be more affected and seem to be more angered by these actions than the more educated as well the wealthier citizens.'* (23)

According to the Islamic faith, representations of the prophet are prohibited. Consequently, many citizens across the ME and in Egypt went out to protest against the movie's (Prophet Mohammed movie) release. Rumours surfaced that the movie originated from the USA and the UK. As one participant noted:

> *'After the video that was released of the prophet [it had] a massive impact in Egypt. The majority of Egyptians are Muslims and I know that in the neighbouring countries [...] in Saudi Arabia they were affected even more because they are very strict with their religion. I think that it has built up a lot of resent and hatred towards the US and UK and people have been a lot more reluctant to buy those goods from the US or the UK [during the period of the boycott].'* (24)

In the past and under the old Mubarak regime, protests extending to political and religious issues were tolerated to a certain extent. However, animosity held towards a particular issue such as the Mohammed cartoon and film lasted for a specific period of time and does not appear to have affected citizens' present experiences as seen in the next subsection.

6.8.9 Consumer animosity (CA): present experiences

While moments like the Mohammed cartoon and film caused controversy amongst Egyptians, the level of animosity declined over time. However, instances of historical animosity have carried over into present experiences. Participants argued that they share strong animosity towards products from Israel. Israeli products are the only country of origin that Egyptians avoid. The animosity expressed does not mean that Israeli products are boycotted entirely but, as a show of historical animosity, they are avoided for political reasons. As some participants explained:

> *'I would not buy Israeli products. By hook or crook I would not buy them. If they are for free I would not take them I mean I would not go near them.'* (7)

A further participant commented:

> *'There are a lot of boycotts towards Israeli products. You know about the conflict between the Arabs and the Israeli's and they* [Egyptians] *sometimes thought that products from Israel were supported by America such as the coffeehouse Starbucks. I have stopped buying coffee from Starbucks. I know that a certain percentage of the profits go to Israel and still to this day I have therefore boycotted it.'* (21)

The animosity towards Israeli products has not changed since the past. To a lesser extreme, citizens resent Israeli products but on a more extreme level Israeli products are boycotted as indicated in the quote above. In contrast, the lesser extreme is highlighted in the following quotes:

> *'I do not support Israel. I'm totally against it. I'm not against Jews I'm against Israel. One of my best friends is a Jew and I'm totally happy with that. It's just the concept of invading other people's privacy, place or country or whatever you want to call it and the killing of people.'* (18)

'Two years ago, I heard about banning Pepsi products for example or not banning, but boycotting to be more specific. There was a call for the Egyptian people to boycott such products but I don't really care. I want the quality that matches the price that I am paying regardless of the country of origin.' (3)

An unexpected theme emerged in relation to boycotts in the present epoch. This is the growing animosity towards Muslim Brotherhood owned businesses by opposition supporters. Citizens are prepared to boycott Muslim Brotherhood products, stores or outlets that are affiliated with the political party, mainly because they do not agree with MB policies. As some participants stated: *'I am actually boycotting MB products, supermarkets, shops that they say are there's but I investigate them first' (10).* Another participant commented:

'There is a supermarket chain called Zad that is owned by one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. I used to buy products from there because they were actually cheaper than other supermarkets for the same goods [...] I used to get them from there and then I found out that this person [a member of the Muslim Brotherhood] *owns the chain and decided to boycott the whole chain of Zad Supermarkets.'* (7)

Interpreting the quotes above leads to the view that there is a growing division between pro-Muslim Brotherhood supporters and anti-Muslim Brotherhood supporters. The divide has led to domestic boycotts and consumption segregated on the basis of political and religious beliefs. In the next subsection, future expectations are brought forward.

6.8.10 Consumer animosity (CA): future expectations

Animosity and boycotting behaviour is argued to be temporary and last for a specific period. As one participant explained:

'If there is something bad caused by the US, so we are against the US [...] some people were asked not to buy Chinese products. Why? Because China is supporting the Assad [in reference to Bashar Al Assad- current Syrian president] *regime in Syria [...] or we don't like to buy specific products for several reasons. This could be because they* [the US and UK] *are producing movies against the prophet Mohammed or against Islam or Egypt [...] once*

matters have been forgotten, of course we will go out and buy them. So you can say it is a temporary influence.' (20)

Incidents like the prophet Mohammed film change consumption practices by pushing citizens to support local products and become more ethnocentric, rather than undergo a retaliatory backlash. Consequently, animosity, boycotts, ethnocentrism, patriotism and country of origin effects are all interlinked with each other. For example, when there is strong animosity or retaliatory action via boycotts, Egyptians have a tendency to become more ethnocentric. With regards to segregated consumption, citizens expect that other minority groups are likely to be affected. For instance, Christians (around 10% of the Egyptian population) may be deterred from shopping in predominantly Muslim shopping districts and vice versa. Moreover, shops and businesses that are boycotted by anti-supporters of the MB are likely to stay away their community districts, leaving MB communities to operate independently. In the next subsection, the findings in relation to consumer animosity are positioned within the current literature.

6.8.11 Consumer animosity: positioning the findings within the current literature

In the past, consumer animosity existed across various points in time such as the prophet Mohammed cartoon and depiction of the prophet in a Danish newspaper. Boycotts of Danish products took place for a specific period of time. In contrast to the past, animosity exists towards opposition groups in the present epoch. The findings add to a growing literature on consumer boycotts (Andrew and Klein, 2003; Farah and Newman, 2010; Kerr et al., 2012; Klein et al., 2002, 2004). In the case of Muslim Brotherhood boycotts, political polarisation is segregating citizens in the present, and consumption practices have become fragmented and defined by religious/political beliefs. Animosity towards opposition groups was less of an issue for consumption practices in the past. Since consumer boycotts based on situational animosity disintegrate after a prescribed period, consumption practices are distorted and consumption is segregated within a particular community. The findings that boycotts last for specific period seem to be consistent with those of other studies (Guido et al., 2010; Mostafa, 2010; Nes et al., 2012; Rose et al., 2009; Shoham et al., 2006). The duration of the boycott also depends upon on the severity of the accusations made. After a certain period, consumption practices were no longer motivated by boycotts. Furthermore, consumer animosity also exists because of historical

issues, such as the conflict with Israel. Citizens attempt to avoid Israeli products but are able to differentiate between foreign policy and Israeli people.

Until this point in the chapter, the main themes that have been found to affect consumption practices have been discussed. While the revolution has reconfigured Egyptian mind-sets, reinstated their identity, increased ethnocentrism and made citizens more patriotic towards their country, the flux has affected consumption practices because the lack of stability and security has resulted in conservative consumption. Likewise, the present circumstances have also affected the social classes as the upper class used to consume conspicuously in the past but they have become more conservative in the present epoch. Therefore, in the next section, the theme of conservative vs. conspicuous consumption is discussed.

6.9 Conservative vs conspicuous consumption: past experiences

Two streams of consumption have emerged. The first is conservative consumption and the second is conspicuous consumption. The former refers to the notion of consuming with caution but also consuming traditionally, while the latter implies consuming excessively on products and services. Inferences towards both streams have been made throughout the course of this chapter. In the past, lower class citizens could only afford the necessities and trended towards conservative consumption. On the other hand, other citizens and predominantly the middle and upper class used to consume copiously on foreign products and services. Their consumption practices resembled status and materialism and were indicative of being well attuned with a western consumer culture. As captured in the following quote:

> *'If you look at say a 4x4 which many people prefer in Egypt like a BMW X5, it would cost you at least a £100,000 […] it's hard to believe that Egyptians would pay a much higher price for the same good than in the UK or US. But yet the rich as a symbol of wealth like to show that they have westernised goods because westernised goods are meant to be of a higher quality […] the wealthier like to have those things to show as a sign of wealth.'* (19)

A diverse range of foreign companies had already set up in Egypt such as P & G (Procter and Gamble) as well as a multiplicity of *'brands such as Coca cola and Pepsi* [which] *are all over Egypt'* (21). Western products tended to be more expensive than the local

products so citizens with lower incomes leaned more towards cheaper Chinese products, which were very popular and available in both informal and formal marketplaces. The middle and the higher class tended to follow prestigious and established brands in the formal marketplace such as *'Ralph Lauren'* (19) for example. In fact, Ralph Lauren had allegedly increased the size of the brand logo on their clothes in Egypt to provide a stronger and eye-catching brand apparel. Participants remarked that Egyptian citizens also had a tendency to follow consumption practices from the Gulf region. As told by one participant:

> *'One big reason following the upper-middle class is going to work in the Gulf, so you cannot ignore the influence from the culture [...] because the appearance, image and prestige are so important there.'* (22)

As well as being exposed to western consumer cultures, the notion of conspicuous consumption also emulated from developing consumer cultures in the Gulf States, which have progressively amalgamated western and local consumer cultures together in recent years. Thus, western influences and an emerging global consumer culture in the Gulf states explains the magnitude of influence that consumption has had on Egyptians and gives reasoning for hedging towards conspicuous consumption. In the next subsection, present experiences of conservative vs. conspicuous consumption are discussed.

6.9.1 Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption: present experiences

In the present epoch, Egyptians have resorted to tradition in order to reassert their identities and embrace the family unit. At the same time, the flux has made citizens take due care and attention when consuming because of ongoing insecurity in the country. Conservative consumption has emerged as citizens' ethical beliefs have increased to empathise with the flux so they are pulled away from excessive consumption and have become more ethically conscious and *'passionate towards others and the poor'* (20). Ethical consciousness is directly linked with conservative consumption, because when there is instability, there are individual and collective family worries and citizens refrain from consuming conspicuously. Instead, they have been coerced into choosing their consumption on the basis of necessity. In a similar vein, citizens feel guilty for consuming excessively because of polarisations in society. This is underscored by the following quote:

'Poverty is increasing so the guilty feeling of living a good quality of life,
spending on unnecessary goods with carelessness is increasing and causing
a lot of disappointment all over. I am not enjoying buying stuff and getting
things. This doesn't make me happy anymore.' (5)

The above quotes indicate that the flux has made citizens unhappy for spending lavishly on products and services. On the contrary, citizens have recognised the ethical benefits of rekindling tradition alongside empathising towards the state of the poor.

Another issue is that the lack of jobs, particularly for young citizens who were influential in driving the revolution forward (Sika, 2012; Singerman, 2013), has had a major impact on consumption practices because citizens are held back from consuming anything other than the necessities such as food, water, clothes and shelter. Similarly, the job uncertainty has also made citizens more anxious due to the flux. As one participant commented:

'If my contract ends will they renew it? Will my husband's job keep on going
or will he stop it? If he gets fired what will we do? Will I have to take the kids
out of school?' (7)

A report by Euromonitor International (2012b) substantiates the findings and suggests that citizens are keen to save rather than consume unnecessarily, but they are still keen to find discounts and locate bargains where possible.

A growing global consumer culture has had a negative impact on Egyptian consumption practices because citizens still have an appetite for foreign products and services but are constrained from engaging in consumption because of the flux. On the other hand, citizens are not supporting local consumption like they used to in the past because many have lost faith in the direction of change and have therefore become less ethnocentric towards the country. Consequently, conservative consumption has emerged as a means to navigate around the marketplace. Citizens who used to frequently visit fast food chains and restaurants now prefer to consume fresh local cheese and spend more time eating at home with family and friends rather than in the marketplace. Such actions also suggest that citizens have become more traditionalistic and conservative by moving closer to historical roots. Nevertheless, the marketplace is still littered with independent local modes of consumption but is being overtaken by an expanding number of shopping malls such as City Stars in Heliopolis, Cairo. Shopping malls are important to consumption practices

because they are gradually taking over traditional bazaars and souks as citizens lean towards foreign consumption (Business Monitor International, 2011b). In terms of present experiences, a global consumer culture scene in Cairo is still in existence but the flux has distorted consumption practices.

Under the present circumstances, citizens are preoccupied with their own social lives and relationship circles and have less time to conduct a thorough information search for products. Likewise, basic needs and necessities are prioritised as citizens are placing emphasis on survival rather than taking risks by spending more time in the marketplace and consuming nonessentials. A report by Business Monitor International (2011b) confirms the findings that Egyptians have reduced their time spent outdoors in the marketplace. Dining out during weekends was a popular feature for many Egyptian families in the past, but it has been heavily affected by the flux as citizens disposable incomes have dropped and security concerns have increased. Instability and insecurity concerns have not only contributed to a reduction in consumption, but have increased anxiety and worry amongst citizens. Thus, the information search carried out for a product is of secondary concern, whereas safety and security are primary ones. Locating the right price and exceptional quality is more important than conducting an in depth information search for products.

In contrast to past experiences, conspicuous consumption has been replaced by conservative consumption. For instance, luxury goods that were once chosen by middle and upper class citizens have seen a sizeable drop in sales and, even when affordable, citizens prefer to safeguard their consumption and spend their money on the daily essentials. As one participant noted: *'If I wanted more luxurious goods, I have stopped buying them. For example, if I wanted to buy a new car I would not* [in the present epoch]*'* (1). Moreover, consuming for conspicuous purposes no longer excites citizens who to date, have not felt any comfort or happiness in the marketplace by achieving regime change. Spending on unnecessary products and services does not appeal to citizens in the same way that it used to. On the other hand, participants noted how for some middle and upper class citizens, the revolution has not severely impacted on them and, for such citizens, consuming conspicuously is considered the norm. As explained in the following quote:

'I think for the high class it doesn't matter for them to have the revolution or not. There hasn't been a revolution for them because they are rich, they have their investments, and they are wealthy. I think they will use non-Egyptian products in all their lives such as clothes, cars and all of their life will be non-Egyptian.' (25)

Regardless of the flux, conspicuous consumption may have slowed down but not stopped completely as middle and upper class citizens have still shown the propensity to signpost their future with consumption, emulate their status via materialistic possessions and follow a global consumer culture. Conversely, citizens across the social classes have returned to the anchor of tradition or have at least tried to rekindle family ties. In the next subsection, future expectations regarding conservative vs. conspicuous consumption are put forward.

6.9.2 Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption: future expectations

Participants expect the trend of conservative consumption to continue into the future. Citizens look to navigate around the flux and use tradition and their beliefs towards the desirable in order to oversee a change in the level of flux. One participant explained the importance of conservative consumption for the future, especially since in the past and in the present epoch, citizens have leaned towards Marxism and leftist lifestyles:

'Hopefully people will grow to realise that they are being a bit too libertarian or too middle class on this by shopping in places and prioritising foreign products over so many accessible local products.' (26)

In interpreting the above quote, prospective attempts to initiate changes in flux are argued to be facilitated by movements towards supporting local consumption. Such a movement suggests a potential increase in ethnocentric tendencies. Regardless of the progression of change, citizens are anticipated to be agents of change and thus, they have the ability to shape the direction of consumption practices in the future. In addition, support for local consumption emphasises a trend towards conservative consumption and a return to tradition. The disintegration of conspicuous consumption is embedded within the notion that citizens no longer enjoy consuming excessively but want to act ethically in the interests of other social classes, particularly poorer segments of society who have suffered

under prior regimes. In the next subsection, the findings for conservative vs. conspicuous consumption are positioned within the current literature.

<u>6.9.3 Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature</u>

Egyptians have had to adapt to suit the flux conditions. In doing so, citizens have navigated around the marketplace by clinching onto tradition, reviving traditional cultural values and sharing a sense of ethical consciousness towards consumption. Due to the aforementioned implications of present experiences, citizens have followed the stream of conservative consumption. Very little attention has been directed to the type of consumption practice that consumers follow after periods of flux. To the author's knowledge, the closest segment of literature that can explain the conservative consumption stream is utilitarian consumption. In the literature review, utilitarian consumption pertained to the extent that consumers consume products for their benefit and nothing beyond serving the products' purpose (Babin et al., 1994; Bussiere, 2011; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Okada, 2005; Overby and Lee, 2006). The originality of this finding is grounded in the view that unlike utilitarian consumption, citizens do not look for the utility of the product. Rather, importance is placed on the necessity of the product. Similarly, citizens have returned to a conservative state of affairs by attempting to bring families and social circles closer together in a collectivistic manner. Coupled with a new found sense of identity, citizens have also used the anchor of tradition to advocate a sense of ethical consciousness towards poorer segments of society. The second stream of consumption is conspicuous consumption where citizens, particularly wealthier citizens, used to demonstrate their affluence by promoting their own status through materialistic possessions.

Conspicuous consumption may have slowed down but not stopped completely as middle and upper class citizens have still shown the propensity to signpost their future with consumption, emulate their status via materialistic possessions and follow a global consumer culture. This finding corresponds with that of Veblen (2009) who argued that consumers sought to emulate and compare their own status to others by displaying luxury possessions. On the other hand, Veblen also acknowledged that wasteful consumption can become a by-product of emulation when the desire to consume conspicuously exceeds expectations. The notion of wasteful consumption echoes the finding of lower and some

middle class citizens recognising the need for conservative consumption. Hence why participants argued that the occurrence of a revolution has minimally affected upper class citizens. Veblen articulated the notion of conspicuous consumption as the desire of the very wealthy to match things that others had in order to cement their place in society. Numerous scholars concurred with Veblen's view (Bourdieu, 1984; Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002; Migone, 2007; O'Cass and McEwen, 2004; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2002). Regardless of social class, citizens have been lured towards helping the local cause and have used conspicuous consumption in the form of local products in order to drive change. The integration of ethnocentrism and conspicuous consumption is currently missing in the marketing literature and as such, the positioning of this finding contradicts that of Veblen and contests that to denominate one's social standing or identity (Slater, 1997), Egyptians have turned local consumption into something of a conspicuous experience.

An alternative explanation for following conspicuous consumption via the use of local products is the rediscovery of citizens' identity and the attempt to escape the flux by trying local sites of consumption that symbolise *Egyptianism*. Thus, this stance is underpinned by the current literature (Marinov, 2007; Rice and Mossawi, 2002) as cultural and religious values have prevailed in the present epoch. Cultural values have steered the conspicuous consumption of local products by enticing citizens closer to tradition; while religious values have been used to reposition a new sense of Egyptian identity. As much as citizens have become more patriotic and rediscovered their identities, Egyptians still appear inclined to maintain a sense of modernity in their consumption practices by supporting global consumption but not as much as in the past. This finding is in agreement with Abaza's (2001; 2005; 2006) findings as Egyptians have preferred to demonstrate foreign products and services as much as possible because they were symbols of wealth, prestige and quality. In table 7 and 8, the pertinent themes that affect consumption practices in Egypt are compared according to past experiences, present experiences and future expectations. After illustrating the tables, chapter seven follows and the findings for Libya are presented.

Themes	Past (past experiences)	Present epoch (present experiences)	Future expectations
Consumption and flux	• Influence of globalisation led to a growing consumer culture. • Marketing activities used to promote change.	• Flux driven by consumption but also an outcome of it. • Citizens are attempting to fill a void by consuming.	• Further protests and demonstrations expected. • Preference for foreign consumption in order to lift local consumption.
Social classes & consumption	• Lower class consumed necessities, middle class enjoyed hybridised consumption and upper class enjoyed luxury lifestyles. • Large social class divide.	• Lower class citizens have worsened due to a lack of job opportunities and incomes. • Upper class citizens less buoyant because many were content with the past.	• Middle class expected to grow in the future. • Class convergence expected to continue.
Corruption & consumption	• Corruptive ties were common. • Lower and middle classes wanted greater transparency and equality in consumption practices.	• Segregated political streams. • Upper class have become more ethically conscious towards classes below them and members of society.	• Rise of the middle class is expected to see a decrease in the upper class. • Consumption is considered a driver in tackling corruption.
Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption	• Citizens felt safe consuming individually and in groups. • Strong collectivist community/ Family unit considered of high importance. • Younger generation adopted both western and traditional values.	• Flux preventing excessive spending on non-necessities and visits to friends and family. • Traditional marketplaces declining but bulk consumption purchases becoming more common.	• Retreat to tradition expected to continue. • Egyptians are spending less time outdoors but devote more leisure time to the family.
Religious values	• Varying degrees of religiosity. • Religion viewed in an egalitarian light. • Citizens contradicted fatalistic desires by calling for change.	• Religious values still very important in guiding citizens. • Religiously polarised groups have surfaced.	• Egyptians do not want to adopt western values wholeheartedly. • Religion should be a source but not the main source of rule for the country.

Table 7: Effect of themes of consumption practices in Egypt- Source: Author.

Themes	Past (past experiences)	Present epoch (present experiences)	Future expectations
Polarised communities & consumption	• Polarised communities were not common due to tightly defined boundaries by the state. • State censorship prevented civil disturbances taking place.	• Polarised communities have avoided shopping from opposing community districts. • Social surprises or hidden identities have caused segregated families.	• Diverse heterogeneous Egyptian personalities are expected to help tackle polarisations in society. • Given historic cultural encounters, new consumer cultures are anticipated to reduce polarisations.
Desired vs. desirable effects	• The regime used to dictate the desired by implementing tightly confined boundaries. • Egyptians had to materialistically praise regime status.	• Process of change has enabled citizens to advocate greater freedoms and implement the desirable. • Tightly confined boundaries have become more fluid.	• Desirable expected to help reduce flux. • Social surprises and hidden identities overshadowing the desirable and distorting the family units.
Consumer ethnocentrism	• Many citizens consumed foreign products because they were available in abundance. • Absence of regiocentricity • Concealment of Egyptian identity in the past.	• Rediscovered identity, patriotism and greater ethnocentric tendencies. • Revolution was also call for a new identity and sense of belonging.	• Egyptians are using consumption perhaps unintentionally, as a vehicle for steering change. • Support for the local cause predicted to decrease because of political uncertainty.
Country of origin effects	• Growing positive perceptions towards foreignness. • Western products favoured due to quality aspects.	• Citizens prepared to pay more for branded products manufactured outside Egypt. • COO of less concern with Egyptian products in foreign markets as traditional products cannot be substituted.	• Polycentric perceptions likely to skew consumption practices towards foreign consumption. • A strong focus on country of brand origin and country of manufacture.
Consumer Animosity	• Animosity towards a country or their products lasted for a specific period. • Widespread boycotts and demonstrations were uncommon.	• Strong hostilities towards Israel due to historical animosity. • Growing animosity towards Muslim brotherhood has contributed in segregated consumption.	• When there is high animosity, it is expected that citizens become more ethnocentric. • High animosity anticipated to increase segregated consumption.
Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption	• Lower class citizens advocated conservative consumption. Upper class consumed conspicuously. • Conspicuous consumption supported by acculturation.	• Citizens feel guilty for consuming due to polarisations in society. • Growing global consumer culture restricted due to the flux.	• Conservative consumption expected to continue in the future. • Conspicuous consumption is anticipated to further decline.

Table 8: Effect of themes of consumption practices in Egypt- Source: Author.

Chapter 7 Libya
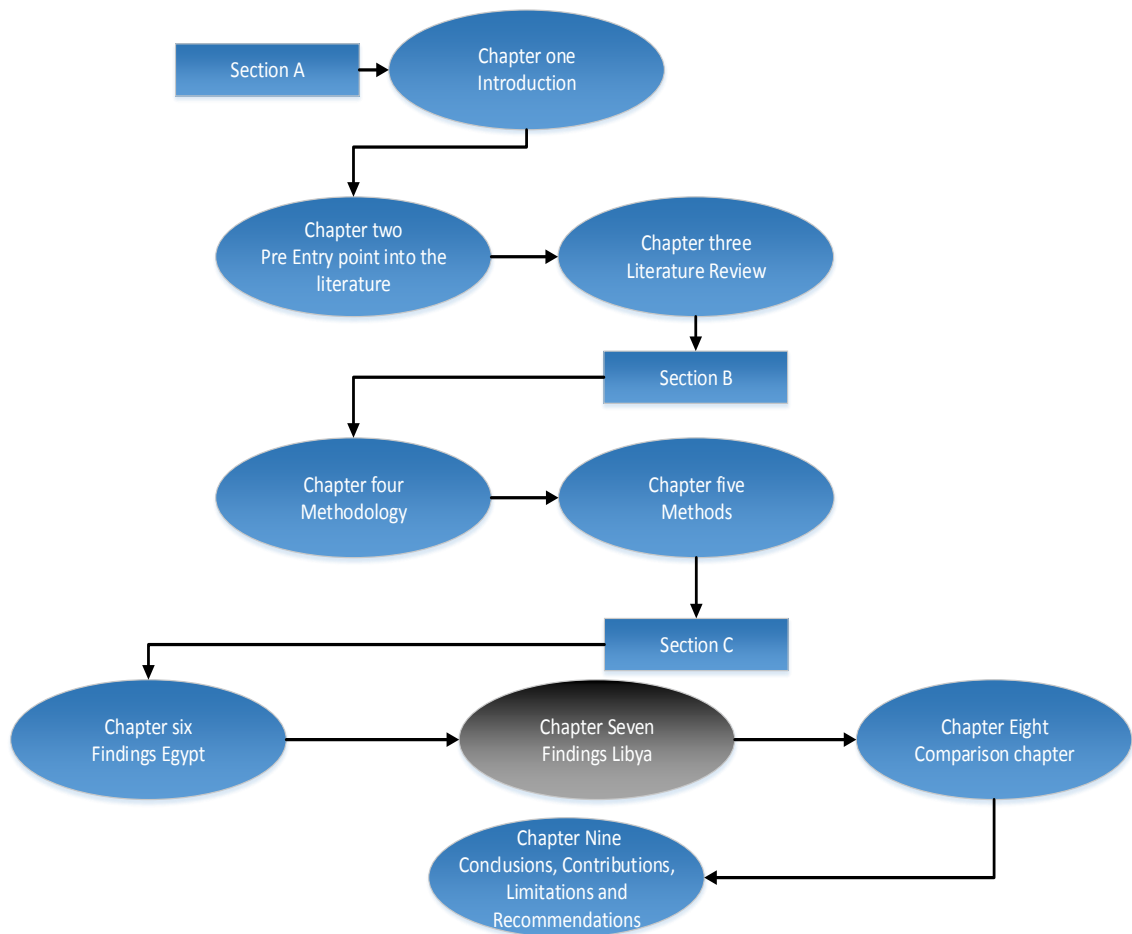
Figure 17: Route Map- The position of the current chapter in the thesis-Source: Author.

7.1 Introduction

The format of this chapter is identical to chapter six and each theme is structured according to past experiences, present experiences and future expectations. After each theme, the findings are positioned within the current marketing literature. Analogously, secondary data is used to reinforce the primary data findings. In the first section, which is presented next, past experiences, present experiences and future expectations pertaining to consumption and a state of flux are discussed.

7.2 State of flux

7.2.1 Consumption and flux: past experiences

To better appreciate the construction and spread of flux, it is necessary to give a brief history of Colonel Qaddafi. The former Libyan leader was tied to several major ethnic groups: *Oulad*, *Suleimans* and *Meghrahi*, which were mainly concentrated in the middle of Libya, based on Qaddafi's birthplace of Sirte (Lewis, 2011). Since United Nations (UN) sanctions were lifted in 2003, Qaddafi was adjudged to have tried to redeem his status and become accepted in the international community. Remedial steps were taken by the regime to move the country from a planned to a market based economy. The regime had a firm authoritarian grip on society and maintained a state of control, so civil conflicts were uncommon. Consequently, in the build up to the revolution, the state of flux may be interpreted as a combination of political autocracy, social inequalities and constraint on freedom of expression.

Economic sanctions from 1992 to 1999 restricted Libyans' consumption practices and choice of products and services. The free choice and the opportunity to choose different modes of consumption are almost taken for granted in the west. In contrast, Libyans had to venture abroad for job prospects, to obtain modern technology (Agnaia, 1997) and experience foreign consumer cultures through international travel or by studying/working abroad. Sanctions were lifted on the 12th September 2003 and gross domestic product (GDP) increased substantially, particularly in the country's oil and gas sectors. Technological advancements, particularly in the social media sphere alleviated social exchanges on a global level. Citizens were exposed to the internet, satellite and news which allowed Libyans to see '*how the world was living and what was happening outside the country*' (40). […] particularly since *'they* [Libyans] *were kind of growing more restless with how inequitable their lives were in Libya'* (39). Post sanctions, citizens had limited choices and modes of consumption. Little evidence suggested that the country was moving towards a market based economy that could provide different modes of consumption and give citizens freedom of choice in the marketplace. The planned economy mirrored communist practices. As underscored in the following quote:

> [the economy was] *'Totally nationalised, totally controlled by the government […] I mean the situation was very similar to any communist economy. His* [Qaddafi] *political ideology was very communist.'* (27)

Consumption practices in the past were heavily influenced by the political ideology of the old regime and therefore citizens had to consume within tightly defined boundaries. This is evidenced in the following quotes: *If you spoke out you disappeared* [...] *you couldn't even speak out with your close friends* (33). Another participant concurred:

> '[In the past] *we were subject to dictatorial slavery. The old regime wanted to control the people like slaved robots and they did not want them to be educated, didn't want Libyan society to learn because they felt that if society did expand their learning then the society would demand more rights in return. So they wanted to capture people's minds inside a tangara* [big pot used for making stews].*'* (38)

Interpreting the above quote leads to the view that Libyans had to operate and obey the old regime's political conditioning. Therefore, there was little opportunity for expression. Hence, the term *tangara* was metaphorically used by participant 38 to denote how citizens were trapped within a big pot with no way out. In relation to consumption practices, the political conditioning had a profound effect on citizens because they had to be cautious when making consumption choices in the marketplace. Political conditioning disguised citizens' perceptions for change and was underlined by the following quote:

> *'Under the old system we were often petrified to even breathe a word of our own reflections towards the government because we were living under the umbrella of fear.'* (27)

It was the element of fear and punishment that prevented citizens from speaking out for changes. As one participant stated:

> *'People were getting shot on the spot in the streets[...] when it was just one or two persons being executed in public people were like ah ok that's just them[...] when its random, if you lose your friend in a protest and go to his funeral, what are you going to do when you leave the funeral, go home?'* (27)

For flux to occur and bring about a revolutionary epoch, citizens had the collective motivation to call for change but other drivers such as social media, activist groups, internet bloggers and charity organisations were also important in bringing about change. A report commissioned by the strategic and international studies (CSIS) claimed that rebel groups used online platforms such as Google earth to target Qaddafi strongholds (Vira et al., 2011). The increased use of social media by citizens opened up a new stream

of consumption as information was disseminated to the masses. To an extent, the call for regime change was also a call for a change in consumption as citizens had pushed away from the tightly confined boundaries of the state to express their own needs and wants.

Another issue was that citizens were confined to only having short-term objectives and there was little long-term thinking as they were not encouraged to expand themselves. As witnessed in the following quotes:

> *'The previous regime did not encourage us to expand ourselves or to have any objectives for the future. If it wasn't for my father setting up the family business twenty years ago we would probably be struggling to survive. I have ten other brothers and one sister and the older ones are working in different divisions in the company. I am the marketing manager, my brother is HR manager, the other finance manager and so on [...] we lacked motivation during the old regime and we had to tread careful with government officials.'* (29)

> '[In the past] *there were no objectives, strategic plans, nobody had any real visions because all of us were hypnotised by the guy* [Qaddafi] *swinging his pendulum back and forth. We had to nod and obey the way he mapped out the country [...] he had us under his thumb the way he wanted. As a society you didn't own an individual voice and you didn't own any visions or goals for the future.* (42)

The above quotes are indicative that citizens were subject to strict political conditioning and individuals could not plan long-term objectives for the future. The Qaddafi regime had resisted extensive foreignness (i.e. attracting foreign companies), which explains why citizens lacked an appetite for enjoying consumption in the past. To illustrate the restrictions placed on foreignness, the English language was forbidden on public displays as one participant explained:

> *'English was locked in a dungeon and it is ironic because English goes hand in hand with globalisation [...] you can see the extent to which both businesses foreign and local, and also consumers were limited in their exposure to advertised information.'* (29)

Prohibition of written English extended to promotional information as adverts were only published in Arabic and citizens could not experience global branded adverts, which are

unanimously dotted around most streets in the west. The English language, taken for granted in many states across the globe was seen as one of the drivers of globalisation. Brands that contain English characters are also synonymous with a global consumer culture.

In summary, many factors contributed to the build-up of flux in the past including discontent with regime ideology, lack of freedom of expression and prohibition of the English language. The combination of these factors alongside a very youthful and technologically savvy demographic assisted in the making of a revolution. Irregular developments in a heavily regulated marketplace by the government meant that citizens suffered from a lack of free choice and could not make their own consumption decisions. In the next subsection, present experiences of consumption in a state of flux are discussed.

7.2.2 Consumption and flux: present experiences

In comparison to the past, present experiences suggest that citizens feel a sense of liberation. As exemplified in the following quote: '*Participants felt liberated* [following regime change] *and for the first time felt like human beings with a new found sense of belonging* [to the country]*'* (37). Historically, internet access opened the doors to the evolutionary (global) environment but has become of vast importance in the present epoch because citizens can express their own opinions of their own accord. Consequently, the notion of freedom of expression has attracted globalisation. Based on the premise of this argument, globalisation is refuted as a cause of the revolution but a by-product of it. From a different angle, looser state censorship has had a knock effect on the rise of globalisation. In the past, Libyans had already taken on new consumption practices to suit the call for changes. The issue of censorship is significant because it restricted citizens' ability to choose in the marketplace and they were forced to settle for what the state permitted. The change in censorship is reflected in the following quote:

> '*We can virtually fly around the world and back in seconds. We have so many stories to tell, so much grief to get off our chests and we can gratefully do that publicly […] and online at the same time.*' (28)

'*Fly around the world*' as a metaphor connotes the desire to explore uncharted territory or cultural modes of consumption outside Libya indicating that consumption practices have become hybridised and accepting of a global consumer culture. '*So much grief to get off our chests*' implies that citizens want to share their own thoughts with the outside

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world and experience what they have been missing out on. Consumption is seen as a means of filling a void in citizens' lives because they were not allowed to consume freely in the marketplace.

A further contention raised is that participants now feel liberated and this has been achieved to the extent that people are able to socialise with others unconcerned about who is watching or listening in to conversations. As underscored in the following quotes: '[In the past] *we were in a prison and now we have total freedom'* (34), while another stated:

> *'I now feel like a human being and I actually have human rights and belong to this country. I have an affiliation and a new found sense of belonging. Previously, we never used to believe or feel that we belonged here.'* (42)

Lifted restrictions on the English language have liberated consumption practices and the marketplace by providing more choice/s for citizens and exposed them to the global arena. Studies conducted in a state of stability subscribe to the idea that the rise of a consumer culture is only possible in a state of socio-political stability. The findings contradict this assumption and suggest that it is the nature of flux that is increasing Libyan consumers' desires and is causing transformations in consumption practices. Although consumption is important to the direction of change and as much as a new scope for consumption has been developed, citizens are also consuming to fill a void. This void relates to the constant punctuations upon society from socio-political issues such as political corruption, civil conflicts and cultural animosity between different social groups (e.g. tribal clans, Berbers and Bedouins).

Nevertheless, an attempt to fill a void exists as a means of emotional escapism from the worries of the current flux and as a way to capitalise on new found freedoms. As underscored in the following quote: *All this oppression and restrictions on our freedom made us want what we couldn't have. This is another reason why Libyan's have now gone consumer crazy* (30). Therefore, consumption can also be seen as a therapeutic mechanism but also a way of showing off new found freedoms. A key difference to the past is that Libyans have chosen to structure and sign post the future with products and possessions. As one participant explained:

> *'I have noticed that the whole chain of products coming into the country is changing. Goods are coming into the ports daily instead of monthly […] Libyans want to spend more now, they want to go out and buy foreign products and spend more time looking for them. Their whole patterns of*

buying are changing and they want to make a connection with real brands [in the past] *they were stuck with what they could get or fake brands and had no other choice but now real brands are coming in they can get the real products.'* (32)

Consequently, consumption practices have changed to reflect the demand for consumption. Compared to the past, tariffs on consumer products have now been decreased and this is reflected in the following quote:

'They [the government] *have simplified processes* [import duty] *substantially. I know because we have a carpet factory and import raw materials from the UK, Turkey, Mauritania and Tanzania. Custom costs were a lot higher* [in the past] *and involved a lengthy documentation process, [...] now goods are swimming into the country with ease. Even Arabic products that came in from neighbouring states were subject to customs duty [...] the old regime was just putting excessive custom duty's and sticking them in their own pockets.'* (29)

Interestingly, the phrase *'swimming'* is used to denote the influx of products coming into the country in the present epoch. Tripoli is strategically located surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea, so the phrase has a metaphorical inference of new consumption coming into the capital city. Comparisons made against the past are consistent with secondary data evidence. Euromonitor (2012c) claimed that imported goods are subject to a 4% service fee, while production and consumption tax went up to 50% for imported products and 2% for domestically produced goods. Exports have also increased in a bid to resume the oil sector and also to drive economic growth. If the present state of consumption is an accurate representation of the future, then citizens and the marketplace will continue to evolve, identities will be restructured and consumption practices will lean towards a global consumer culture. In the next subsection, future expectations relating to matters of consumption and flux are presented.

7.2.3 Consumption and flux: future expectations

Prospects for new consumption are underpinned by the following quote:

'We will have seen an economic boom [...] have a wealth of foreign and local companies, shops, services, better education and health systems and have so

much untapped potential that if we keep on the straight and narrow, there are no limits to what we can achieve.' (29)

In addition, participants also expect foreign firms to acknowledge citizens' needs and internationalise within the windows of punctuated equilibrium and amidst the instability and insecurity while an opportunity is presented:

'We can now invite foreign companies and brands to Libya because we are experiencing a once in a lifetime moment of opportunity and a timely transition period.' (42)

Regardless of the duration of ongoing flux, citizens still have needs and wants to be fulfilled. Opportunities for foreign consumption are possible because new modes of consumption are desired by Libyan citizens who want to experience something new. Globalisation is also influential in meeting citizens' expectations for future changes because it assists in advocating technology, infrastructural development and driving new consumption practices. The desire for consumption via foreign companies is clear. Indicative signs of a newly developing consumer culture in the country are grounded in the mentality to diversify and become accustomed with global consumption.

In the past, a further problem existed as there was an incomprehension of marketing activities because the old regime operated a predominantly supply and demand philosophy. As one participant stressed:

'Libya has been through a time warp in terms of marketing, putting its products on the map, putting tourism on the map and putting itself on the map.' (34)

The argument is that if firms do not acknowledge marketing activities, then how can they capitalise on changing consumption practices? An incomprehension of marketing activities is likely to push citizens to travel abroad to satisfy their needs just like many citizens did in the past. However, the findings contradict this assumption. Participants' desire for greater foreign activity in Libya suggests that marketing activities are very much integral to the trajectory of change. Based on the findings, a proposition can be made that defends the presence of marketing in flux environments. Comprehension of marketing activities may have been lacking in the past, but is becoming more prominent in the present and is predicted to do so in the future. There are signs that perceptions towards marketing are changing:

'Now products are flooding into the ports [Tripoli port] *like no tomorrow […]* [in the past] *even the foreign products that would come in were in small quantities and extremely difficult to find.'* (27)

On a theoretical basis, if globalisation initiated a state of flux, then the recognition of marketing practices is important to change especially as: *'goods are coming flooding through the major ports such as in Tripoli and Misrata and there is almost a whole catalogue of consumerism in the country'* (32). Therefore, greater attention is now being given to marketing practices at the consumer level, which indicates that Libyans are important agents within the scope of change and are the ones shaping the new marketplace. As a result of *'a whole catalogue of consumerism in the country'*, a new wave of consumption has emerged and given rise to new consumption practices. In the next subsection, the findings are positioned within the current literature.

7.2.4 Consumption and flux: positioning the findings within the current literature

Consumption and flux manifested frequently during the round of interviews and as such is identified as an emergent theme. To date, there is a paucity of studies that have discussed consumption in relation to flux or indeed a revolutionary epoch. Punctuated equilibrium (Gersick, 1991), as discussed in the literature review, corroborates the primary and secondary data because irregularities in the marketplace cause imbalances which make the direction of flux anything but linear. If the punctuated equilibrium is imagined as a flight of stairs, then within each step is a different epoch. Within new periods, punctuations have to occur. Hence, there is a sharp contrast in consumption practices compared to the past. As identified in the literature review, an issue that used to be problematic in Libya was the incomprehension of *marketing activities* (Burgess and Steenkamp, 2006; Osuagwu, 2006), as firms were driven by a supply and demand profit orientated philosophy. However, the ability to implement marketing activities is improving and is characterised by both the companies' desire to reach out to consumers but also the citizens who, as agents of change, are responsible for trying to reshape the marketplace and rebuild it with a plethora of consumption opportunities.

Citizens had always aspired to find freedom and oversee democratic transitions but were hesitant to challenge the regime for fear of being punished. Conversely, Qaddafi's regime attempted to contain outbursts of descent, maintain a state of control and have a firm grip on consumption practices. Under authoritarian regimes, the consumption practices of

citizens and the choices available were embedded within macro-level state structures, meaning that there was little room to manoeuvre or exercise any other consumer culture apart from the one imposed by the state. While holding onto sovereignty, authoritarian regimes contradicted revolutionary interference. This view is echoed by Goldstone (2011; 2014) who concurred that revolutions destroyed state sovereignty. Accumulating power within an inclusive hegemonic circle took priority and reduced the threat of mass protests and demonstrations. Goldstone also argued that uneven development, rising food prices, economic woes, wealth distribution were fuelled by political corruption and globalisation, thus contributing to the build-up of flux. Analogously, citizens have used consumption as a way to escape the flux and help make sense of the future. Until this point in the chapter, an analysis of consumption and flux has been given. Therefore, in the next section, an attempt is made to understand consumer segmentation and how consumption practices have been affected by different categories of segmentation.

7.3 Consumer segmentation and consumption practices

7.3.1 Social classes and consumption: past experiences

In the past, a three tier social class structure was existed and comprised of lower, middle and upper class. Most of the wealthy upper class citizens were members of the old Qaddafi regime or linked to them. As one participant articulated:

> *'The social classes were split into three categories. These were the rich diamonds, middle class and the lower class. Many of the rich diamonds were members of the old regime or very rich figures that had relationships or links with the government. The middle class layer had a stable job, a decent sized home, family and have enough income to put food on the table and go out shopping each weekend. The lower class generally struggled and often had low paid jobs and very low incomes.'* (31)

The political conditioning constrained lower and middle class citizens because only members of society that shared ties with the regime incurred preferential treatment. As society was confined within tightly defined boundaries, ordinary lower and middle class citizens were cautious about revealing their savings or personal incomes for fear of extra regime tax levies. Similarly, the consumption of expensive products and services was unsafe because it indicated personal wealth and status. Citizens had to be careful in their

consumption practices in order to not attract unwanted attention from regime figureheads. One participant provided an example of social class consumption in the past:

> *'If you are under a shadow of oppression and only those at the top have money*
> *to spend, then of course you will only go for products that are a necessity.'*
> (33)

Participants' narratives collectively agreed that oppression was reflected through the old regime's dividing of the social classes. Consequently, citizens had no other alternative but to adapt to the social class system.

Another issue is that while pro supporters of the revolution and rebel fighters were battling to overthrow the regime, ordinary citizens had to protect their neighbourhoods and districts. Some participants even carried weaponry as one participant stated: *'The people needed protection during the fighting. You will see that each house in Libya will have at least one or two guns'* (42). A recognisable change occurred during the armed conflict because the rich elite, who used to freely demonstrate their consumption were forced to flee. Therefore, many of the lower and middle class converged for the purposes of embracing change. Moreover, consumption usually took place within the family environment because of the armed conflict.

In summary, the disintegration of the rich elite allowed the lower and middle class to begin experiencing consumption in a new light. Although the flux in the marketplace prevented much consumption outdoors, citizens were able to build family ties and unite together to see through change. In the next subsection, present experiences in relation to social classes and consumption are discussed.

7.3.2 Social classes and consumption: present experiences

The convergence of the lower and middle social classes has led to an increase in the level of middle class, which has resulted in less societal disproportion and greater emphasis on the equal distribution of wealth. As captured in the following quote: *'The majority of Libyan people are middle class now'* (30). A decline in upper class citizens is relative to the regime change because the old ruling power dominated the upper class hierarchy. Moreover, many affiliated members of the old regime and rich elite have been exposed. As one participant told:

'The middle class have started to shift more towards a new level of upper middle class. This is because after the old regime crumbled, many of their affiliates were exposed, sent on law trials or expelled from their businesses on the grounds of corruption [...] At the same time many working salaries have increased by more than 100%.' (31)

During Qaddafi's reign, driving an upmarket car was dangerous because it attracted attention from Qaddafi's associates. BMW was reserved for the old regime, Mercedes was frowned upon because Qaddafi associated it with capitalism, while Audi was considered for ministers and government head figures. Consequently, little effort was put into advertising and promotion as only the rich elite could afford such vehicles and ordinary citizens would not purchase them for fear of attracting unwanted attention from the regime. However, in the present epoch, middle class consumption has become a showcase of status. The change in social classes consumption practices is underscored by the following quote: *'Libyan consumers are less utilitarian and are spending more lavishly on consumer goods than they used to'* (27), meaning that consumption practices are undergoing radical transformations to reflect the desires of citizens. A report by Libya Herald (a new news agency established following the revolutions and the first to publish in English) claimed that car manufacturers such as Toyota and Geely have entered the marketplace. Others like BMW, Audi and Mercedes have also set up showrooms in the capital. Furthermore, Ali Muttawa, the managing director of Oasis Motors BMW Libya, concurred that consumption has changed on a whole new level. The complete metamorphosis in Libyan consumer culture has allowed consumption practices to adapt to the new wave of consumption. For instance, ordinary Libyans are now the primary customers and deciders of their own choice of branded cars. The transformation is causing citizens to materialistically experience what was previously prohibited (Libya Herald, 2013b).

Participants also pointed out that *'Libyans have gone crazy for foreign brands'* (40). Secondary data affirms the participants' views because there has been a rise in disposable income as a result of a 250% increase in state sector wages, concessionary benefits to revolutionary fighters, family pay-outs and a rise in child benefit payments (Libya Herald, 2013A). Members affiliated with the old regime have seen their finances decrease. Such citizens were considered the top niche demographic during Qaddafi's time in power. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that there is a relationship between a rise in salaries and benefit pay-outs and new found modes of consumption. Without much spending

power, citizens would not be able to actualise their desires. Therefore, the increase in disposable income has heavily assisted the transitioning of consumption practices and provided citizens with greater choice in the marketplace. As a result of political reforms and new found freedoms, citizens have less motivation for concealing their finances and publicly illustrate their social status by spending profusely on products and services. In the next subsection, future expectations pertaining to social classes and consumption are documented.

7.3.3 Social classes and consumption: future expectations

The desire to consume is argued to be reconstructing self-image congruence because Libyans wish to be perceived differently in society and demonstrate a change in their consumer identities. Consumer identities in this context refer to the extent to which consumption is steered by the rediscovery of patriotism. The identity displacement in the past is being substituted with a rediscovered identity, which is important because citizens now attribute their identity alongside earned salaries. Although the social class system is anticipated to stay intact, citizens are now able to project their own aspirations for the future and consume according to their own disposable incomes.

A further point is that participants expect foreign businesses to recruit local Libyans and particularly young cohorts (those who called for employment reforms in the call for change). Young segments of society were one of the main drivers behind the revolution and have contributed to the birth of a new consumer culture. However, the findings also suggest that the flux is accelerating the emergence of a new consumer culture even in the midst of political uncertainty and instability. The convergence of the social classes is also expected to support consumer segments which are able to freely articulate their own consumption practices. In the next subsection, the findings for social classes and consumption are positioned within the current literature.

7.3.4 Social classes and consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

Social classes and consumption was identified as an emergent theme and was mentioned repeatedly during the round of interviews. In addition, the findings supplement a growing literature on the structure of social classes in the ME (Al-Sayyid, 1993; Shechter, 2008a; Singerman, 2006). However, previous literature tended to take a sociological stance and

has failed to adequately address how social classes affect consumption practices, particularly following a revolutionary episode. Moreover the findings for this theme demonstrate the change in the state of different social classes' consumption practices since regime change. The desire to consume in line with self-image congruence complements the findings of Jamal et al. (2001). It is the new sense of having and being as well as the ability to relate with other social classes that is reshaping Libyan consumption practices. Likewise, citizens' consumer identities have changed and they are able to project themselves differently in the present epoch. Citizens are aligning their own salaries with consumption and using it as a benchmark to signify their own wealth. To date, forms of market segmentation have received scant attention in the ME, particularly in Libya (Ahmida, 2012). Consequently, the demise of the rich elite in the present epoch has allowed for the convergence of the social classes and permitted more fluid consumption practices. Fluid in this sense refers to the extent that consumption practices can be flexibility projected in the marketplace. Present experiences suggest that the dispersal of new identities and the ability to choose is motivating a multiplicity of consumption opportunities for citizens. In the past, many of the rich elite were associated with corruption and received preferential treatment because of nepotistic ties with the old regime. Therefore, in the next section, the theme of corruption and consumption is discussed.

7.4 Corruption and consumption: past experiences

In the past, corruption was rife as regime figureheads controlled many enterprises and managed the country's finances within a specific group of loyal regime members. In the past decade, Libya's oil exports gradually rose and by the eve of the revolution made up 95% of the country's exports. Oil reserves were adjudged to have been churned by the Qaddafi regime instead of:

> *'Improving the roads, improving infrastructures, foreign direct investment,*
> *education, making the health systems better, regulatory laws and regulations.*
> *All these things were either lacking or did not exist.'* (29)

The neglect for such issues illustrates that citizens needed basic necessities and the improvement of public services. Wealth derived from oil came under scrutiny in the call for change as citizens contested why excess oil revenues had been absorbed by the old Qaddafi regime members instead of being used to enhance basic services such as health,

infrastructure and education. In relation to consumption, the mass accumulation of wealth enabled the rich elite to dictate citizens' consumption practices and choose what was available in the marketplace. For instance, as the English language was banned in advertisements, citizens could not witness any global brands which were commonplace in many developed societies. As one participant explained:

> *'If you talk about advertising, then it was pretty much corrupt. Many things were corrupt in Libya but advertising was one of them. Qaddafi only used to allow signs to be printed in Arabic. People were not allowed to be used in advertisements and the signs were not allowed to contain any English letters.'*
> (34)

Banning the English language affected severely consumption practices as Libyans could not feel part of a global consumer culture or actualise on global brands seen on pan-Arab satellite TV without travelling abroad. Therefore, there were growing tensions towards corruption and consumption, which motivated Libyans further to call for change. For several decades, Libyans had got used to seeing the rich elite consume materialistically but there was little that citizens could do in response for fear of being punished. Citizens had grown restless of the widespread corruption in the country and this issue was addressed through the people's call for change. The rich elite had surpassed the classes below them and preserved their hegemonic status by way of authoritarian rule. Consequently, citizens wanted to see a change in equality. Widespread corruption affected citizens' social exchanges, particularly since citizens were afraid to converse with one another for fear that someone from the Qaddafi regime would be listening in to their conversation. In the next subsection, present experiences with regards to corruption and consumption are covered.

7.4.1 Corruption and consumption: present experiences

The desire for greater equality in consumption practices is grounded in the present experiences of Libyan citizens. The fact that specific cars for example such as BMW, Audi and Mercedes were reserved for specific members of the old regime concerned citizens as they could not emulate or promote their own social standing. Similarly, the issue of *wasta* was directly linked with corruption. This was because regime members used to recruit employees into businesses and government institutions based on nepotistic ties. The contrast in perceptions towards corruption is identified in the following quote:

Wasta is evident in all Arab societies […] [in the past] *there was a lot of corruption. There still* [present epoch] *is a lot of corruption but at least now the old rats* [old regime] *have been taken care of […] wasta will still remain but now people have more rights and it is less likely that people will get jobs based on who they know. However, wasta is not always bad and can lead to great partnerships, networks or expansion of networks. It* [wasta] *is implanted into our way of life and I don't think that it will go away. Think of it as a culture rather than a threat.* (36)

In interpreting the above quote, efforts to reduce the level of corruption in the past were necessary in order to redevelop the marketplace. The acknowledgement of *wasta* as a threat to consumption in the present epoch is apparent when there is unethical consumption or the preservation of wealth within a particular niche (such as the rich elite). Furthermore, the evidence suggests that citizens have tried to achieve a sense of equality with regards to consumption and this is why citizens are no longer afraid or motivated to conceal their own consumption practices. Under the old regime, citizens were coerced into following orders from the ruling power and there was little motivation to consume or demonstrate consumption practices. However, in the present epoch, citizens now have the ability to choose and it is this flexibility in choosing that has reconfigured Libyans mind-sets and allowed them to take part in social exchanges in the marketplace. The act of conversing with one another with less restriction has also had an effect on the state of *wasta* relations. Perhaps this is why participants view *wasta* as a positive concept and argue that it is embedded within Libyan culture. The effects of positive *wasta* relations have become increasingly evident as citizens look to break the corruption mould and navigate around the flux by taking part in consumption activities. For instance, the idea of particular cars being associated with particular regime officials is no longer an issue as citizens now have the opportunity to purchase the car brand of their choice. This is underpinned in the following quote:

'I have a BMW car and now because of the increased salaries and profits from the factory and I have sold it and bought a more expensive Mercedes 4x4.' (32)

The difference is that Libyans are now at liberty to choose their own brand of car and can consume by choice rather than by force. In the next subsection, future expectations with respect to corruption and consumption are brought forward.

7.4.2 Corruption and consumption: future expectations

Social classes are very much interlinked with corruption. The decline of the rich elite is leading to the rise of the middle class. This is underscored in the following quote*:*

> *'You can attribute the level of corruption declining with the level of middle class rising because many members of the rich elite have vanished or had their assets stripped away.'* (32)

The above quote suggests that efforts are being made to tackle corruption as consumption practices are becoming more transparent than before regime change.

The theme of corruption and consumption is important to consumption practices because in the past, citizens were subject to forced consumption practices under the old regime. However, citizens' expectations now personify a complete shift in corruptive practices and consumption. In effect, the revolution has allowed citizens to become more aware of the dangers of corruption and excessive *wasta*. At the same time citizens are eager to demonstrate their own consumption practices and this is evidenced through ongoing social exchanges and the presentation of consumption symbols that were previously not possible. In the next subsection, the findings for corruption and consumption are positioned within the current literature.

7.4.3 Corruption and consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

The reformation of the social classes and citizens' ethical desires have impacted on the level of corruption in the present epoch. Consumption has been identified as a way to tackle corruption because it has allowed citizens to showcase their own consumption practices in the marketplace, something that used to be concealed under the old regime. The collectivistic desire to be part of a global consumer culture and the opportunity to choose is indicative of citizens' efforts towards redeveloping the marketplace. These findings build on the current literature (Hashemi, 2011; Sakbani, 2011) which discussed corruption from a political stance. Scant attention has been given to corruption and consumption. Even less attention has been given to consumption in the Libyan context. Therefore the theme of corruption and consumption serves as an emergent theme which can be positioned within the current literature (Chandler and Graham, 2010; de Monthoux, 1977; Kennett and Matthews, 2008; Yuksel, 2012). A key aspect supporting the reduction

of corruption is an ethical view towards 'wasta' because in the past, nepotistic ties were prominent and as such, the rich elite had exclusive consumption circles; whereas in the present epoch, citizens are more aware of each other's consumption practices and can criticise the marketplace. In the next section the theme of cultural values is discussed. Cultural values are integral to Libyans' consumption practices because they help guide consumption choices in the marketplace.

7.5 Cultural values

7.5.1 Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption (family buying units): past experiences

Historically, Tripoli has been subject to colonialism such as by the Italians and Ottoman Turks. Libyans who had disposable income to spend used to regularly visit Italy in groups or with their families to buy Italian products because they had money, the goods available in Libya did not satisfy consumer needs and regime corruption prevented citizens from publicising their own consumption practices. Italian products signified prestige and quality. According to the participants, post-colonial relationships with Italy facilitated inter-cultural relations between the two countries and were reasons for citizens favouring Italian products and services. As one participant revealed:

> *'I think [...] Libyan people like to buy Italian goods because we were occupied by the Italians for thirty three years and we still have aspects from the Italian culture and Italian foods.'* (40)

Colonialism is important for understanding changing consumption practices because consumption practices have been culturally guided by colonial interference over time. For example, similarities were noticed between Libyans and Italians' consumption of Italian foods and are illustrated by the growing number of pizza and pasta houses around Tripoli. Local language is also diluted with Italian words. Historical ties and similarities were not only shared with Italy, but also with Turkey. As articulated by a Libyan participant:

> *'We have long historical relations with Turkey from the Ottoman times and similar cultural values. Some acts of behaviour* [consumption amongst Libyans] *[...] can be attributed to those of Turkish citizens.'* (27)

Interpreting the above quote is grounded in the view that Turkish and Libyan citizens are culturally closer because of common religious Islamic ties, cultural values and close geographical proximity.

Diverse ethnic groups and around 200 tribes make up Libya's population and are representative of a very heterogeneous culture. The largest ethnic minorities are Arabs, seconded by Berbers. However, Berbers amongst other tribal groups were frowned upon by Qaddafi because such minorities did not fit in with the old regime's pan-Arabist ideology as the regime wanted to eliminate any competitive ruling power. One of the biggest Arab tribes in Libya is *Warfalla* with over one million followers, seconded by *Magarha* (Lacher, 2011). Other minorities include *Warshfanna*, *Amazight*, *Tibu*, *Touareg* and *Qaddadfa*, which as the name suggests is the tribe that former leader Qaddafi belonged to. The main tribal clans are highlighted in a geographical map below:
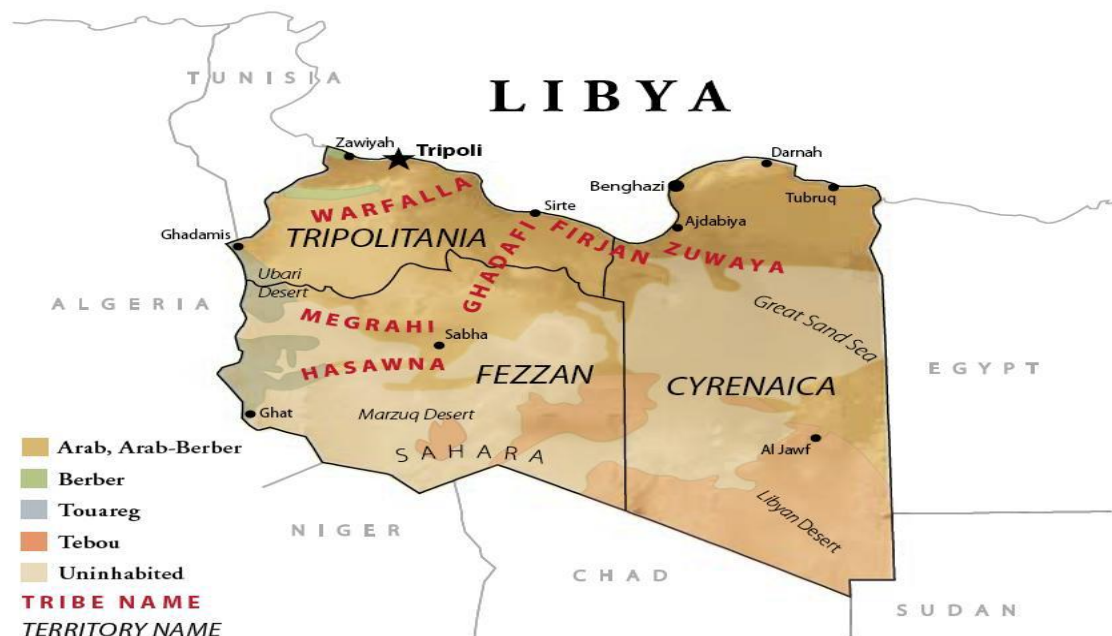
Figure 18: Map of Libyan Tribal regions- Source: ARC (2013).

Given the diverse ethnic minorities in Libya and the closely knitted collectivist community, there was little opportunity to consume individualistically. On the other hand, members of the regime could afford to consume individually and show off their status via luxury products and services. Conversely, ordinary Libyan citizens had to consume with caution and usually engaged in consumption as a family unit. Due to close family ties, Libyans have traditionally followed the consensus of the wider group. Perhaps this explains why citizens were reluctant to abandon their families amidst the armed conflict. Another explanation for the close collectivist consumption practices of Libyans during

the revolution is because many citizens did not believe that change could be achieved. As one participant expressed:

> *'Some people thought that if you have food, drink and you go about your daily life; there is no point to have any changes [...] people just wanted to get on with their lives. But now there is an opportunity which embodies a collectivist society such as ours. Collectivist societies see each other and collaborate to start a movement today.'* (41)

As indicated in the above quote, the collectivistic nature of the citizens enabled them to cope with their daily lives throughout regime change. As much as close collectivistic ties were apparent in the past, consumption practices in the present have become more individualistic. Therefore, in the next subsection, present experiences of individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption are discussed.

7.5.2 Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption (family buying units): present experiences

In comparison to the past, present experiences suggest that foreign consumption has increased substantially. On a collective level, there has also been an increase in family buying units because of new product offerings in the marketplace. As captured in the following quote:

> *'My lifestyle has changed and so too has my family's. We are more cohesive now as a family when we go shopping [...] we spend more time in the shops to see what is on offer. I now spend around $300 a month more than what I used to on consumable goods [...] that gives you an indication of how my lifestyle has changed.'* (29)

The increase in disposable income appears to be contributing to a change in family consumption. Citizens used to be accustomed to a particular way of living and consumption practices were directed by the state. On the contrary, citizens are now free to choose their own consumption practices in an individualistic manner. As one participant stated:

> *'Many Libyan's are still shocked by what has happened and it* [revolution] *has changed their lives forever [...] once you get accustomed to a particular routine, why would you want to change it when you can't see any better option*

[…] I don't think Qaddafi would have lasted a single second in any western country […] because society is full of independent individuals, whereas in a collectivist society like ours we always followed what the majority of the group dictated. In America or European countries like the UK and France your opinion can override the group decisions like getting married, you are free to choose who you want.' (30)

In interpreting the above quote, it would seem that Libyans are trying to achieve a balance between individualistic and collectivistic consumption. On one hand, Libyans recognise the importance of tradition and maintaining ties in the family unit. On the other, Libyans also want to become individualistic in terms of expressing their own individual choices in the marketplace. Tribal ties and allegiances are still considered to be important and citizens are not prepared to compromise their cultural values for the sake of foreign consumption. Importantly, the findings not only represent a shift in cultural values but also citizens who demand new modes of consumption on a social, recreational, cultural and educational level. In the next subsection, future expectations towards individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption are given.

7.5.3 Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption (family buying units): future expectations

Participants expect the marketplace to become inundated with foreign consumption as Libyans look to capitalise on new found freedoms and express their consumption choices. In fact, citizens are leaning towards individualistic lifestyles by spending on foreign consumption. In contrast to the past, citizens are experiencing consumption in a way which was not possible because foreign products were restricted under Qaddafi as underscored in the following quote:

'There has definitely been a gigantic increase in spending. Obviously with an increase in income comes an increase in spending. I haven't seen any significant changes in the business environment as far as international companies are concerned [but] *Libyans now long for foreign products and even if they are not currently obtainable in Libya they will jet off abroad and purchase them and bring back a sack full of western treats.'* (27)

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Restraints on consumption in the past prevented multi-modes of consumption and compressed the marketplace into a conservative environment. Colonial Italian and Turkish rule modified social interactions to an extent and brought their own influences, but only left artificial imprints on society because Libyans were reluctant to have their cultural values compromised. However, colonial rule has also had implications for present and future expectations. As underscored in the following quote:

> *'There are some like the Italian culture that we can't break away from and admire a lot because of historical ties with the country. That is why we love Italian made shoes, Italian fashion brands, Italian foods and this is reflected by the number of Italian clothes shops* [not all original] *we have in Libya and Italian restaurants.'* (40)

Based on citizens' expectations for the future, it would seem that colonial influences are becoming more important in the present epoch and may do so in the future. As much as citizens are trending towards individualistic lifestyles, the element of tradition pulls citizens towards collectivistic consumption such as shopping in family units. In the next subsection, the findings regarding individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption are positioned within the current literature.

7.5.4 Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

The importance of tradition complements the view of Obeidi (2001) who found that religion and family are the most significant elements of Libyan cultural values. To an extent, the social status of the family is almost pursued as a materialistic objective and has not changed since regime change. Pressures from the family encourage citizens to go abroad and find work, get a western education with an expectation to eventually return and start a new family or support the existing one in a collectivist manner. This finding is in agreement with Barakat (1993), who argued that there is a moral expectation that younger Libyan family members support the older ones later in life. Consequently, family loyalty still plays a big role as the achievements or failures of one family member affect the whole family unit. Religious values are synonymous with cultural values and are obtained through societal interaction. Contradicting Obeidi, the findings demonstrate that the changing consumption practices may be conflicting with religious and cultural values

because of an emphasis on a global consumer culture and the move towards individualistic lifestyles in the marketplace. Thus, a threat is posed to the collectivistic bond that ties families and communities together. The argument is that the greater the exposure to foreign consumption, the more probable it is that Libyans are in danger of maintaining their cultural values. Nevertheless, the individual tapestry of Libyan consumption practices are woven of threads sown by the life processes of consumption and are linked to the past and shaped by the present and the future. In the current state of flux, they seem to reflect an individualistic status but when it comes to the family, the loyalty bond between family members is rarely compromised.

Traditionally, Libyans have been collectively united and influenced by family and peers, particularly when making consumption choices (Al-Nouri, 1995). Despite regime change, family consumption practices have become more visible as families enjoy greater social time together outdoors, but family loyalty will nearly always outstrip social class and regime change. Hofstede and Hall's cultural distinctions were criticised in the literature review and are not useful in explaining changing consumption practices because the former author brackets the Arab countries together and the latter assumes only two context based cultures (high or low) and fails to address different sub-levels of each. Alternatively, present experiences have united citizens together and made them collectivistic in terms of demanding further changes in consumption. The multi-ethnic heterogeneous composition of Libya also contradicts Hofstede's unified cultural dimensions. Conversely, the close collectivist family ties complement Hofstede's analogy of the Arab states but his view may not be compatible in the present epoch, particularly since citizens are shifting between individualistic and collectivistic consumption practices. In the next section, the theme of religious values is discussed.

7.6 Religious Values

7.6.1 Religious values: past experiences

In the past, Libyan citizens used religious values as a means of guidance in everyday life and also in the marketplace. Religion was embedded within Libyan cultural values. Hence, the combination of the two was influential in steering Libyan consumption practices. For instance, women used to *typically dress in traditional Libyan clothes* (36). Although strict Islamic Sharia was deployed under Qaddafi, his personal ideologies (advocated within

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his 'green book' which contained the core principles of how citizens should behave and what is permitted) were used alongside notions of religion. As one participant explained:

'Qaddafi did not want Libyans to expand their knowledge and spread it around to others because that would result in people thinking more and sharing ideas. Sharing ideas might expose you to non Qaddafi like values and so you would stay away from his teachings and his green book [...] people had to censor their words when it came to references whether indirect or direct to the old regime. (41)

While citizens were growing restless with the old regime's oppressive rule, there were no concerns about their religious values. In fact, religious values guided citizens to hope and wish for a better future. Citizens were also affected by fatalism, which was deep rooted in religious values and believed that God determined an individual's destiny. Perhaps this is another reason why citizens were hesitant to challenge the status quo in the lead up to the revolution. In the next subsection, the present experiences of religious values are discussed.

7.6.2 Religious values: present experiences

In comparison to the past, Libyan participants possess an egalitarian view of society and are trying to maintain a secular society, keep religion away from the political and encourage modernity. One of the challenges Libyans are facing at present is the extent of managing western consumption alongside tradition. Religious values are ingrained within tradition and therefore, it is difficult to separate the two. Thus, citizens are faced with several challenges: to abandon the traditional sacred values (religious, social and cultural), to compromise such values and adopt westernised consumption practices, to merge traditional and western consumption practices together, to become acculturated or to seek comfort in religious fundamentalism (Sandikci and Jafari, 2013). The importance of religious values to present Libyan consumption practices is demonstrated by citizens' desires to not adopt western values wholeheartedly. As captured in the following quote:

I have always enjoyed purchasing western fashions. Even for headscarf's, I buy branded ones like Burberry and Louis Vuitton. Foods both western such as burgers, fries, pasta dishes and so forth and Arabic dishes have played a central role in my diet [...] I feel like I have the best of both worlds. I have always tried to remain close to my cultural roots and follow my religion the

way I know how. I know a lot of people become exposed to western societies and often lapse into a swamp of western ideals and norms [...] when they forget where they came from and who their parents are, then that is what is worrying. (30)

In interpreting the quote above, it would seem that Libyans are prepared to consume western brands but integrate them within their own religious values. The mentioning of a Burberry and Louis Vuitton headscarf emphasises the hybridisation of present Libyan consumption practices. On the other hand, Libyans also pointed out the dangers of becoming over receptive to western consumption and argued that it is affecting traditional values. One participant illustrated the dangers of compromising traditional values:

'Now they [Libyan women] *dress like European women or they combine the two styles with each other like women in the Gulf. You see women in the UAE* [United Arab Emirates] *for example wearing the abaya* [traditional black dress] *and beneath they will have t-shirts, dresses, shorts, skirts and so on). They are trying to maintain their traditions whilst accepting western dress codes at the same time [...] if she is trying to cover her hair for religious reasons, why is her hair dangling from one half of her head?* (36)

Inferences made in the quote above indicate that western and traditional values can sometimes contradict each other, particularly when citizens try and hybridise the two together. On the other hand, the combination of traditional and western dress codes suggests acculturation. It is a sense of acculturation that Libyans are trying to achieve. In the past, citizens used to go abroad to bring back foreign products because they were not widely available in the country. However, at present, citizens are keen to strike a balance between western consumption and maintaining tradition. As has already been noted, there are aspects such as honour and reputation that cannot be revoked. It is the acceptance of acculturation in consumption practices that allows citizens to choose their consumption practices and navigate around the marketplace by upholding traditional values. For instance, Libyans are keen to overspend on the latest foreign gadgets such as Ipod's and Iphone's, yet they are not prepared to compromise on traditional rituals such as weekly Friday gatherings with the family.

Another point is that the forces of globalisation have relayed global consumer messages to Libyan citizens both in the past and in the present and have threatened religious values

to an extent because citizens do not want to break away from tradition. This view is supported by the following quote: *'Maybe it is because we are exposed to consumer messages from the west, […] because we feel we have to have what they do'* (41). The interpretation of consuming messages from the west is reminiscent of the spread of global consumer cultures (Jafari et al., 2012; Karababa, 2012a; 2012b). Partial marketplace developments and exposure to foreignness during Qaddafi's era only exacerbated aspirations for changes in the country. Citizens never refused foreignness but under the previous political conditions, the rapprochement between government and citizens was mismatched. Consequently, citizens are facing a dilemma with regards to integrating western consumption alongside traditional and religious values. In the next subsection, participants' future expectations are discussed.

7.6.3 Religious values: future expectations

In terms of future expectations, participants expressed their wishes for religion to be separated away from the state. That is to say that religion should remain a private part of citizens' lives and not part of governing rule. As one participant stated:

> *'For me religion should be followed but not the source of following […] we should embrace religion but not allow it to dictate our rules and regulations. Religion has its place within your own heart and soul, anything outside that screams disputes and violence.'* (31)

Future expectations appear to mirror present experiences as citizens want to separate religion from the state but still try to maintain a sense of equilibrium with regards to tradition. As explained in the following quote:

> *'I do not want Libya to become a completely sharia ruled state but at the same time I do not want it to become too liberal either. We are not a western country and we never have been so we should try and maintain our morals and traditions and achieve some kind of balance between the way we behave and act in society and make sure that it reflects our history.'* (32)

However, participants are also concerned that some Libyans might be drawn towards hybridised consumption practices that could compromise tradition and religious values. As one participant commented:

'We are not Dubai and we are not Afghanistan either, we would love to become a growing consumerist society but we do not want to copy the UAE and damage our cultural roots and in effect contradict ourselves [...] a lot of people there are confused, you see a woman wearing a headscarf for fashion rather than religion, you'll see a mosque on the same street and just opposite it is a nightclub. There is so much hypocrisy. I'm not saying do not embrace other cultures, but do so without forgetting your own. My culture is no better than any other culture and vice-versa.' (35).

Similarly, the value of consuming foreign products is grounded in the view that Libyans were denied the opportunity in the past and so now they want to be able to experience what they have been missing out on. One participant explained how Libyans do not wish to be exactly like westerners. Instead, they want to be able to have the same consumption opportunities as consumers in western societies.

'There has been a major change in the way that people perceive foreign products now compared to before [in the past] *and this shows from their buying habits. It is almost like wanting something or dreaming of it your whole life and now the dream is becoming reality. We want foreign products and businesses to help expand and develop our country. We do not want to be just like westerners but have the same things that they do and I think that is why Libyans have gone mad now with buying foreign consumer products.'*
(30)

An issue that may help facilitate the movement of foreign consumption in the country is that there is the perception of western hegemony. As addressed in the following quote:

'There is still an orientalist view even amongst Arabs towards themselves. We always look at the west as being the leader, so we are still holding onto that mentality.' (34)

The quote above would seem to imply that there is an absence of future vision amongst Libyan citizens, which means that reliance is placed on western hegemony to drive change. For some participants, a move towards western values would increase certainty and stability as western values are widely known and boundaries are familiar. With this otherness, comes the *sacralization* of consumption. On the contrary, a total move towards western values could damage traditional Libyan values. Indications are that this is

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unlikely to happen as Libyans do not want western values to take over and because religious values have the capacity to overpower other values. Therefore, it is implied that religious values are firmly grounded within Libyan culture. In the next subsection the findings for religious values are positioned within the current literature.

7.6.4 Religious values: positioning the findings within the current literature

The presence of religious values was found to be integral to the production of new consumption practices. Since the alleged coup d'état by Qaddafi in 1969, attempts were made by the regime to embed Islamic values within the social system (e.g. the prohibited sale of alcohol or pork in marketplaces) (El-Fathaly et al., 1980). Due to governmental measures to impose religious values, consumption was still restricted because of embargoes on foreign products and services. There is a strong interaction between religious values and consumer culture as continuous spiritual (Islamic) beliefs serve as moral principles to abide by in the marketplace although the level of religiosity differs across different states. Western secularism is represented by countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt, while strong Islamic governance is represented by countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The level of religiosity in Libya was found to differ between the capital and other cities and rural areas, with citizens in Tripoli noticeably less conservative with regards to religion. This finding impacts on consumption practices because citizens are observers of the Islamic faith but are also tolerant of western secularism and western consumption. Consumer cultures in the Gulf countries contradict the view of global consumption because even though there is a higher level of religiosity in states such as Saudi Arabia (Assad, 2007), western secularism and consumption practices are well tolerated (Stearns, 2006). Previous studies have attempted to conceptualise Islamic consumption practices (El-Bassiouny, 2014; Karatas and Sandikci, 2013; Sandikci and Ger, 2001; 2002; Sandikci and Jafari, 2013; Wilson and Grant, 2013) and found consumers in the ME to perceive western luxuries, fashion and media in a positive light. The Gulf region is a good example of hybridised consumption and materialistic consumers who conspicuously over consume western products and services. In the past, the constraint on thought led citizens to fatalistically believe that the marketplace was beyond their control. Therefore, citizens had little opportunity to integrate Islamic values with global consumption like consumers in the Gulf.

In the present circumstances, there are still religious requirements to abide by such as the prohibition of pork or alcohol. Thus, religious values have not been affected by regime change. Whether or not the tourist sector will apply the same prohibitions for foreign travellers remains to be seen. On a secular level, other religious denominations are not accepted. For example, *Shia* books that promote *Shiaism* or *Shia practices* are not allowed in the country because the country is primarily inhabited by Sunni Muslims (Myers, 2013). Another interesting finding is that citizens agree that religion should be followed but not the source of governance.

The findings corroborate with the literature reviewed on religious values (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000; Cleveland et al., 2013; Hashemi, 2011; Karatas and Sandikci, 2013; Rice and Al-Mossawi, 2002; Steenkamp, 2001). However, the findings contradict the view of Engelland (2014) who stated that religious stimuli can return to a state of religious conservatism. Libyans use religious values for guidance on what is morally right and wrong and consumption practices are built around them. Moving away from religious conservatism suggest the freedom to choose in the sense that Libyans can now dictate their own consumption practices and not be conditioned by the state. The view of Allen (2006) agrees with the finding from this study that the pressures of globalisation are causing concerns within the family unit and threatening traditional values. There is a shared concern amongst citizens that a new consumer culture could eventually lean towards a global consumer culture and clash with traditional cultural values, something that Libyans and the state have tried to preserve for decades. Perhaps this is why Libya has to date, not seen as many marketplace advancements as nearby North African countries such as Tunisia, Morocco and Tunisia who have integrated French values within the traditional values.

In summary, religious values are deep rooted in the social system but the level of religiosity differs amongst citizens. The marketplace adjusts around religious, cultural and social values such as family ties. In terms of citizens' expectations, there is the opportunity to show off collectivistic and individualistic consumption practices but within the boundaries of personal religious values. In the next section, the theme of polarised communities and consumption is discussed and is important to consumption practices, because communities in the present epoch have become divided over political and religious issues.

7.6.5 Polarised communities and consumption: past experiences

In the past, citizens were afraid to converse with one another about political issues and changes in the marketplace. Therefore, because of the oppression and political conditioning, hidden identities were common. As articulated in the following quotes:

> *'People used to be afraid to tell things to each other because you didn't know if your friend or brother* [friend or family member] *could stab you in the back or be a government spy. Qaddafi threatened individuals to spy on their closest circles and see if they spoke about him or his government in a negative way* [...].' (32)

> *'Everyone had to look out for themselves. Anyone you talked to in Libya could be with you or against you and that was the same thing abroad [...] you didn't freely just run your mouth about the regime because you did not know who you would come across. I think the fear was spread beyond Libya [...] we were really cautious with what we were saying with friends and to people inside the country as well.'* (39)

Citizens had to be careful when taking part in social exchanges because they did not know if friends or family could be affiliated with the old regime. Therefore, the lack of trust meant that citizens were pulled away from each other. In the next subsection, present experiences of polarised communities and consumption are documented.

7.6.6 Polarised communities and consumption: present experiences

Participants argued that the influence of militia groups is having a negative impact on the social community, which is important in the context of consumption practices, because punctuations in society give rise to imbalances and chaos in the marketplace. In contrast to the past, tribal groups feel neglected under the present government and have formed their

> *'Own mini economies within the country and the revolution has not changed that but rather strengthened their own unique identities and brought them closer together.'* (27)

The integration of ethnic minorities are important for the wider Libyan social community because conflicts between ethnic groups are restricting the development of consumption

in the marketplace. Even though the findings suggest that Libya is moving towards a market-based economy, the alienation of minority communities is disturbing marketplace progress.

In contrast to past experiences of hidden identities, citizens now have more trust in friends and family members and can socialise with one another without worrying about being punished. The change in hidden identities is allowing Libyans to express themselves on their own accord and is assisting in the development of new consumption practices. As emphasised in the following quotes:

> *'I now express myself freely and there is more trust in people I talk to [...] there is a closer relationship between the people now. They have been brought closer together, united as one [...] the unitedness has affected the way they perceive each other, the way they mix and go out with each other [...] if you combine the freedom, trust and happiness together, then you have the ingredients for a greater social experience. With a greater social experience comes the desire to go out shopping and spend more time outdoors* [with family and friends] *[...] this fits with the idea of Libyans buying more things now.'* (32)

> *'I think that* [reduction in hidden identities*] is another major factor that has changed because people now have the ability to trust, confide and support one another. The whole social strings that were twisted in knots* [in the past] *have now been unravelled.'* (39)

Despite the ability to confide with family and friends, polarised communities are increasing civil tensions between members of society. Libya has many diverse ethnicities ranging from cosmopolitan citizens in Tripoli to rural Bedouin and Berber communities around the country. Tribal affiliations were and still are very important in Libya and are embedded within Libyan cultural values. A problem is that as society achieved new found freedoms, some tribal clans (particularly those who were linked with the Qaddafi regime) have rejected new reforms and caused social anarchy by forming insurgency militant groups. Tracking down the insurgents is almost as difficult as identifying their consumption practices because of their constant mobility. Traditionally, the consumption practices of rural citizens living outside the three main cities (Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi), were very different. Many rural citizens led simple lives and had their own

farms and mini economies. Mini economies comprised of agricultural, livestock and horticulture. On the other hand, globalisation under the old regime mainly stretched to the capital city, Tripoli, and in some areas of Benghazi, while in other places it remained almost non-existent. Thus, the concept of consuming products and services for conspicuous purposes was very uncommon among ordinary citizens. Conversely, the findings contradict this assumption as the following participant mentioned:

> *'The paradox is though some* [tribal citizens] *may reject globalisation and buy western products, you will find them wearing Levi's jeans or driving American cars or drinking Coca Cola. To me that spells hypocrisy.'* (35)

In light of present polarisations in society, polarised groups still appear to be incorporating foreign products within their consumption practices. Perhaps the consumption of foreign products is a reaction by polarised groups to the flux or is a way of coping with uncertainty. A limitation with the findings is that rural citizens were not interviewed due to the study focus on the Libyan capital, Tripoli. In the next subsection, future expectations for polarised communities are brought forward.

7.6.7 Polarised communities and consumption: future expectations

While Libyans acknowledge that polarisations in society are affecting the progress of change, there is much uncertainty and citizens wonder if the country will progress or go into a process of decline. One participant used a metaphor to describe expectations towards polarisations in society:

> *'We have a saying that says if you chop a tree, you have to chop the whole tree otherwise; it will just collapse on you. Sometimes you feel the situation is not stable, sometimes you think the circumstances are improving and other times the opposite is the case. At present, there a few politicians who wonder if they are going down the path of Dubai or down the path of Somalia. They are not sure if the country will see expansion and developments or civil wars and restrictions.'* (34)

Citizens are also unsure if the issue of polarised communities can be resolved easily. Regardless of the intensity of polarisation in Libyan society, consumption is still expected to increase, particularly since different ethnic groups – whether consciously or subconsciously - are embracing foreign consumption in their consumption practices. In

the next subsection, the issue of polarised communities is positioned within the current literature.

7.7.8 Polarised communities and consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

While marketplace reforms may be set back by polarisations in society, citizens from different groups appear to be using consumption as a way of navigating around the flux. On the other hand, the issue of hidden identities has declined because citizens are able to confide with one another. This finding is consistent with the issue of honour and reputation, something which is of great importance in ME societies (Uskul et al., 2010). In the past, hidden identities were common because of the political conditioning in society which dictated how citizens should behave. In a collectivist society like Libya, the family unit is reliant upon each family member's success. The present experiences of Libyan citizens demonstrate that family units have become stronger because of the reduction in hidden identities. To an extent, it is the strengthening of the family units that may be causing polarisations because in the past, citizens were subject to tightly implemented boundaries by the regime. Consequently, discontent was not tolerated and there was little room for opposition groups to operate. On the other hand, consumption is now being used as a coping mechanism amongst opposition groups who are trying to make sense of the future. With an increase in tribal mini formed economies, segregated consumption is anticipated to become more common due to polarisations in society. In the next section, the theme of desired vs. desirable effects is discussed.

7.7.9 Desired vs. desirable effects: past experiences

Unlike Egypt's pre-existing global consumer culture, the undeveloped marketplace in Tripoli was attributable to the level of restrictions in place under Qaddafi. Restrictions mostly extended to a lack of free choice and a heavily regulated marketplace, especially with counterfeit foreign products and services. Deliberate obstructions against foreignness were because *'he [*Qaddafi*] thought it would lead to citizens following western lifestyles'* (30), something that the government did not want Libyan citizens to emulate. By way of authoritarian rule, the desired was implemented. As a result, citizens had difficulty expressing themselves. *'Foreign brands were a minority* [in the past] *with the exception of Mango, Zara, Marks & Spencer amongst a few others'* (32) while another

participant commented: *'foreign products would only come in small quantities and extremely difficult to find'* (33). Thus, citizens did not have any real aims or goals for the future and so what the government desired conflicted with the desirable of citizens. That is to say that citizens were growing restless of the desired rule and wanted to change it by trying to achieve the desirable. As an example of what the state desired, citizens did not have access to a range of authentic foreign products in the marketplace. This sentiment is reflected in the following quote:

> *'Consumers had longed for foreign products. They loved to have the latest electronics like Sony computers, Ipad's, Ipod's, Samsung Galaxy's and so on but they had to travel [abroad] in order to get them.'* (28)

By way of implementing the desired, citizens were forced to settle for what was on offer even though many wished to display a certain *'level of materialism and lift their own sense of modernity'* (40). Advocating a sense of modernity coincides with the idea of globalisation and underpinned citizens' wishes to be a part of a global consumer culture. However, the idea of modernity conflicted with the desired. Consequently, in settling with the desired, citizens pursued products rather than choose them. Therefore, getting hold of a product was a major source of satisfaction.

As expressed in the following quote:

> *'The markets were contaminated with fake brands like Ralph Lauren, Armani, Adidas, Nike, most of which came from China [...] people still purchased them because they didn't have another choice and two because they wanted to show that they could have the desirable even if it was not what they desired.* (27)

Fake brands were often sold in traditional marketplaces such as 'bazaars' or 'souks'. To a wider extent, foreignness was not solely responsible for the deprivation of products and services in the marketplace. Conversely, foreignness was incidentally desired because of the widespread availability of foreign products in global markets. While abroad, citizens could experience the desirable and the capacity to consume at their leisure. As one participant mentioned:

> *'Libyan people who had money* [rich people] *used to go to Italy yearly for shopping to buy Italian products* [especially Italian made clothes] *[...] because the goods in Libya were not good enough* [lacked quality].*'* (30)

Exposure to globalisation abroad triggered aspirations for a global consumer culture to reach Libya and is underpinned in the followed quote:

> '*What made matters worse is when they* [Libyans] *travelled abroad and were exposed to all this globalisation and consumption [...] they had even greater wishes that this would happen in Libya.*' (28)

An additional issue was that goods often used to be damaged in transit or close to their expiration dates for foods. To an extent, the consumer culture in Libya in the past did not have the opportunity to evolve because of political constraints that conflicted with citizens' notion of the desirable. The banning of foreign advertising (i.e. foreign brands and English language) in the country also curbed citizens' pursuit of the desirable. In contradicting notions of the desired, pan-Arab satellite disseminated a wealth of marketing messages to citizens throughout the ME and had a recognisable impact on educating Libyan citizens with consumption trends, causing them to seek products seen on TV. Aspirations for a global consumer culture corroborate with the finding that the revolution was a call for a greater consumption and also a cause of it. In the next subsection, the present experiences pertaining to the desired vs. the desirable are discussed.

7.7.10 Desired vs. desirable effects: present experiences

In comparison to the past, participants argued that the oppression suffered under the old regime is motivating citizens further to achieve the desirable via new modes of consumption. As one participant commented: '*Maybe because they have been oppressed and denied all these products and brands that they are exposed to now online and through pan Arab satellite*' (38). Another participant commented: '*I think the whole idea of wanting more products goes hand in hand with the success of the revolution*' (42). Due to becoming restless with the marketplace conditions, citizens' consumption practices have taken a new turn and they are experiencing new modes of consumption in the marketplace because the desirable is possible. As one participant stressed: '*They* [Libyans] *had been oppressed for decades and now want to show what they have been missing out on*' (27).

On a demographic level, the youth have become more knowledgeable of global brands and modes of consumption because of overseas travel, education and work abroad;

whereas many of the older generation have never had the opportunity to experience a changing marketplace, *'so they* [Libyans] *want to capitalise and find out what they have been missing out on for all these years'* (28). Given the reliance of the older generation on younger family members to provide support and maintain a strong family unit, participants argued that studying abroad has become even more common because of reduced restrictions on overseas travel. As one participant noted:

> *'This goes hand in hand with their* [Libyans] *desires to be better, to do their families proud and to one day return to Libya and establish their own careers or companies.'* (41)

Family ties are therefore fundamental to implementing the desirable. In contrast to past experiences, young citizens have now become more materialistic in their consumption but still have close connections with the family. Part of the desire to develop the marketplace comes from family achievements as a form of status and wellbeing. Consequently, citizens use the family almost as a reference symbol that must be followed when making consumption choices. Maintaining family ties implies a collectivist desire and agrees with the notion of preserving collectivistic cultural values. At the same time, the desire of younger family members to venture abroad to uphold and elevate their family status is very much individualistic. The argument is that without the guidance of the family unit and recognition of their values, citizens are lost in a newly developing marketplace and the desirable cannot actualised. A contraposition is that even though a collective family identity promotes a sense of belonging, the desire for global consumption may conflict with this family identity because of an over emphasis on individual identities. The freedom to choose and negotiate through the marketplace promotes individualistic consumption practices as much as it forms new consumer identities. Consequently, there are several threats to the traditional norms of Libyans and collectivistic family ties. First, the desire to consume as a means of status and better quality of life may be negating the long-term objectives for change. Second, if the desirable takes the form of materialistic pleasures, consumption may actually be masking citizens' desires for long-term changes.

In addition, the findings contradict the assumption that relative stability must take place before marketplace reforms can happen because the demand for the desirable is actually outstripping conditions of uncertainty and instability. As a result, consumption seems to have spread contagiously in Tripoli and has revolutionised consumption practices to the

point that citizens feel incomplete without consuming foreign products and services. The liberalisation of markets, state and citizens' openness to foreignness have resulted in a multiplicity of consumption choices facilitated by a growing number of foreign multinationals. More than three years have passed since Qaddafi's subjugation from power, and in the meantime, change has assisted in transforming a planned economy closer to a market based one. *'Foreign products like Apple Ipad's are being flooded into Libya. Libyans are obsessed with anything from Apple'* (27). Consequently, the propensity for the consumption of western products has increased and modernised consumption practices. *'The port in Tripoli works nonstop 24 hours a day bringing products in'* (41). Thus, the desire to consume more is argued to go hand in hand with achieving a revolution because citizens want more from the marketplace and want to expand themselves.

A report by the Libya Herald news agency adds confirmability to the findings and indicates that the inferiority of products and services on offer in the past has contributed to present experiences of sharing a passionate desire for consumption. Importantly, engaging with consumption is not just about following a global consumer culture but a statement of freedom. Citizens can now go out and choose what they want when they want. It is this sense of liberation that has lifted consumer spirits and restored confidence in marketing practices. On the flipside, there is a consistency issue with the re-consumption of products/services because companies still give priority to price over quality which has meant that if citizens go to a particular store to find a product, it may not be available (Libya Herald, 2013a). The same report also noted how international stores such as Marks and Spencer, Pronovias, Next, Mango, Debenhams, Aldo, La Senza, Punt Roma, Timberland and Trucco have populated Tripoli's high streets because of the demand for foreign consumption and many more are poised to enter the marketplace in the foreseeable future.

A further issue is that the pace of new consumption is taking some citizens by surprise because they are finding it difficult to cope with new found freedoms. At the most extreme level, some citizens are abusing their new freedoms and have resorted to consuming products that compromise religious and cultural values. As one participant told: *'They* [consumers] *are now trying to experience what they have never had and sometimes [...] you act before you think which is why some people have resorted to taking drugs, drinking alcohol and keeping weapons for themselves'* (29). In interpreting the above quote, the ongoing civil conflicts are upsetting the balance between the desired and desirable

because what different communities desire is conflicting with the desirable. Since individuals have a different experience of freedom compared to the past, their sense of being and having is entering uncharted territory and with unconstrained boundaries comes uncertainty, which explains why some citizens are taking part in what can be described as anti-social consumption practices. Resorting to products forbidden by religion becomes problematic because traditional values have their own notions of the desired. This in turn conflicts with citizens' notion of the desirable if the two contradict each other. The notion of the sacred and profane is relevant in this context. Midgley (1992) argued that the processes of marginalization between the self and the social and the grey areas that may processually exist between the two shift over time. The flux has caused contrasting views towards what is sacred and what is profane. Preserving sacred values such as tradition, rituals and artefacts is considered sacred while engaging in anti-consumption suggests a move towards the profane. That is to say that sacred processes (i.e. religious values) steer citizens in one direction (Belk et al. (1989) while profanity drives citizens in another (i.e. pushing citizens towards the desirable). Consequently, the boundaries between what is sacred and what is profane have been significantly blurred and seem to remain, at the time of writing, in a state of flux.

A further contention raised is that many Libyan expatriates have decided to repatriate to help rebuild the country. The following quote tells of Libyan repatriation:

> *'A whole heap of Libyans have returned to Libya because they fled the country during the old regime for a better life abroad or because Qaddafi had a bounty on their heads.'* (40)

A further motive for returning back to the country is to experience similar modes of consumption that repatriated citizens were attuned with abroad. More often than not, expatriate workers that repatriate are better acculturated to a global consumer culture and are likely to exhibit hybridised consumption practices (Kipnis et al., 2014; Luedicke, 2011). Acculturated citizens add hybridity to the marketplace by emphasising goods with greater personal value such as hobbies, home décor, cars and houses (Ehrnrooth and Gronroos, 2013). In the next subsection, the future expectations with regards to desired vs. desirable effects are presented.

7.7.11 Desired vs. desirable effects: future expectations

In relation to the desired vs. the desirable, citizens are still looking to implement the desirable. As stated in the following quote:

> *'It's like we have our own baby democracy. This democracy needs years to mature to become an adult [...] The ones that deny this freedom are Bedouins who had links to Qaddafi [...] so many of them were pro old regime and against the revolution. They disliked the idea of change.* (30)

There are contrasting views towards the desired and the desirable. It is expected that while some citizens want to capitalise on new found freedoms, others such as tribal groups want to return to a previous state of affairs because they were content with the old regime. Nevertheless, citizens from different groups are still recovering from the after effects of a revolution and many are still confused about how to consume in the marketplace because of the new modes of consumption and growing choices available. The consumer confusion is underpinned in the following quote:

> *'I think Libyans [...] have not yet quite grasped exactly what they want, other than the fact that they have succeeded in the overthrow of the revolution [...] they* [citizens] *don't quite see the potential they have to set up their own businesses and sell their own local products.'* (28)

Tripoli is undergoing major transformations in the marketplace and this is evidenced by the huge influx of foreign products coming through the city's ports. However, citizens are cautious about rushing marketplace reforms. As one participant mentioned: *'I want a healthy gradual development, not development on steroids'* (27). Interpreting the above quote leads to the view that developmental changes should be incremental and not introduced suddenly. Expectations for the future are important to consumption practices because it is the citizens who are the agents of change. This is evidenced by the ongoing plans to redevelop the marketplace. For instance, participants told how redevelopments include a new *'Tripoli Mall'* (31) and another participant commented:

> *'Investors* [both foreign and local] *are starting to open chains and cafes now [...] the whole picture of shopping in Libya is changing and in the next few years we will see major changes with more foreign stores opening up.'* (34)

Secondary data affirms the participants' views. For instance, the American brand Cinnabon has set up a bakery in Tripoli (van Gilder Cooke, 2012). Similarly, Iceland foods has recently internationalised in the capital and plans to tap into nearby ME markets in the foreseeable future (Mintel, 2013). Other UK-based retailers such as Debenhams (Mintel 2013b) and Mothercare have also opened stores in Tripoli (Libya Business News, 2013). Regardless of instability and insecurity, perhaps the choice to enter in a period of flux underpins the determination to explore Libya's untapped opportunities and meet the demands of changing consumption practices that now demand foreign products and services. Participants underscored this expectation:

> *'When an economy is transitioning, the way to tell if it is going in the right direction [...] is if a few foreign outlets set up in Libya, other foreign companies take note and then want to knock on Libya's door.'* (33)

The development of a new consumer culture is believed to nurture social problems and contribute to enhanced stability. To achieve a state of stability, Libya was compared to being in the beginning phases of change or as one participant stated:

> *'Key stage one, we need a lot of things, we need buildings, services, products, education [...] they* [foreign companies] *should come and be the first to establish themselves here. We have oil running like water and it is really cheap. As you can see with the Gulf States, they have oil and look how they have transformed their economies with it.'* (29)

The comparison made to the Gulf States is suggestive of Libyans' desires to emulate growing consumer cultures in the region. In the next subsection, the findings for desired vs desirable effects are positioned within the current literature.

7.7.12 Desired vs. desirable effects: positioning the findings within the current literature

In the literature review, desired and desirable effects pertained to what "is desired" and "what is desirable" (Hofstede, 2001). The findings agree with Hofstede's (2005) notion that issues concerning the desired do not necessarily match up with the way people actually act when they have to choose. In relation to the findings, Hofstede's notion of the desired vs. the desirable explains why citizens' interpretation of the desirable did not match up with the desired in the past. The state had conditioned citizens with how to act and citizens did not have a say in the development of the marketplace. The findings

concur with the current literature and indicate that decades of authoritarian rule by the old Qaddafi regime had citizens tightly confined with strictly desired rules. Therefore, there was little room for citizens to manoeuvre in the marketplace and they could not express the desirable. Similar to the view of De Mooij (1998), a gap will most likely exist between the desired and the desirable as long as the state and citizens continue to have contrasting views towards what is desired and what is desirable.

The desire to redevelop the marketplace through consumption coincides with Zineldin's (2002) assertion that globalisation is the desirable object for many Arab states (such as Libya) but its desired effects could cause problems and crisis, particularly in relation to individual and group identities, traditional norms and cultural values. Zineldin's view echoes the findings of this study as polarised communities were not the desirable to many, but they were desired by some. Furthermore, there is still a sense of confusion in society as to what Libyans want from the future. At present, citizens seem to be signposting the future with consumption without actually visualising long-term goals. At the time of writing, the majority of Libyans had achieved the desirable in terms of freedom of expression and are able to decide their own futures and make informed consumption choices. There are expectations that the Libyan marketplace could mirror those of the oil rich Gulf States in the ME. Comparing the country to the Gulf States is suggestive of transitioning towards a market based economy with a longing for global consumption. As previous studies focussing on the Gulf States have demonstrated, marketplaces are home to numerous modes of consumption, a plethora of choices and a wealth of foreignness (Al-Khatib et al., 2005; Assad, 2007; Attia et al., 1999; Bhuian, 1997; Epps and Demangeot, 2013; Leonidou, 1991; Rice and Al-Mossawi, 2002). It is the polycentric perceptions towards foreign products and services and the pursuit of the desirable that have enriched marketplaces and developed new consumer cultures. The findings enhance an understanding of desired vs. desirable effects, something which is currently missing in the ME marketing literature. In the next section, it is important to discuss the issue of consumer ethnocentrism because ethnocentric tendencies towards the state have changed since the revolution.

7.8 Consumer ethnocentrism: past experiences

In the past, there was an absence of genuine ethnocentricity towards the country because citizens did not have a choice but to praise regime status. The findings indicate that

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citizens held firm ethnocentric tendencies towards the country but such tendencies were overcast by the political conditioning imposed by the regime. As one participant told: *'The old regime just wanted to see us struggle. They wanted to see us suffer as businesses, suffer as consumers and they took great pride in doing so'* (37). One of the reasons that could explain why citizens did not express ethnocentric tendencies towards products and services was because in order for Libyans to engage in local production, they had to gain authorisation from the regime, something that was not easy to achieve. As underpinned in the following quote:

> *'You had to obey Qaddafi and all of his supporters. Even if you wanted to establish a business or you wanted to bring goods from outside of Libya, you had to take their permission. You had to take their agreement to take these goods into the country and for them to be in Libya.'* (31)

The combination of oppression, implementation of the desired, and political conditioning assist in explaining why citizens did not appreciate local products but had to show artificial ethnocentric tendencies in order to please the old regime. That is to say that citizens were coerced into supporting the local cause. Hence why the development of local goods in the market was inferior in relation to foreign products. As one participant explained: *'The local goods were not trusted at all and were considered a waste of time and money. Generally, there was a high level of trust towards foreign products'* (28). A further explanation for reduced ethnocentricity in the past was because the old Qaddafi regime selected which products came into the country. At the same time, local production was weak in comparison to exports. Therefore, citizens were drawn towards foreign products. On the other hand, obtaining genuine foreign products was difficult. In each case, there was little motivation for citizens to be drawn towards the local cause, especially since everything from setting up a business to promoting local products entailed approval from the regime. The combination of restrictions on local production and emphasis on foreign imports meant that citizens were not encouraged to become ethnocentric. In the next subsection, the present experiences pertaining to consumer ethnocentrism are discussed.

7.8.1 Consumer ethnocentrism: present experiences

In comparison to the past, the present has seen little change with regards to ethnocentricity. There appears to be a lag with perceptions towards the influence of supporting the local

cause as a way to facilitate change in the marketplace. Unlike Cairo, Tripoli has not seen as many advanced marketplace developments and so there has been an absence of ethnocentricity. This is underscored by the following quote:

> *'Libya does not have an illustrious history of locally manufactured products [...] there are only some* [local manufacturers] *such as the dairy industry that manufacture locally made cheeses and milk and are desired by Libyans. The rest of food items were imported from foreign states or neighbouring Arab states such as Egypt and Tunisia.'* (27)

In contrast to the past, negative perceptions towards the consumption of local products and services have been substituted by ethnocentric tendencies which have encouraged the growth of the local economy and also polycentric views towards foreignness. Therefore, citizens are welcoming both local and foreign companies. On the other hand, during the interview rounds, the issue of purchasing non-Libyan products did not compromise moral beliefs because in the past, official products were scarce.

To a wider extent, the direction of change is instrumental in swaying ethnocentrism because every time there are punctuations caused by political and social turbulences, the more likely it is that citizens' perceptions become agitated. Since the ramifications of new consumption practices have contributed towards establishing a global consumer culture, citizens now advocate acceptance of foreign products and services. The findings are not suggestive of a decline in local consumption, mainly because Libya did not previously have a coherent market based economy that promoted consumption (specifically foreign consumption). Conversely, the findings are indicative of polycentric perceptions towards the concept of foreign consumption. In a similar vein, it is the ability to consume with more freedom that is reducing ethnocentric tendencies, particularly since many citizens want to sample and experience previously unknown consumption practices. As illustrated in the following quote: *'People nowadays* [in the present epoch] *only buy brands, brands. They want to show that they can afford global brands and display them in their homes, on themselves and in the things they eat'* (42).

Present experiences are also quite dissimilar to the past because citizens are pulled towards foreign products. The following participant commented on the contrast in foreign and local consumption practices:

'What I see is a very up and coming importing business but bringing in foreign products from abroad […] one of the biggest businesses right now is cars, bringing in cars from all over and mostly from the US […] people are buying more but as far as production locally, there is nothing! Unfortunately this is the case right now!' (17)

Extending the argument further, the neglect for local consumption is also influenced by present perceptions that praise the superiority of western products. This view is explained in the following quote:

'There is the assumption that western products are our ancestors and we should pay homage to them. I am not saying that we should be nationalistic towards our own products because unfortunately we do not manufacture many consumables but at least have more dimensions to our buying behaviour and not just rely on our western counterparts for quality products […] even though the Arab products from Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Saudi and so on are cheaper, many Libyans including myself are more enticed by them [foreign products]. *They seem to have more of a hedonistic appeal to me.'* (38)

The above quote is indicative of citizens' present perceptions towards consumption. There appears to be an absence of regiocentricity which assumes that citizens should support local products from the same region; in this case the ME. In contrast, citizens are sceptical of local Arabic products because of reasons pertaining to quality assurance. As one participant explained:

'European countries have strict rules of how to produce products, […] recognised quality assurance measures, […] very good knowledge, motivated workforces, better technology and equipment to produce products.' (29)

Perceptions relating to the quality of local products go back to past experiences of Arabic products. As underpinned by the following quote:

'Egypt is infamous for playing with products […] it comes down to quality assurance and also down to the workers because they are not getting paid enough, not motivated in their job or they are operating in poor working conditions.' (36)

Two main factors emerge from this quote: quality assurance and labour conditions, both of which were considered below comparable standards with European countries and put Libya at an economic disadvantage of sourcing the local marketplace with goods that would satisfy citizen's needs. Interpretations of the above quote lead to the conclusion that the revolution has not entirely curbed perceptions towards Arabic products. Instead, the revolution has presented an opportunity to redevelop the marketplace and it has reflected the desire for products to forgo extensive quality procedures to match those of western countries. It is improvements in quality procedures that are likely to increase ethnocentricity and reduce the level of regiocentricity. In the next subsection, future expectations concerning consumer ethnocentrism are brought forward.

7.8.2 Consumer ethnocentrism: future expectations

Local production is expected to increase in the future because Libyans are now more patriotic towards their country. As one participant explained: '[there is a] *very good opportunity to launch Libyan made products because the people are delighted with the revolution and proud to be Libyan again'* (38). The achievement of new found freedoms is responsible for making citizens more patriotic towards Libya. Patriotism is inextricably linked with the national identity. As one participant put it: *'I think now we are more patriotic than ever before as a result of what has happened [revolution] [...] we have human rights now and freedom'* (30).

Depending upon the trajectory of change and transition towards a stability epoch, citizens in Libya are able to hold ethnocentric tendencies for the sake of securing local jobs and protecting national pride. However, movements towards a global consumer culture appear to be stronger than ethnocentric tendencies and may prove detrimental to the development of a market planned economy because of foreign dominance and a lack of involvement from local actors. In addition, acculturated citizens who are familiar with working abroad are bringing back aspects learned from other cultures and guide the marketplace by adding their own experiences. The result is a reduction in ethnocentrism and a pinch at patriotic values. There is also the expectation that foreign products will continue to dominate the marketplace. This sentiment is shown in the following quote:

> *'I think that they* [foreign companies] *will dominate Libya because Libyan people now like to* [consume]*, even for fashionable items, Italians products or especially the big company names. For example, when you talk about*

clothes, people prefer to buy from Debenhams, Zara or Marks & Spencer. Its better spending money on a well-known company instead of buying from an unknown company.' (34)

The lack of ambition towards pushing local consumption would seem to contradict with high patriotism towards the country. Moreover, the over reliance on foreign products and services and an emulation of a global consumer culture overshadows long-term visions and aspirations for the future because citizens believe that foreign consumption can get them out of the current flux.

An additional issue is that in the past, patriotism was conditioned to support the old regime; whereas, future expectations of patriotism are positive as Libyans can now choose their own consumption practices and navigate between their identity and patriotism. Hence, citizens are proud to be Libyan once again. In contrast, some rural citizens such as tribal groups are likely to display greater ethnocentrism to rediscovered identities and reject patriotism because many are dissatisfied with the current government and want the old regime back. Consequently, their identities are being obstructed and the present epoch is driving them closer together, not for the purposes of embracing change, but to rebel against it. As one participant stated:

> *The revolution has strengthened their* [tribal groups] *own unique identities and brought them closer together. Under the old Qaddafi regime* […] *they had a lot of comfort and* […] *he used to treat them and give them lands and cash. This favoritism have declined* [in the present epoch] *which is why many Bedouins despise the new government and reject developments and government reforms.* (27)

On the other hand, even though polarisations are affecting the social relationships in society, ethnocentric tendencies are expected to increase not solely because of consumption but because Libyans are experiencing a new identity, sense of belonging and are therefore more patriotic towards the country. One participant explained the difference in patriotism compared to past experiences:

> *'The revolution has brought the citizens together socially, politically and emotionally. We all suffered in one way or another, some more than others but we still are proud and were always proud to be Libyans. We might have had our identity curbed by the old regime but we were still Libyan in our*

hearts and minds and nothing could ever change that. […] *you can actually feel the atmosphere around you and grab Libyan pulses that scream we love to be Libyan. These pulses were there* [in the past] *but they were pretending to please the old regime.'* (31)

Due to the rediscovery of identity and renewed patriotism, Libyans expect the emerging consumer culture to continue to grow. As one participant suggested:

'There is massive scope for consumerism now in the country and new found longing for western brands. Libyan's have changed both mentally and physically. They now have a voice, they now feel they have a sense of belonging, a greater identity which was slashed under Qaddafi. They now feel like they can plan a better future, have goals and objectives.' (41)

The increase in salaries and acculturated perceptions towards foreignness are not only reconfiguring Libyan consumption practices but also by exhibiting previously forbidden global lifestyles, the present epoch is giving citizens a new sense of belonging and attachment. As one participant remarked: *'People have discovered new patterns of consuming, new patterns of buying, new sense of belonging and new passions for developing the country'* (39). It is precisely this new belonging and attachment that has given citizens a new identity in the marketplace. It is anticipated that new Libyan identities may enhance ethnocentric tendencies towards consumption practices. In the next subsection, the findings for consumer ethnocentrism are positioned within the current literature.

7.8.3 Consumer ethnocentrism: positioning the findings within the current literature

In the literature review, consumer ethnocentrism was discussed as differing by countries and regions and is an important theme in consumer cultures because it can pull consumers towards their own national products over foreign options (Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2007). The findings suggest that polarised communities are affecting the level of ethnocentricity and have created a sense of scepticism with supporting the local cause. Moreover, the ability to choose in the marketplace and experience new consumption practices is allowing Libyan citizens to hedge towards foreign products. The reasons for preferring foreign products pertain to the questioned quality of local products and the fact

that Libya has not had an established marketplace. Consequently, citizens are trying to capitalise on new found freedoms driven by patriotism and a new sense of identity. On the other hand, despite having a high level of patriotism towards the country, citizens are still not lured towards local products. Nonetheless, the findings complement the existing literature (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Varman and Belk, 2012; Westjohn et al., 2012) as the greater the progress of global consumer culture, the more likely it is that consumers become familiar with global consumption, more acculturated (Lysonski and Durvasula, 2013) and less xenophobic (Kipnis et al., 2014). The increase in Libyan salaries has also lead to citizens becoming more acculturated and tolerant of foreign products. On the contrary, the findings also contradict the current literature on consumer ethnocentrism (Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Klein, 2002; Klein and Ettensoe, 1999; Shankarmahesh, 2006; Shimp and Sharma, 1987) because although citizens have rediscovered their identities, they are still pushed to consume foreign products. Even though the level of ethnocentrism has been affected by the flux, citizens have reasserted their identities, have become more patriotic towards their country but have signposted their future with foreign consumption symbols.

The findings also advance an understanding of what is currently known about regiocentrism. An array of authors have investigated regiocentrism in relation to the EPRG (ethnocentrism, polycentrism, regiocentrism and geocentrism) framework (Shoham and Rose, 1995; Wind et al., 1973). However, little attention has been given to the consumption perspectives towards the absence of regiocentrism in Libya. Whereas in the regiocentrism literature, it is argued that consumers within a particular region are pulled towards neighbouring countries products because of similar cultural, religious and economic values. Libyans on the other hand, are not encouraged to support local Arabic products in the region because of aspects relating to the quality of Arabic products. In the next section, the findings relevant to country of origin effects are discussed.

7.8.4 Country of origin effects: Past experiences

In the past, consumption practices were constrained by what was available and so citizens had to take what was given. Consequently, country of origin effects (COO) were less of an issue and were not deliberated in great detail. However, consumption practices were closely linked to the construction of the social classes. The lower and middle classes had

to settle for lesser quality products and less preferred COO. As reported in the following quote:

> *'There was a strong consumer segment base that favoured Chinese products because people wanted cheap goods [...] some products that were considered of 'middle' product quality such as Turkish products were vastly available in the country. Some products also came from Syria, UAE, Qatar and so on* [but] *they were generally basic products because of the pertinence of the price amongst consumers.* (40)

In explaining the above quote, cheap goods were identified as products that advocated an affordable price but lacked significant quality and durability. The implications of mass production and marketed principles by the state were characterised by a supply and demand philosophy which did not allow ordinary citizens to select a variety of products from a range of origins. In contrast, members of the regime had the ability to choose the products' COO. However, ordinary Libyans had to settle for cheaper products produced in mainly Arab or Asian states. As articulated in the following quote:

> *'The majority of people favoured Chinese products. The prices of their* [Chinese] *products are cheap and serve their purpose and people were attracted towards them. They had a magnetic pull affect and people did not want to buy them, but because of the cheap price factor, they were geared towards them [...] the people who were related to the political system could afford more expensive and better quality clothes such as those of Italian and English origin for example. The market did not have American goods, a few Canadian goods.* (35)

The unequal market segmentation strategy used by the state reinforces the notion that COO was of a lesser concern for ordinary citizens. Due to particular political relationships with different countries at a given time, the old regime could pick and choose which countries products they wished to import. For some products, embargoes were incurred, something which is discussed later in the theme of consumer animosity. Therefore, the state had full autonomy over consumption practices and deliberately restricted citizens' access to a multiplicity of products in the marketplace. In the next subsection, present experiences regarding COO effects are discussed.

Experiences of COO effects suggest that Libyan citizens held favourable perceptions of foreign products in the past and also in the present. In particular, products stemming from countries that have had colonial influences in the past (such as Italy) are preferred. The perturbations caused by flux have not hindered perceptions of foreign products or services but strengthened them, which could help explain why consumption has been propelled by present experiences in the marketplace.

In contrast to the deliberation of foreign products, local consumption has declined. The reason for the decline of local products is not because of polycentric perceptions towards foreignness but because citizens have more choice in the marketplace and therefore, COO effects are more of an issue than they used to be in the past. As captured in the following quote:

> *'Most people that I have seen have actually started to become even more open to consume foreign products and go out on a spending spree. People are even more inclined and hold even greater positive perceptions of US products for example [...] you have to remember that* [in the past] *there weren't that many foreign products, like especially from European countries and the US [...] anything to do with Apple, IPod, Ipad's, anything coming from there is going to be of a high price [...] consumerism and the propensity for the consumption of western products has massively increased.'* (27)

Present experiences of consumption indicate that Libyans are not only following COO but also the country of brand origin (COBO). Consequently, there a specific focus on brands. The implications of having more choice are explicitly linked to an increase in citizens' perceptions towards COO effects. As demonstrated in the following quote:

> *'The Libyan people have more choice now. For example, if you would like to buy chocolate, there are now thousands of types of chocolate. Between the 1980's-1990's which was the dark period for the Libyan people because Qaddafi's regime prevented us from doing many things. At that time we had a lot of money but we could nothing with it because nothing was offered in the markets. He stopped trading in Libya* [in the eighties]. *In the nineties,*

Libya went under hissar [sanctions]. *We suffered for twenty years from having expensive and very low quality goods.'* (36)

In the above quote, it is implied that because of past experiences with sanctions, citizens could not select products based on quality because the marketplace contained low quality products at high prices. The random selection of products available varied and the unpredictable political relationships which the regime had with other countries prevented citizens from engaging with consumption as an enjoyable experience. Thus, COO effects are more important for citizens' present experiences. Conversely, the sudden thrust of new consumption is also causing some confusion amongst citizens who have become exposed to a multiplicity of products. In contrast to negative perceptions of Arabic products and an absence of regiocentrism, citizens appear to favour Arabic products that are manufactured in western countries. As one participant commented:

> *'Ahmad Tea is one of the world's most famous Arabic tea brands and it is made in London, UK. [...] we know when we buy Arabic products that are made in western countries that are they are guaranteed to have gone through rigorous quality measures and we trust them more than Arabic products made in Arab countries.'* (30)

The above quote is suggestive of brand origin confusion and indicates that Libyans are pulled towards Arabic products made in western countries without realising that such products are still Arabic but are just manufactured outside of Arab states. Thus, brand origin confusion also reinforces perceptions of western hegemony and the idea that products manufactured in western nations undergo extensive quality procedures. In the next subsection, the future expectations regarding COO effects are considered.

7.8.6 Country of origin effects: Future expectations

Participants expect Libyans to continue to be attracted to foreign products because of product quality and because of hegemonic perceptions of the west. As one participant expected:

> *'As far as German products are concerned, Libya has a long history with German products such as with Mercedes, their reputation precedes them. But as far as American products, I think it is all about the basic infatuation with*

the west to be honest with you. Everything produced there [USA] *means that it is going to be of good quality, country of origin basically.'* (37)

The above quote is representative of concurring views towards the high quality of western products and strong perceptions of foreignness. It is precisely because citizens associate western products with quality that allow future perceptions of COO effects to be elaborated in more detail than was possible in the past. In addition, favourable perceptions of foreign consumption are also guided by *'the west's [NATO forces] treatment of the revolution in Libya'* (27) who did not intervene directly on the ground and assisted the revolution by patrolling the skies and targeting Qaddafi's strongholds (Wehrey, 2013). Consequently, western countries are expected to receive preferential treatment in the coming years (Kamel, 2011; The Economist, 2013). The welcoming of NATO countries are indicative that COO is apparent within nepotistic formed ties based on experiences in the past.

Another contention is that Libyans are not only thinking about COO effects in more detail, but they are also looking beyond the 'made in' label and quality aspects and believe that it is important to also consider the country of manufacture (COM). Therefore, the extensive level of detail used in deliberating over products suggests that COO effects may become more prominent in the future. The importance of COM is highlighted in the following quote:

'They [Libyans] *fail to realise that even western brands such as Pepsi, Coca Cola, Dettol, Lipton tea and so forth are manufactured regionally within other Arab states [...] now they are even more brand conscious and don't just look at brand names but where the product is made and where it is designed. For example a Libyan consumer is more likely to buy a Mercedes manufactured in Germany than from Egypt or Turkey even if the costs are slightly higher, because in their mind they are getting the authentic version.'* (41)

The above quote is illustrative of participants' perceptions towards COM and also country of design (COD). There is an expectation that citizens want to be able to capitalise on the country-product link. Hence, citizens are more inclined to buy a Mercedes car manufactured in Germany than in neighbouring Arab states. Moreover, avoiding Mercedes cars manufactured in Egypt suggests the absence of regiocentricity and a lack of trust towards regionally manufactured brands. The emerging trend towards pursuing

the product from the associated country also indicates that Libyans want to be part of a global consumer culture and they are able to use COO as a purchasing cue in their consumption practices. However, citizens are also prepared to acknowledge that the same product manufactured in different countries may follow standardised quality procedures. In which case, citizens are in a better position to accept the authenticity of the product. As explained in the following quote:

> *'We prefer to go for the quality brands that are recognised worldwide [...] if I am buying electronics, I would look for Japanese or European products like from the UK, Germany or Italy because they will last a lot longer and are safer to use than Chinese or Arab made electronics. [...] if I want to buy a Samsung TV or mobile and I find out it is made in Egypt, I will still buy it because I still expect the same quality standards as in Japan.'* (32).

Despite holding firm perceptions towards the authenticity of a product's COO, citizens are also willing to accept electronic products made in regional ME such as Egypt. Consequently, it can be theorised that the level of COO acceptance with regards to branded products manufactured in regional ME states is dependent upon the perceived level of product involvement. For higher involvement products such as Mercedes cars, the original COO is desired, whereas with electronic products, citizens are prepared to compromise providing that quality standards in the COM are strictly followed in the same way as in the products associated COO.

A contradistinctive expectation is that western food products are not able to substitute traditional Arabic food products, mainly because citizens want to be able to hold onto aspects of tradition and maintain religious and cultural values. As indicated in the following quote:

> *'Western food products for example cannot substitute Arabic food products and traditional Arabic food products such as Hummus, Falafel, Fool* [Fava beans] *and other Arabic foods.'* (42)

In the same way that consumption practices were guided by traditional consumption options in the past, tradition is still anticipated to pull citizens towards local consumption options that cannot be substituted by foreign brands. In the next subsection, the findings for COO are positioned within the current literature.

<u>7.8.7 Country of origin effects: positioning the findings within the current literature</u>

In the past, Libyans did not have the opportunity to think about COO in subsequent detail and citizens had limited modes of consumption available, so there was less room for product evaluation or decision making which meant that COO was less of an issue. However, present experiences indicate that COO is becoming increasingly important and a useful cue in consumption practices. Similarly, future expectations indicate that citizens are becoming more demanding and want to investigate the products' country of manufacture and country of design. At present, there is little sign that Libyans are prepared to place less emphasis on COO for the sake of becoming more ethnocentric, mainly because citizens are now in a position to be able to choose and are preoccupied with experiencing a period of new consumption.

Furthermore, the literature to date tends to depict COO in a negative light (Amine, 2008; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2004; Jimenez and Martin, 2010; Josiassen et al., 2011; Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Klein and Ettensoe, 1999; Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2007; Shankarmahesh, 2006; Sharma, 2011; Shimp and Sharma, 1987). That is to say that perceptions of COO can push or pull consumers towards a particular product based on where it is manufactured (COM) (Amine et al., 2005; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2011; Niss, 1996), where the brand originates from (COBO) (Ahmed et al., 2012; Hamin et al., 2014), or where the product is designed (COM) (Chao, 1998; 2011; Essoussi and Merunka, 2007; Hamzaoui and Merunka, 2006). On the contrary, the findings suggest that COO is responsible for new consumption in so far as citizens now have the flexibility to choose. In addition, the findings echo the view of Orbaiz and Papadopoulos (2003) who argued that world mindedness or polycentrism resulted in favourable perceptions of foreign products.

In the literature review, the traditional view of COO was considered to be outdated. Therefore, country of brand origin (COBO) was defined as a more applicable term, giving rise to hybridised products because in the evolutionary (global) marketplace, products may be designed in one country (Country of design-COD), manufactured in another (Country of manufacture- COM) and assembled in another (Country of assembly- COA) (Schroath et al., 1993). The findings also advance an understanding of COBO, COM and COA as Libyans have shown the capacity to consider COO effects in detail. COM was considered to matter with regards to high involvement products. To date, the majority of studies that have focussed on COO in the ME have used the traditional view of COO

(Ahmed and d'Astous, 2008; Ahmed et al., 2010; Ahmed et al., 2012; Al-Hammad, 1988; Badri et al., 1995; Bhuian, 1997; Bhuian and Kim, 1999; Darrat, 2011; Debabi, 2010; Ghadir, 1990; Guido et al., 2010; Maher and Mady, 2010; Vitale, 2011; Zbib et al., 2010a, 2010b) whereas the findings for this study extend what is currently known about COO in the ME by delving into COBO, COM and COD factors. Similarly, studies in both the evolutionary (global) and revolutionary (Middle East) environment have tended to specifically focus on COO as a sole component. However, in agreement with previous studies (e.g. Bhuian, 1997, Bhuian and Kim, 1999), the findings concur that quality aspects and foreign brands are perceived in a better light than Asian products from China and Korea for example. In the next section, the theme of consumer animosity is presented.

7.8.8 Consumer animosity: past experiences

In the past, citizens' experiences of consumer animosity (CA) were embedded within the level of political autocracy. The old regime's political relationships with different countries changed depending on the specific period of time. Political relationships affected the availability of imported products in the marketplace. Through political conditioning, citizens were not in a position to readily distinguish between state norms and animosity towards other countries. As underpinned in the following quote: *'I feel that* [in the past] *Qaddafi tried to make us hate other countries like the US, France and Switzerland because of his political battles'* (29). In interpreting the above quote, political relationships dictated consumption practices by causing citizens to hold animosity towards a particular country. The animosity was deepened through embargoes on certain countries' products for a specific period of time until political relations improved.

Another example of animosity spread through the regime's political relationships was an embargo on all Israeli products because of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Despite experiencing a global consumer culture outside Libya, citizens were not able to protest or engage in collective action against a country or its product/s because protests were banned under the old regime. However, there was an instance where citizens took to Facebook to protest against the depiction of the prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper. As one participant told:

> *'Some people protested against offensive depictions of the prophet on Facebook, which advocated that people stayed away from buying Lurpak for*

example and other Danish products but protests in Libya [in the past] *were not allowed.'* (31)

The implications of the animosity held against Denmark had serious ramifications in Libya as an embargo was placed on Danish products. Due to the nature of the embargo (resulting out of a religious issue), citizens agreed with the old regime's decision. On the other hand, when the issue was not related to religion, citizens were against the embargo of products and did not agree with the old regimes decision. As exemplified in the following quote:

> *'Security was often closed minded* [in the past] *and they the political rulers often dictated what products could come into the country and from where. If there was a problem with Italy at a given time, then Italian goods would not be allowed in the country. In the end, he* [Qaddafi] *ruined relations with Italy.'* (38)

In the past, it was clear that while citizens agreed to the ban of products that offended religion, this was not the case with embargoes (resulting from political relationships) on products from other countries such as Italy. As a result of constant restrictions on a particular country's products at any given time, citizens' consumption practices were distorted because they had to adjust without the supply of Italian products for example. Product alternatives were not available in abundance, so the prohibition of certain products meant no substitutes. In the next subsection, the present experiences relating to CA are discussed.

7.8.9 Consumer animosity: present experiences

In contrast to the past, consumer boycotts (CBs) are still uncommon in Libya, except under exceptional circumstances where the context is considered to conflict with religious and cultural values. In reference to the prophet Mohammed Cartoon, participants denoted that instead of protesting against a particular product: *'we will advise people against buying such products* [Danish Products]*'* (42). The magnitude of CA leading to CB is also considered to have short-term effects but can be incrementally reduced through time. This is underpinned by the following quote which demonstrates the current state of Danish products in the country: *'Now if you look at the Libyan market, Danish products are very popular such as Puck cream cheese or Roberts Halal sausages'* (27). Moreover,

in comparison to the past, animosity towards a certain country and/or their products only last for a specific prescribed period.

Although Danish products have re-entered the marketplace after periods of animosity and resentment, religious books that promote *Shiaism* (the second largest denomination of Islam) are prohibited. Libyans predominantly adhere to the *Sunni* branch (the largest denomination of Islam) and consider any other sub branches of religion to conflict with their own. As demonstrated in the following quote: *'Religious Shia books are not allowed in the country that promote Shiaism or Shia practices'* (35). The above quote is indicative that Libyans are trying to maintain their followed denomination of religion. The idea of avoiding other religious denominations coincides with citizens' views towards sacralising religious issues away from the state.

An additional contention is that animosity has grown between regional areas such as Tripoli in the west and Benghazi in the east because of disputed historical nepotism for the capital and alleged neglect for other Libyan cities. Under the old regime, Tripoli was prioritised over other cities and was the main hub for globalisation and development. The regional animosity is underscored by the following quote:

> *'The societal divide is evident between the people of the north and the people of the south, people of the 'civilised'* [in reference to cosmopolitan consumers] *and people of the 'bedouin'* [tribal communities].*'* (39)

Present experiences of animosity towards other regional areas is indicative of polarised communities in the country. Animosity between opposition groups is detrimental to consumption practices, because people segregate themselves from each other in the marketplace. Segregated consumption has an impact on social exchanges and affects new found freedoms. In the past, the old regime had maintained a sense of social harmony as discontent was not tolerated; whereas in the present epoch, some citizens are abusing their sense of freedom and this has deepened the animosity towards each other. In the next subsection, future expectations regarding consumer animosity are brought forward.

7.8.10 Consumer animosity: future expectations

With respect to future expectations, citizens anticipate the influx of new consumption to continue in the country. Yet at the same time, distinctions must be made towards citizens' perceptions of holding animosity against a country and their products. While participants

agree that new consumption is beneficial for consumption practices and for the progress of change, they disagree with having to match favourable perceptions of countries and their products. For instance, citizens acknowledge that they may hold animosity towards American politics, but they are still prepared to buy American products. As illustrated in the following quote: *'We are more tolerant of Italians than Americans for example but that doesn't mean that we have anything against American people but perhaps American politics'* (35). The above quote is indicative of participants' ability to distinguish between political issues from the products of a country. In the past, a distinction could not be made because political relationships decided whether embargoes were placed on products coming into the country. Whereas in terms of aspirations for the future, citizens now have the ability to choose and can clearly articulate their own views towards animosity. Thus, there is a lesser tendency to boycott products. On the other hand, the level of animosity held depends on the magnitude of the issue. If the issue offends religion for example, then it is more likely for citizens to take action against a country's product via protests.

A further issue which may contradict the arguments made in this section so far is that historical animosity is expected to remain prevalent in the future. In the past, embargoes were placed on Israeli products coming into the country due to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As exemplified in the following quote:

> *'I think in my country Israel is the only country is probably not allowed to sell, import or export its products to Libya as the people do not want to buy products from Israel. The most important factors for other countries are the quality and the price. Other countries have not really been affected.'* (40)

The extent of historical animosity appears to only entail Israeli products. Interestingly, other episodes of historical animosity pertaining to colonialism (such as by the Italians and Turks) seem to not have an adverse effect on Libyans' perceptions of Italian and Turkish products. From another angle, and as has been argued in this chapter thus far, the influence of colonialism has had a positive impact on perceptions towards Italian and Turkish products. Therefore, a distinction can be made between colonialism and historical animosity relating to current affairs. In the next section, the findings for consumer animosity are positioned within the current literature.

<u>7.8.11 Consumer animosity: positioning the findings within the current literature</u>

In the literature review, CA was described as the antipathy or resentment towards a country and its products based on ongoing or past events (Klein et al, 1998). CA is closely related to ethnocentrism because there is a belief that by supporting foreign countries or their products who had intentionally or unintentionally harmed the home country, then consumers were unpatriotic to their domestic economy (Shimp et al., 1987). The findings would seem to contradict the view that citizens should be more ethnocentric, because despite holding animosity towards certain countries' products in the past, Libyans are prepared to sacrifice the boycotting of products for the sake of redeveloping the marketplace. Furthermore, the findings concur with the current literature (Guido et al., 2010; Mostafa, 2010; Nes et al., 2012; Rose et al., 2009; Shoham et al., 2006) and indicate that boycotts last for a specific period as witnessed with the prophet Mohammed cartoon in a Danish newspaper. In contrast, citizens have now reverted back to consuming Danish products.

Although polarisations in the country have seen an increase in social animosity, no evidence was found linking social animosity with consumer boycotts. The magnitude of a potential boycott still depends on the severity of the issue, especially if it offends religious values. In this case, Libyans are prepared to boycott products. The findings would seem to echo the current literature (Andrew and Klein, 2003; Farah and Newman, 2010; Kerr et al., 2012; Klein et al., 2002; 2004). However, by extension, the findings also propose that consumption practices have to a certain degree, become segregated due to polarisations in society. Nevertheless, opposition groups are contradicting their own cultural values by still engaging in foreign consumption even if they share negative animosity towards a certain country orits products.

Moreover, in line with the current literature (Evanschitzky et al., 2008), Libyans have displayed the tendency to evaluate foreign products based on their merits and use cues such as COO to inform their consumption practices. Thus, even if animosity exists, it is becoming less of an issue in the present epoch. However, the type of animosity may still be influential in directing consumption practices. Lwin et al. (2010 identified the theme of transient country-specific animosity (TCSA) which concerns the ongoing political agendas that exist in the global economy and which consumers may see as a threat to their country, leading to the retracted consumption of foreign products. Similarly, Ang et al. (2004) investigated four types of animosity: these were *stable* versus *situational*, and

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personal versus *national* animosity. The findings allude to those of Lwin et al. (2010) and Ang et al. (2004) because historical animosity that extends to ongoing political issues is important to Libyan consumption practices in their consideration of Israeli products. However, the findings also add to the current literature by identifying that historical animosity due to colonialism is of less importance to Libyans in the present epoch. Hence, citizens are still prepared to consume Italian and Turkish products.

Shoham et al. (2006) found three additional CA constructs which affected consumption. These were dogmatism, nationalism and internationalism. Dogmatism refers to the degree of openness in one's belief system. Dogmatic consumers were considered to be more conservative in their consumption practices and less likely to process new information because of deep rooted personal beliefs. Nationalism relates to the view that one's country is superior and therefore, the national culture is dominant. Internationalism is seen as the polycentric view that consumers hold of other nations. In relation to the findings, Libyans could be considered as dogmatic consumers under the old regime because their consumption practices reflected a conservative nature. In contrast to the past, Libyans have adopted the view of internationalism and it is this view that has reduced ethnocentric tendencies and increased the appeal of supporting the redevelopment of the marketplace. Moreover, in line with the findings of Amine (2008), COO and CA are directly linked with each other. The linkages between the two themes are demonstrated through Libyans' perceptions towards a country's image. For instance, China still has a poor image in Libya and thus Chinese products are still considered of a lesser quality than German ones. Furthermore, the heterogeneous makeup of sub communities such as tribes, Bedouins and Berbers in Libya (Najem, 2004) denote different consumption practices and even in the present epoch, consumer animosity must be taken with caution when used as a basis for segmentation. In the next section, the theme of conservative vs. conspicuous consumption is discussed.

7.9 Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption: past experiences

Conservative consumption was widespread in the past due to political conditioning by the old regime. Citizens were not in a position to freely dictate their own consumption practices and had to praise the hegemonic status of the state. The narrative of conservative consumption has been denoted throughout this chapter by Libyans' perceptions towards consumption practices in the past. Consequently, there was little room for articulating a

different consumer culture other than the one directed by the state. Even though Libyans were well travelled and brought back foreign products, it was the only upper class citizens (many of whom were affiliated with the old regime) that could emulate conspicuous consumption and display their consumption practices. Hence, lower and middle class citizens envisaged foreign consumption as a symbol of freedom, wealth and prosperity but only the rich elite could afford to spend profusely. Even though attempts were made by the old regime to modernise the marketplace, consumption practices were still skewed by the ruling power. Nonetheless, Libyans were still drawn towards local consumption and attempted to maintain traditional cultural and religious values. In the next subsection, the present experiences with regards to conservative vs. conspicuous consumption are discussed.

7.9.1 Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption: present experiences

In the present epoch, the convergence of the social classes has led to a decline in praising regime status as a form of materialistic possession. In contrast to the past where support for the old regime was often by force, the level of materialism towards the state has declined because of new found freedoms. In a similar fashion, Libyans' consumption practices have abandoned conservative consumption except for in the family environment, where traditional values are maintained. In the marketplace however, Libyans have the flexibility to choose and the increase in salaries has allowed citizens to lean towards conspicuous consumption in order to reflect new social status and forms of acceptance in the marketplace. In line with trying to achieve the desirable, conspicuous consumption has allowed citizens to show off status, wealth, the ability to consume and also to escape the flux. The move towards a global consumption culture seems likely given the appetite for foreign products. The emergence of conspicuous consumption is possible because citizens have used consumption to help navigate through the flux. Though consumption may not be a long-term solution, present experiences are suggestive of a newly emerging consumer culture.

In the past, citizens had recognised disposable income but they could not consume conspicuously without attracting unwanted attention from the regime. Analogously, many citizens could not afford to travel abroad for shopping and this explains why in the present epoch, new consumption has been welcomed by citizens. If citizens were content with the state of consumption in the past, then there would have been insignificant reasoning

behind excessive consumption outside the home market. Thus, consumption practices abroad posed as forms of escapism and gave citizens the liberty of consuming at their leisure. Consuming for pleasure and status conforms to the concept of conspicuous consumption but consuming for what is permitted and what is available complements the concept of conservative consumption. The contrast in consumption between the past and the present is demonstrated in the following quote:

> *'One of the greatest things I have noticed from the revolution however is that Libyan consumers are less utilitarian and are spending more lavishly on consumer goods than they used to. Maybe this is down to an increase in disposable incomes or down to the fact that they had been oppressed for decades and now want to show what they have been missing out on.* (27)

Along with the desire to consume conspicuously, the marketplace is undergoing rapid redevelopments to reflect the change in consumption practices. Branded chains and cafés have opened up in Tripoli. The findings are reinforced by the secondary data. For example, a report published by Libya Herald in November 2012 claimed that there has been a retail explosion, especially in Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi. Compared to the past where there were few stores, many suburbs have seen the opening of clothes stores, cafés, computer stores, furniture and home decorative goods (Libya Herald, 2012). While the report acknowledged that the lack of security and stability obscures many foreign firms from investing in the country, it emphasised that there is no better time to enter the marketplace than under the current conditions.

7.9.2 Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption: Future expectations

Throughout the course of this chapter, citizens' expectations have been discussed. Participants expect more foreign companies to internationalise in Libya in the foreseeable future. Amidst the uncertainty and flux, the opportunities to branch out into Libya are considered greater than waiting for a stability epoch to occur. It is through consumption that citizens are using their new found freedoms to find other ways of having and being. At the same time, there is the expectation that tradition must be respected and cultural as well as religious values are upheld, particularly since citizens are trying to manage individual and collective forms of consumption. In support of the redevelopment of the marketplace, secondary data by Libya Herald (2012) suggests that the future is attractive

for foreign companies. For example, Erika Galea (the brand manager at Tripoli's Debenhams store) noted that: *"Libya is a surprising marketing with an appetite for growth"*. Likewise, one of the city's leading businessmen Husni Bey claimed: *"What you find in Libyan shops in terms of variety and pricing is now far greater than anywhere else in the world"*. A comparison to the rest of the world may appear slightly overstated but signals that Libya is incrementally transitioning closer towards a stability epoch. In the next subsection, the findings for conservative vs. conspicuous consumption are positioned within the current literature.

7.9.3 Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption: positioning the findings within the current literature

Depending on the state of flux, consumers can be guided by either becoming conspicuous in their consumption or more conservative. Dichotomously, Libyans have transitioned from having conservative consumption practices towards more conspicuous consumption practices in a present epoch. In the past, it would seem that Libyans had to play a conservative role in order to match state norms. However, in light of revolutionary change, citizens no longer have to perform to please the state but can *actually* perform their *own* roles to match their *own* consumption aspirations. Therefore, citizens have discovered new ways of *having* and *being* (Belk, 1989) and are demonstrating their own consumption practices in a way that was not previously possible. Thus, citizens are capitalising on new found freedoms to consume for pleasure, enjoyment and delight, all of which point towards the theme of conspicuous consumption. Although, hedonism (O'Shaughnessy et al., 2002; Migone, 2007) and materialism (the value placed on the possession of material objects) (Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002) may be contributing towards consuming conspicuously, in previous studies they have been examined separately. However, the findings have revealed that it is the *combination* of hedonism and materialism that constitutes part of conspicuous consumption. Therefore, they are integrated together and not viewed separately. Likewise, the author of this thesis contends that status consumption (Bourdieu, 1984; O'Cass and McEwen, 2004) is akin to conspicuous consumption.

Due to the limited research on conservative consumption, there is a number of studies that have tackled utilitarian consumption which were considered to bridge the current lacuna (Babin et al., 1994; Bussiere, 2011; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Okada, 2005;

Overby and Lee, 2006). However, utilitarian consumption implies consuming products only for utility benefits and not much more beyond the products' purpose. Hence, the view of utilitarian consumption does not match with the theme of conservative consumption. Consequently, the manner in which conservative consumption is applied in this thesis connotes the extent to which consumers consume within their own boundaries and traditions and the degree to which consumers may also cut back on consumption because of financial constraints, social or political pressures/restrictions, CA and CE (Shechter, 2011). Therefore, conservative consumption is positioned as an emergent theme within the findings of this thesis.

The finding that Libyans are seeking to emulate a global consumer culture is consistent with Veblen's (2009) view of emulation. He defined emulation as the stimulus for consumers comparing themselves to others within the same or similar social class. It is also considered discriminatory practice because consumers emulating a certain consumer culture have to visibly display their consumption practices (e.g. through branded goods).Wasteful consumption can accompany emulation when the desire to conspicuously consume exceeds expectations. In a present epoch, citizens are coping with the flux by consuming but their long-term goals and aspirations are still unclear. As other studies have demonstrated (e.g. Elbashier and Nicholls, 1983; Marinov, 2007) the findings are also indicative of a growing global consumer culture in the ME. As suggested by several authors (Appadurai, 1990; Craig and Douglas, 2006; Douglas and Craig, 2011), marketplace transformations are not stagnant and are subsequent to changes in both the macro and micro environment. On the macro-level, Libyans have had to endure past experiences of oppression and restrictions under the old regime. Whereas in the present, the micro environment (Libyans' consumption practices) presents citizens who are trying to experience the desirable. Similar to global consumption movements in the Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia (Assad 2007), present experiences of new consumption and future expectations signify that Libyans are moving towards a global consumer culture. Libyans' demand for products and services of a high quality is consistent with the views of Fry (2001) and Martin (1999). The former argued that the demand has come about as a result of a rise in self-image congruence and conspicuous consumption practices, while the latter suggested that young consumers in particular have the desire to spend copiously on high-end foreign products as part of a materialistic lifestyle.

In summary, while Libyan consumption practices have changed from being conservative to conspicuous, citizens are still trying to maintain traditional values but at the same time

experience what they have been missing out on. The changes have been shaped by political punctuations and social influences in the marketplace, which have created new opportunities for citizens. At the same time, punctuations are responsible for polarisations in society, which in turn have contributed to the flux. Nevertheless, Libyans are keen to disseminate their consumption practices and use consumption as a way to deal with the flux. In Table 9 and 10, the pertinent themes affecting consumption practices are compared according to past experiences, present experiences and future expectations.

Themes	Past (past experiences)	Present epoch (present experiences)	Future expectations
Consumption and flux	• The regime maintained a state of control and had tightly defined boundaries. • Consumption restricted to political conditioning. • Globalisation was restricted.	• Looser censorship. • Consumption helping to fill a missing void in citizens' lives as they can now consume freely. • New catalogue of consumerism in Libya.	• New consumption possible because citizens want to experience what they have been missing out on. • Change in marketing philosophy predicted to continue.
Social classes & consumption	• Only upper class and regime members advocated their consumption practices. • Lower and middle class cautious about revealing their consumption practices.	• Convergence of lower and middle class, decline in upper class. • Rich elite have been exposed and middle class spending more on consumption.	• Consumption practices expected to be more transparent. • Citizens attribute identity alongside earned salaries.
Corruption & consumption	• The state dictated product availability. • Neglect for lower and middle social classes caused discontent. • Many businesses nationalised by government.	• Wasta has become more transparent and citizens are more ethically conscious. • Citizens no longer afraid to conceal their consumption practices.	• Citizens more aware of dangers of wasta and corruption. • Increase in social exchanges and greater equality in consumption practices.
Individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption	• Historical colonialism helped shape Libyan consumption. • Libyans used to regularly visit Italy in groups to buy Italian products. • Closely knitted collectivist community.	• Increase in family buying units because of new product offerings. • Citizens are now free to choose their own consumption practices. • Libyans still value tradition but are becoming individualistic.	• Increase in foreign consumption as Libyans look to capitalise on new found freedoms. • Tradition and colonial influences pulling citizens towards collectivistic consumption.
Religious values	• Religious values guided citizens was embedded within Libyan cultural values. • Citizens adopted their own levels of religiosity. • Belief in fatalism prevented challenging the status quo.	• Egalitarian view of religion and society maintaining a secular society. • Clash between western values and tradition. • Acculturated consumption practices.	• Wishes for religion to be sacralised away from the state. • Libyans want similar consumption opportunities to citizens in western countries.

Table 9: Effect of themes of consumption practices in Libya- Source: Author.

Themes	Past (past experiences	Present epoch (present experiences)	Future expectations
Polarised communities & consumption	• Fear of conversing with friends and family due to the Qaddafi regime. • Hidden identities were common.	• Increase in polarisations in society. • Militia groups want greater legitimacy and control. • Libyans have more trust in friends and family.	• Uncertainty an increase in flux due to polarisations in society. • Consumption still expected to increase despite the flux.
Desired vs. desirable effects	• Lack of free choice in the marketplace. • Counterfeit products and services. • State implemented the desired.	• Consumption important for driving the desirable as citizens have more choice. Desirable is also reshaping family units. • Youth well acculturated but older generation now exposed to new consumer culture.	• Contrasting views towards the desirable (Cosmopolitan citizens and tribal groups). • Citizens still confused about what they want due to the sudden impact of consumption.
Consumer ethnocentrism	• Absence of genuine ethnocentricity because citizens were coerced into praising regime status. • Qaddafi selected which products came into the country. • Local products scarce due to difficult set up conditions.	• Ethnocentric tendencies towards encouraging local consumption but also polycentric views towards foreignness. • Ability to sample the unknown has resulted in less ethnocentrism.	• Increase in local production as Libyans are more patriotic. • Repatriates acculturated consumption practices may reduce ethnocentrism.
Country of origin effects	• Citizens constrained by what was available. • Unstable political relationships dictated product imports. • Only regime members could choose products COO.	• Preference for products from colonial states. • Preference for Arabic products manufactured in western nations.	• Libyans expected to consume foreign products because of product quality hegemonic perceptions of the west. • Growing influence of COM and COD
Consumer Animosity	• Animosity varied and lasted for specific period. • Embargoes on Israeli products. • Citizenry protests were very uncommon.	• Protests still uncommon except for religious issues. • Religious shiaism books prohibited. • Regional animosity between Eastern and Western Libya.	• Citizens able to distinguish between animosity towards a country and its products. • Historical animosity towards Israeli products.
Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption	• Widespread conservative consumption. • Little room for any other consumer culture than the one imposed by the state. • Conspicuous consumption reserved for rich elite.	• Materialistic perceptions towards the state has declined. • Move towards conspicuous consumption but conservative consumption in the family unit. • Citizens want to consume for status and well-being.	• Conspicuous consumption a way to reduce flux. • Respect for tradition to strengthen family units. • Opportunity to internationalise within the current flux greater than in a state of stability.

Table 10: Effect of themes of consumption practices in Libya - Source: Author.

In contrast to Egypt, Libyan citizens have hedged towards conspicuous consumption. This has led to new consumption choices and a newly emerging consumer culture. In chapter eight, which is presented next, the two nation cases, Egypt and Libya are compared and contrasted.

Chapter 8 Comparison Chapter
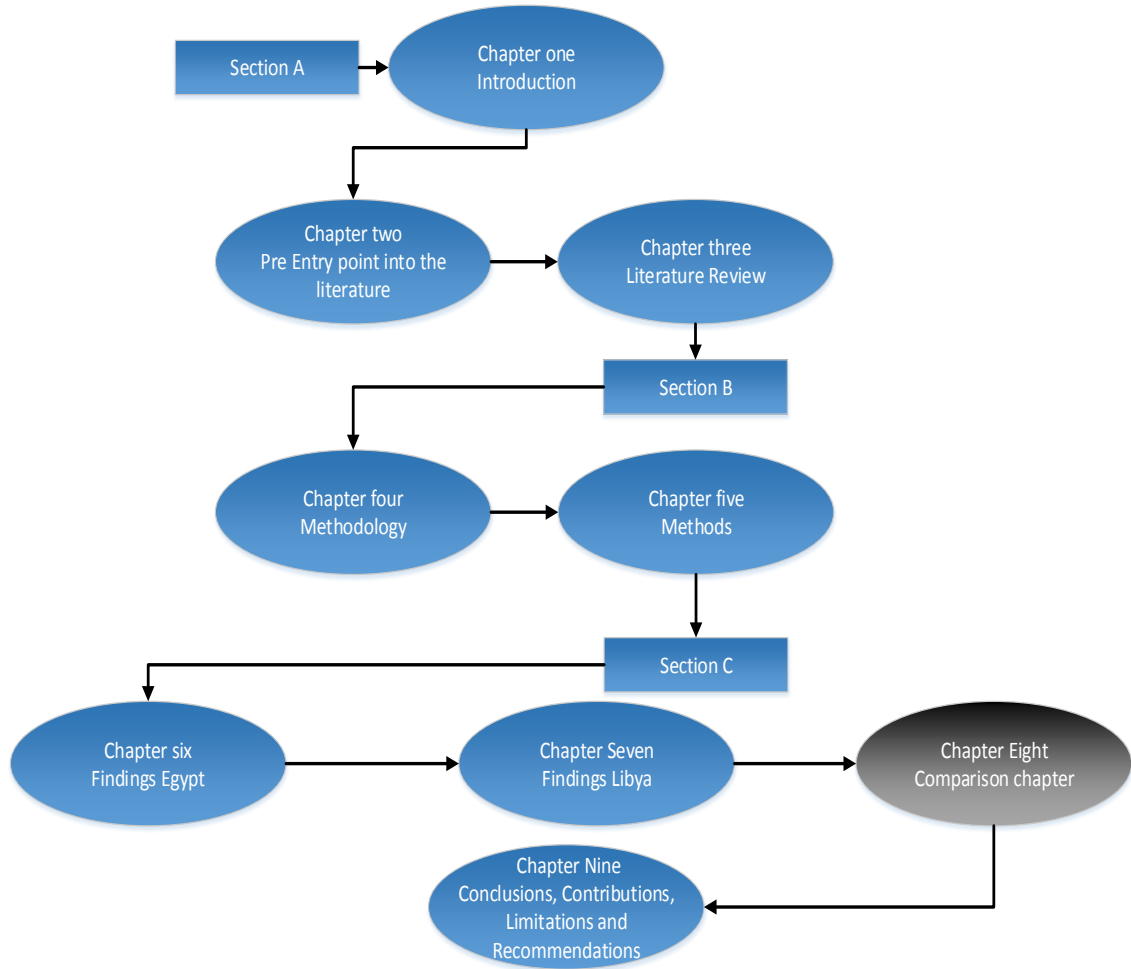
Figure 19: Route Map- The position of the current chapter in the thesis- Source: Author.

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings for Egypt and Libya are compared in order to provide a comprehensive account of consumption practices. This chapter builds upon the findings from chapters six and seven. A conceptual model is also presented in order to illustrate the most pertinent themes affecting consumption practices across the two cases. To maintain consistency, the formation of the focussed codes remains identical to those in chapters six and seven. In the next section, the theme of consumption and flux is compared and contrasted across the two cases; Cairo and Tripoli.

8.1.2 Consumption and flux

In the past, political distance and conditioning were widespread in Cairo and Tripoli. Citizens were subject to differing levels of oppression. For decades, Egypt had a socialist leader (Gamel Abdel Nasser), while Libya was subject to forty years of socialist rule under Qaddafi (Ali and Harvie, 2013). One of the key differences between Cairo and Tripoli is that although Egyptian citizens were politically conditioned under the old Mubarak regime, they could take part in democratic elections and make choices for the country whereas in Libya, citizens never had an opportunity to choose their own futures as the old governing rule decided the fate of its people. Conversely, in the build up to the revolutions, both Egyptians and Libyans had grown increasingly frustrated with being directed by the state. In both cases, it was the element of fear and punishment that withheld citizens from speaking out for changes, particularly in Libya, where being outspoken was deemed an offensive gesture and often resulted in punishment. To an extent, Egyptians and Libyans had growing knowledge of social media and were becoming technologically savvy (Markham, 2014; Shirazi, 2013). However, in retrospect, apart from witnessing successful regime change in Tunisia, citizens did not have any idea about starting their own revolution. Egypt learned from the Tunisian experience, while Libya learnt from both countries experiences. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that the revolutionary epochs in Egypt and Libya are entirely different. Egypt's revolution was achieved via mass protests and demonstrations, whereas Libya was an all-out civil war.

At the time of writing (February 2015), the issue of political distance is evident in both countries. General Abdel Fattah Al Sisi (Ottaway, 2014) was recently elected as the new president. The country is still struggling with polarised communities while Libya is yet to find a permanent prime minister and tensions have increased between civil society and rural tribes/militias (Chothia, 2014) with the most recent clashes involving militia control of Tripoli airport (Stephen, 2014). Across the two cases, participants agreed that citizens were politically ignorant because they had not seen anything other than decades of continuous authoritarian rule. The findings propose that by imposing the desired, governmental rule in both states maintained a sense of control and a firm grip on citizens. Although the flux in Egypt does not reflect the Libyan case, there are comparable *flux characteristics*. These are an increase in political distance, poverty, and polarisations in society. The ongoing flux appears to be pushing away stability and is causing insecurity. In the past, the state's grip on both societies prevented outbreaks of discontent so to an

extent, citizens were confined within tightly defined boundaries and could not protest against the state.

Up until Libyan sanctions were lifted in 2003 (Abod-her, 2013), the old Qaddafi regime had resisted globalisation and was reluctant to move from a planned to a market based economy. Traditionally, Libyans had limited choice and modes of consumption in the marketplace. On the other hand, Egypt already had an established market based economy with a growing global consumer culture and a variety of modes of consumption to choose from (Abaza, 2001). Similarly, Egypt was backed by the popular support of foreign countries and never resisted globalisation. Therefore, the marketplace allowed citizens to independently choose their own consumption practices, whereas in Libya, the lack of marketplace offerings constrained citizens, who had always desired global consumption but could not actualise it. To a certain degree, the lifting of sanctions in Libya saw minor developments such as international investment projects, but very little attention was paid to citizens and the development of the marketplace. Egyptians and Libyans alike were becoming increasingly technologically savvy via exposure to the internet and pan-Arab satellite (Abu-Fadil, 2010). However, Libyans could not pursue any products or services seen online or on TV because of the lack of availability of modes of consumption. Whereas in Egypt, the gradual expansion of the marketplace and growing number of shopping arenas allowed citizens to follow up their consumption practices. The exposure to global consumption information, at least on the online scene, made Libyans wonder why they could not have similar consumption options in Libya.

The findings suggest that globalisation may have helped assist the Libyan revolution, especially since citizens were in favour of democracy, freedom, civil liberties and wanted to become more modernised in their consumption practices. In the present epoch, newly discovered freedoms have opened the gateway to the evolutionary (global environment) for Libyans and globalisation is seen as a by-product of the revolution. The same cannot be claimed for Egypt as historically, globalisation was rapidly expanding across the country. However, in the build up to the revolution, both Egyptians and Libyans were considered oppressed and wanted to voice their own opinions but could not challenge the state, at least until the time of regime change. A problem was that flux actually built up through the regimes' accumulated power, which resulted in uneven development, rising food prices (Ahmed, 2013; Westall and Perry, 2013), economic woes (Banco, 2014; Saleh and Evans, 2014), wealth distribution (Hanafi, 2014) and political corruption (Ahram online, 2013b; Daragahi, 2013). For the flux to combust and initiate a process of change,

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Egyptians and Libyans had to utilise drivers such as social media, activist groups, charity organisations, armed militias and rebel groups (in Libya) to overpower their respective regimes. Therefore, flux was required to spread chaos and anarchy to spark change. The issue of state censorship in both countries - without which citizens would not have had a reason to rebel against political structures - is significant to the combustion of flux. The premise of this argument contends that flux has had to occur to order to promote change.

In the present epoch, the flux has constrained citizens in both countries but at the very least, they have achieved new found freedoms in terms of being able to openly criticise their governments. This finding is crucial to consumption practices, particularly in Libya, because constraint on thought prevented citizens from having any kind of choice in the marketplace. In the past, Libyans had to settle for what was available and what the state permitted. Analogously, Egyptians also demanded greater availability and a variety of consumption options but did not experience severe consumption censorship. In contrast to the past, Egyptians and Libyans' present experiences of consumption are seen as a means to fulfil a void and a mechanism for escaping the flux. Despite the contextual differences of both revolutions, the findings have revealed that consumption was not only a call for the revolution but also a cause of it.

In terms of future expectations, the epiphenomenal state of change in Egypt, and particularly that of regime change, is evidence of the spread of flux but also suggests that Egyptians are still battling for greater consumption as a way to redevelop the marketplace and achieve changes in unemployment, economy and equality. This is why Egyptians are continuing to protest publicly and engage in civil conflicts to promote further reforms. On the contrary, in Tripoli rapid marketplace developments are taking place and providing citizens with global brands such as Debenhams, Marks & Spencer, Mango (Attwood, 2012; Daragahi, 2014) and the chance to experiment with new consumption practices. Since Qaddafi's removal from power, the marketplace has slowly expanded and Tripoli is showing signs of becoming a consumption metropolis. An effort to engage citizens with consumption is explicitly facilitated by freedom of expression because Libyans can display and carry out their own consumption practices without being conditioned by the state. On the other hand, in Cairo, Egyptians appear to be disgruntled by the flux and although citizens can exercise greater freedom of expression, the present flux is clouding future expectations. To an extent, regime change has liberated Egyptians in the marketplace in so far as they can now converse about political parties without fear and censorship. On the contrary, there are few new reforms in the marketplace to match

up with redevelopment of the marketplace in Tripoli. However, it would be unjust to compare the two marketplaces especially since Cairo, historically, has had an established marketplace and a growing consumer culture.

Although the flux in both countries is preventing potential foreign and local firms from setting up in the marketplace, Egyptians and Libyans now have long-term visions and hopes for the future, something both parties were missing in the past because citizens' mind-sets were obscured by dictated thoughts from the old ruling powers. As mind-sets have been liberated, citizens have the opportunity to plan their futures and consumption is seen as a core driver of change. The paradox is that citizens in Tripoli are keen to conspicuously display their consumption practices and spend excessively on foreign products and services, while citizens in Cairo wish to safeguard their incomes, save rather than consume and revert back to tradition as a way to make sense of the future. Whether consciously or sub-consciously, Libyans are using foreign consumption as a means to redevelop the marketplace, while Egyptians are willing to use local consumption as a mechanism for reducing flux, so long as political changes are trusted by the majority. In the next section, it is important to compare and contrast the theme of social classes because Egypt and Libya have an embedded social class hierarchy and thus, consumption practices across the three social classes (lower, middle and upper) differ.

8.2 Social classes and consumption

In the past, upper class citizens and the rich elite in Egypt mirrored the consumption practices of the upper class and rich elite in Libya. Both parties were seen as accumulating unprecedented wealth and could afford to spend copiously on products and services. Connections with political elites provided benefits and preferential treatment. In effect, social structures in both countries were similar and consisted of a three tier hierarchy comprising upper, middle and lower class citizens. Similarly, in the present epoch, a decline in upper class citizens is relative to the regime change and injustice in Egypt whereas in Libya, upper class citizens linked with the old regime have either been reprimanded or have fled overseas (McElroy, 2013). A key difference between consumption practices in Cairo and Tripoli is that Egyptians across the social classes could consume unconditionally and advocate their own consumption practices. On the other hand in Libya, ordinary citizens took great caution and undertook conservative

consumption either, in order to not attract unwanted attention from the old Qaddafi regime or because they had limited disposable income.

A social class system was traditionally common in Cairo and Tripoli. On the contrary, an interesting finding was that the upper class and rich elite in both countries have either dispersed, declined or been demoted to the middle class because much of their accumulated wealth has been taken away. Furthermore, regime figureheads often prioritised rich elite members of society because of social and economic ties. In the present epoch, a form of convergence has occurred within the middle class segments, giving citizens greater disposable income and the consumption power to spend in the marketplace. On the other hand, Egyptian middle class consumers are becoming more ethically conscious and are choosing to safeguard their spending until the flux subsides. However in Tripoli, middle class Libyan citizens have decided to signpost their future with consumption. In the past, another issue that affected consumption practices was corruption, particularly amongst richer segments of Egyptian and Libyan society. Therefore, in the next subsection, the theme of corruption and consumption is compared and contrasted across Cairo and Tripoli.

8.3 Corruption and consumption

In the past, corruption was widespread in Cairo and Tripoli because citizens received preferential treatment based on nepotistic ties and *wasta* relations. Corruptive practices are important to consumption practices as citizens are dependent on actors (friends, family, organisational employees) to make informed consumption choices. A problem occurs when corruption conflicts with stability, an element which is core to determining the direction of change. Nepotistic ties and *wasta* networks are still very common in Cairo and Tripoli in the present epoch, but the level of corruption has reduced as upper class citizens' consumption practices have become more transparent and there have been calls for more ethical grounds to be applied to consumption. Nevertheless, *wasta* is still a common practice but in contrast to the past, its present use in consumption pertains to the extent of consumption recommendations from friends and family. To some degree, *wasta* networks have been beneficial, especially in steering past consumption practices in Cairo, because consumption could be enjoyed conspicuously. In Tripoli however, consumption was seen as a chore and a necessity rather than a pleasurable experience. Consequently, *wasta* networks are influential in guiding Libyan citizens on what to buy and which

consumption trends to follow. Contrariwise, in Cairo *wasta* networks are used as a way to provide protection and reduce uncertainty avoidance in the marketplace. Both Egyptian and Libyan citizens are trying to make sense of present consumption practices. Libyans appear to have become more individualistic in their consumption, while Egyptians have become more collectivistic by retreating to tradition. To gain a better understanding of cultural values, the theme of individualistic vs. collectivistic consumption is discussed in the next section.

8.4 Individualistic vs collectivistic consumption

There are a number of important cultural and historical differences between Cairo and Tripoli. While both metropolises have been subject to colonialism and invasions from the Ottoman Turks and French (in Cairo) and Ottoman Turks and Italians (in Tripoli), Egyptians and Libyans have integrated parts of colonial culture with their own. Colonial influences are important in consumption practices as noticed amongst Libyan citizens who still disseminate cultural aspects from the Italian culture and share common cuisines. In Cairo, aspects of French culture and language are embedded within the local Egyptian culture. Traditionally, Cairo has been home to various religions with the majority of the population following the Islamic faith (predominantly Sunni and some Shia), followed by Christians and Jews. Despite differences in tribal affiliations, the family unit, honour and family name (Uskul et al., 2005) are still of great significance in Cairo and Tripoli in the present epoch.

Consumption choices are often determined by family and friend recommendations. In relation to the existing literature (Hall, 1976; Hofstede 2001; 2005), Hofstede and Hall's cultural distinctions are rendered invalid as the Arab countries are grouped together in Hofstede's study while Hall only assumed two cultural continuums-high and low. By contrast, present experiences of consumption indicate that Egyptians and Libyans have become more collectivistic and have trended towards shopping in groups. Family members represent the wider family unit and there is a duty to preserve the family name by refraining from acts (such as sinning) which could bring shame upon the family. A patriarchal society is ubiquitous in both Cairo and Tripoli and it is usually a male leader (usually the father who acts as head of the household) who has the final say. In the past and in Libya's case, Qaddafi seemed to be the patriarchal leader over ordinary citizens, and his actions distorted consumption practices by promoting what was acceptable in the

marketplace. To an extent, the absence of a consumer culture in Tripoli explains why citizens are now shopping excessively in groups. In Cairo, family time spent in the marketplace has reduced because of safety and security concerns and citizens are choosing to consume within the comfort of the family environment. In contrast to Cairo, the main problem for Libyan citizens in the past was a lack of consumption choice and limited modes of consumption in the marketplace. While Cairo was exposed to a growing global consumer culture and a multiplicity of modes of consumption such as shopping malls, cinemas, bowling alleys and retail outlets, Libyans were heavily reliant on informal marketplaces such as souks and bazaars. Much of the time, informal marketplaces stocked counterfeit brands and even though Libyans desired authentic global brands, the old Qaddafi regime had resisted foreignness in the country. In contrast to the past, Libyans have now become individualistic in the marketplace because of the ability to choose their own consumption practices and make informed consumption choices. However, as much as the present epoch is being approached by individualistic pleas for change, forms of collectivism are still very much embedded within Egyptian and Libyan social structures.

In the present epoch, Libyan society appears prepared to navigate around the flux, inflict desirable consumption practices and keep attuned with the present whereas Egyptian society has a very definite awareness of past consumption. The paradox is that Libyan citizens see consumption as shaping their country's future while Egyptians do not share this view as they have been used to consuming and have various modes of consumption to choose from. In spite of the historical and cultural similarities, Egyptian and Libyan consumption practices are very much heterogeneous and reflect the state of flux and stability. As much as Egyptians are returning to tradition, the change in their consumption practices is not assisted by the decline of local businesses, which were indicated in the examples provided by the participants on informal markets (souks and bazaars). Egyptians have continuously used the informal marketplace to choose local goods and keep in touch with tradition, whereas in Tripoli, informal marketplaces were almost compulsory if Libyans wanted to consume because of the lack of consumption choices in the formal marketplace. It is precisely the lack of choice and the freedom to choose which explains why Libyans have acquired new consumption practices. The consequences of reduced consumption from informal marketplaces may be having a detrimental effect on traditional cultural values because Egyptians and Libyans used the informal marketplace to preserve their own traditional values. The souk or bazaar was seen as a place that evoked heritage and nostalgia as citizens grew up around them.

A global consumer culture in Cairo and an emerging one in Tripoli may be threatening not only traditional shopping venues such as souks and bazaars but also traditional values because of the emphasis on foreign consumption from formal marketplaces such as shopping malls and retail outlets. Although the *infitah* period opened up opportunities for local Egyptians and signalled the transformation from a planned to a market based economy, the revolution has been proof that there is still a lot to be desired to achieve a stability epoch. Similarly, Libya is now showing signs of moving towards a market based economy by emphasising developments in the marketplace. To date, the bulk of developments have taken place in the retail sector, a fact which illustrates how important consumption is to driving change. In contrast to Libyans, Americanisation and western values have long been accepted and embedded within Egyptian culture and consumption practices. The acceptance of foreignness is a key reason for the growth of a global consumer culture in Cairo. Egyptian citizens are no longer drawn towards foreign consumption because they are conscious about spending on the necessities. Furthermore, traditional cultural values have been reinstated by rediscovering identities and patriotism but for some Egyptians, western values are threatening traditional values by persuading young citizens of the benefits of a global consumer culture.

Another issue is that some Egyptian and Libyan citizens have repatriated back to their countries. Having experienced different consumer cultures abroad, repatriates have brought new consumption practices back with them and disseminated them to friends and family. Consequently, consumption practices are affected by repatriates' life experiences abroad, consumption choices and acculturated tastes. The repatriate communities are significant to the development of the marketplaces in Cairo and Tripoli because the contemporary consumer cultures experienced abroad can be transferred to others, a fact that leads to a form of hybridised consumption. However, in Libya, citizens who worked abroad could not do the same because of the resistance to foreignness. Similarly for Egyptians, the exposure to a global consumer culture abroad becomes an implicitly influencing mechanism while in the foreign country, but on the return to the home state it becomes an explicitly influencing mechanism which causes Egyptian citizens to lean towards and desire foreign products. On the other hand, a global consumer culture only has an impact if the foreign product is available and accessible in the home country. Another important theme which is integral to consumption practices is religious values. This theme is discussed in the next section.

8.5 Religious values

Religious values are found to be integral to consumption practices in Cairo with the majority of citizens guided by the Islamic faith. Unlike Egyptians, the religious demographic in Tripoli is predominantly Muslim so there is less opportunity for divided religious communities, an issue which is growing stronger in Cairo and damaging the social community. Religion appears key to reducing uncertainty amongst Egyptians and Libyans, because citizens refer to their faith as a means of guidance in the marketplace. To an extent, it is the strong belief in fatalism (Sidani and Thornberry, 2009; Tuncalp, 1988) that kept citizens patient and pulled them back from calling for changes in the past. The nature of the revolution contradicted fatalistic perspectives because citizens reacted against their own political structures. In reference to past experiences, the old Qaddafi regimes' resistance to globalisation indicated a sense of animosity towards modernity. Similarly, Egyptian participants viewed religion as a separate antecedent to modernity and in the build up to the revolution, they broke away from the status quo. In doing so, pulled away from traditional religious norms in order to challenge the state. The same may be argued for Libya, but the scenario was completely different due to the armed conflict. Nevertheless, religious values are still very much ingrained within consumption practices and are viewed as obligatory.

Religious values firmly guided Egyptian and Libyan consumption practices in the past and continue to do so in the present epoch. However, the newly emerging consumer culture and changing consumption practices in Tripoli are found to conflict with religious and cultural values because of an emphasis on foreign consumption. Analogously, in Cairo and Tripoli, citizens felt that religion should be a source but not *the* source of legislative ruling because religious liberalism was found to complement new consumption practices and freedom of expression. At the same time, there are still some religious requirements to abide by such as the consumption of pork or alcohol.

In relation to future expectations, although Libyan and particularly Egyptian citizens have varying degrees of religiosity, they are strongly against religion and *Sharia* as the sole governing device. Instead, participants propose that political systems should incorporate a mix of *civil* and *Sharia* law. There is a consensus that religion must be practiced on an individual level and not on a state level. Nonetheless, there are still firm expectations that religious values will continue to be grounded within consumption practices and therefore

are seen as an important component of consumption practices. In the next section, the theme of polarised communities and consumption is compared and contrasted against Cairo and Tripoli.

8.5.1 Polarised communities and consumption

In the past, the findings suggest that both Egyptians and Libyans have suffered from oppression which concealed their true national identities. It is only via present experiences that citizens feel liberated and are able to access their own individual personalities. The concealment of identities also affected the social communication in Egyptian and Libyan societies and constrained consumption practices because citizens were always cautious before expressing themselves. It is the development of the mind-set and new found freedoms that has liberated Egyptians thoughts and ideas in the present epoch. Unlike Egypt, the lack of marketplace developments in Tripoli meant that citizens had limited places to socially interact with each other. In both cases, there was the issue of hidden identities in the past. In Libya, the limits placed on freedom of expression denied Libyans an opportunity to liberate their mind-sets. Many Libyans were cautious about what they would say, even amongst close family members and peers because there was always a fear that something could leak out and be caught by the old regime. On the contrary, in the present epoch, hidden identities (also known as social surprises) have surfaced in Egypt as family members have been found to support opposition groups. On the other hand, hidden identities were not as common in the past because there was less opportunity to cast admiration for a political or religious group. Similarly, in Libya, hidden identities have declined as citizens are now able to trust friends and family without fearing the state.

The consequences of hidden identities have implications for consumption and the family unit, which is of prime importance as citizens tend to shop together and generate consumption recommendations from friends and family before making consumption choices. Moreover, the patriarchal nature of the family unit denotes how to consume. For instance, the father figure is often responsible for guiding consumption choices and for making family decisions. Consequently, hidden identities distort consumption practices by threatening the family unit. Betraying the family results in the alienation of family members from family consumption practices in the marketplace. On the other hand in Tripoli, families have not experienced the same hidden identities and greater emphasis is placed on strengthening the family unit. However, in the past, a lack of trust between

friends and family meant that citizens' social exchanges with each other were very reserved and citizens took caution in who they trusted for fear of the other party having affiliations with the old regime. While Egyptians are concentrating on maintaining family units, Libyan families are now encouraging younger members to study abroad. Therefore, the family loyalty is still significant and there is a duty to make the family proud. A difference compared to the past is that Libyans can now venture abroad for study or work without fearing the state. In corroboration with Egyptians, the failures of one family member affect the whole family unit and there is still a moral expectation that younger family members support older ones later in life. The main difference between the Egyptian and Libyan family units in the present epoch is that the polarised communities in Cairo are destroying family ties and family members are spending more time at home; whereas in Tripoli, families have expanded their consumption practices by shopping together in the marketplace. Family loyalty will nearly always outstrip social class and regime change and is embedded within both Egyptians and Libyans.

The hidden identities, political conditioning and oppression by previous regimes explains why citizens in both countries feel a new sense of belonging. On the flipside, not everyone shares the same sentiment. For instance, the polarised communities in Egypt have resulted in segregated consumption based on political and religious beliefs. So for instance, Christians are deterred from shopping in predominantly Muslim shopping districts and vice versa. Also, shops and businesses that were boycotted by anti-supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) are likely to stay away, leaving MB communities to operate independently. In Libya, tribal communities against the revolution have formed militias against the government because they feel their rebel efforts in the lead to the revolution have gone unnoticed. Even though the findings suggest that Libya is moving towards a market based economy, the alienation of minority communities is disturbing marketplace progress whereas in Cairo, segregated consumption and polarisations are preventing marketplace reforms. In any event, the present flux in both countries must be understood as ongoing change. Despite the existence of hidden identities in Cairo and growing militias in and around Tripoli, the argument is that once the turbulent flux subsides and an agenda is reached where different communities and religious groups make compromises, then a stability epoch may edge closer. Compared to the past, citizens have achieved the desirable in so far as it is acknowledged that they are in control of pushing marketplace reforms. Therefore, in the next section, the theme of desired vs. desirable effects are discussed.

8.6 Desired vs. desirable effects

The findings indicate that the old regimes in Egypt and Libya implemented the desired in a bid to condition society with state norms. An important reason for the occurrence of the revolutions is because citizens wished for the desirable and wanted to be able to feel liberated as well as challenge the status quo. As much as citizens demanded changes, the findings have revealed that the revolution was not only a call for new consumption but also a cause of it. Even though Cairo already had an established marketplace, citizens had little say and demanded further modes of consumption whereas in Tripoli, Libyans wanted to experience new consumption after growing frustrated with the state of the marketplace. In essence, the desirable was a key catalyst in setting off change. On a demographic level, the Egyptian and Libyan youth has always been attuned with global brands, but in Tripoli, the youth did not have that liberty. Similarly, while older Egyptians were not restricted from travelling abroad, older citizens in Tripoli that lived through Qaddafi's regime finally have the opportunity to experience a changing marketplace and see the outside world. Part of the desire to develop the marketplace comes from family achievements as a form of status and wellbeing. Therefore, Egyptian and Libyan citizens use the family almost as a reference symbol or guideline that they must follow in order to negotiate their consumption choices within the marketplace.

The findings add substantial knowledge to a limited existing literature by illustrating that the effects of the revolution have resulted in the desirable as a platform to be reached. The desirable is also a catalyst for driving change as citizens in Egypt and Libya can advocate what they want. The production of the desirable is not without its limitations however, to a certain extent, excessive freedoms in Cairo and Tripoli have intensified polarised communities which have contributed to the state of flux. As a contraposition, citizens' desires have led to the opening of the mind-set and exposed their own thoughts in a way that was not possible previously. The main difference between Egyptian and Libyan citizens with regards to the desired vs. the desirable is although Egyptians feared the state to a certain extent, Libyans feared that the state would instantly punish them if they spoke out. Gaining the desirable was a significant achievement in Libya whereas in Egypt, the desirable was more a question of *when* it will happen and not if. As suggested by the participants, the achievement of the desirable is an ongoing learning process as further changes are still desired. Consequently, Egyptian and Libyan citizens have matured in terms of deciding what they want. Another difference is that in Tripoli,

Libyans appear less likely to revolt than citizens in Cairo. The latest regime change in Egypt is indicative that citizens' desires can no longer go unnoticed.

A key problem identified in the literature review, is the incomprehension of marketing activities in emerging ME societies such as Egypt and Libya (Burgess and Steenkamp, 2006). Firms are still driven by a supply and demand profit orientated philosophy and are not motivated by what marketing has to offer. Without comprehension of marketing activities, it is difficult to keep track of consumption practices and understand the consumers' needs and wants. However, the findings contradict this view and suggest that firms in Cairo and Tripoli now have a greater comprehension of marketing activities than in the past, because citizens' mind-sets have changed. In terms of consumption practices, a better understanding of marketing philosophy is needed to gauge what citizens need and want from the marketplace in the present epoch. The opportunity to enter the marketplace amidst the flux is seen as an asset to foreign firms, citizens in Cairo (who wish to expand their consumption of foreign products and services) and also in Tripoli, as citizens wish to sample new consumption. However, while Egyptians appear to have a clear vision for what needs to be done in the country, Libyan participants argued that citizens are not sure what it is exactly that they want other than the fact that a revolution has taken place. The uncertainty caused by confused visions for the future explains why Libyans have turned to consumption as a way to augment future changes. The anxiety and worry caused by flux has made citizens impatient, particularly in Cairo. While Egyptians noted that change would take years because of the scope of reforms that are required, Libyans welcomed healthy and gradual developments as citizens are still recovering from the trauma of the revolution and because the visions and aspirations are still slightly unclear. The events of the past have also assisted in shaping present ethnocentric tendencies, an issue which is discussed in the next section.

8.7 Consumer ethnocentrism

In the past, the absence of a consumer driven society meant that Libyans held little ethnocentric tendencies. Official branded products and services were scarce and alike Egyptian made products, Libyan products were considered to be of inferior quality so there was not an opportunity to be biased towards the national products. On the contrary, in the present epoch, Egyptian citizens are attracted towards local Egyptian products but have not become totally ethnocentric. Instead, Egyptians have discovered a new identity

and sense of belonging which has prompted future aspirations to support the local cause but does not necessarily mean an increase in ethnocentricity. By contrast, Libyans are more keen to consume than support the local cause, perhaps because Libyans are caught up in the commotion of new consumption. A three tiered social class hierarchy still exists in the Egyptian and Libyan societies The social classes are important with regards to ethnocentric tendencies because poorer Egyptian citizens are believed to lean more towards the local cause; whereas the upper class citizens are finding pleasure by consuming foreign products, especially since the regime change has conflicted with the political and social ideals of some upper class citizens. The opposite is true in Tripoli. Libyan social classes are converging since Qaddafi's removal from power. Disposable income has increased for some, while for the poorer segments of society, consumption is based on survival and therefore ethnocentric tendencies are less of an issue.

With the achievement of new found freedoms, both Egyptians and Libyans have discovered a new sense of belonging, rediscovered their identities and become more patriotic towards their country. The findings correspond with the previous literature on national identity and patriotism (Ahmed et al., 2010; Balabanis et al., 2001). However, the perspective towards the implications on consumption practices differentiates the findings of this study from the existing literature as citizens in Cairo and Tripoli did not lose their identities completely but rediscovered them in the lead up to the revolution and through present experiences. At the same time, Libyans expect that excessive foreign consumption may pose a threat to religious and cultural values. A similar sentiment is felt in Egypt. However both sets of citizens are reasserting their identities and are prouder than in the past. It is the rediscovered identities that balance out any threats posed by over exposure to foreignness. Similarly, under previous regimes, the majority of Egyptian and Libyan citizens suffered from a constraint on thought and could not speak out openly. However, some minorities such as rural tribes in Libya benefitted from the preferential treatment given by former leader and tribesman Qaddafi. In the present epoch, some tribal groups are rejecting patriotism because they were content with the old regime. By contrast, the level of ethnocentrism amongst Egyptians is divided by social class and previous political affiliations. For example, some upper class citizens who supported the Mubarak regime and accumulated wealth during the old regime's time are more concerned with the current circumstances and are likely to be less ethnocentric than middle and lower class citizens.

Across Cairo and Tripoli, citizens have welcomed globalisation for the purposes of securing new modes of consumption, working jobs and economic prosperity. On the other hand, Libyans are cautious of the over reliance on globalisation and argue that Libyans should aspire to develop local consumption and encourage local businesses to set up in the marketplace. Likewise, Egyptians echo the view of supporting the local cause but would not practically do so until discrepancies are settled in the political arena. Similarly, the instability and insecurities are considered to have transpired as a result of the flux, but the development of a new consumer culture in Tripoli and a resumed consumer culture in Cairo are believed to help ease the state of flux. Thus, by way of consumption, citizens are considered to be contributing to enhanced stability. As much as future expectations regarding consumer ethnocentrism appear blurred, citizens have shown the capacity to use it in the past for steering change. Country of origin effects (COO) are also important to consumption practices as citizens in the past and present have referred to COO cues when deliberating products and services. Consequently, COO effects have the propensity to pull citizens closer to products or push them away.

8.7.1 Country of origin effects (COO)

The findings suggest that Libyans held favourable perceptions of foreign products both in the past and in the present epoch because of historical and colonial ties with other countries. Historical and colonial ties were cited as reasons extending to the acceptability of Italian products. The state of flux has not affected perceptions of foreignness but made them stronger, which could explain why new consumption in Libya has increased since regime change. Similarly, Egyptians held favourable perceptions of foreign products both in the past and in the present epoch but alike Libyans, they are biased towards products made in western countries such as the USA, UK and European countries such as Germany. The reason for this biasness is because western countries are still viewed as being hegemonic and superior, which is why local products lag behind their foreign counterparts. Egyptian citizens also prefer branded products that are manufactured outside of Egypt because of concerns over the quality assurance procedures of branded products manufactured in Egypt. Cited examples include pampers, Coca Cola and Procter and Gamble products. Contradicting the state of flux in Tripoli, the present flux in Cairo is restricting consumption practices by making citizens more anxious and conservative in their consumption practices. The findings suggest that COO are responsible for new consumption in so far as Libyans now have the flexibility to choose and Egyptians are

using COO to select the best consumption options that meet their necessities. In addition, unlike Egyptian citizens, Libyans were constrained in their consumption practices in the past and had limited modes of consumption available, so there was less room for product evaluation or decision making, meaning that COO influences were uncommon. Another problem in Tripoli was that products often came into the country in a poor condition or close to their expiry date. In Tripoli, relations with foreign countries were poor and often depended on the old Qaddafi regime's mood towards a particular country at a certain point in time. Oppositely in Cairo, the government had established relations with foreign countries such as the UK, USA and Germany. The movement of international goods was instrumental in shaping a global consumer culture because the marketplace was well acculturated with foreignness.

In agreement with Egyptians, and at the time of writing, Libyans are very dissatisfied with local products because of quality. A possible explanation for such negative sentiment could be because the flux has to subside in order to bring enhanced COO perceptions of local products. The polemic of this argument can be compared to issues of COO on consumption practices in central and Eastern Europe. In countries such as Hungary and former Czechoslovakia, the state of flux prompted consumers to sample the unknown and neglect local products, which were considered to be inferior when compared with foreign products. After a period of change citizens reverted to consuming local products as manufacturing industries developed. Furthermore, citizens recognised that supporting the local cause would save jobs and create new ones (Springer and Czinkota, 1997). A similar scenario is occurring in Libya and citizens expect that in time, Libyans will realise that the consumption of both local and foreign consumption is beneficial to marketplace progress. Correspondingly, citizens anticipate that once there is balanced support for political leaders in Egypt, citizens would be more prepared to support the local cause. COO effects are inextricably linked with consumer ethnocentrism, because when citizens are highly ethnocentric, they are likely to select local COO cues when consuming. Similarly, when there is resentment towards a particular country or their products, consumer animosity is incurred. Therefore, in the next section, the theme of consumer animosity is compared and contrasted across Cairo and Tripoli.

The issue of CA existed both in the past and in the present epoch across Cairo and Tripoli. CA is influential in driving consumption practices because animosity towards a certain country can push citizens or pull them away from a particular country's products. Traditionally, Egypt had a history of minor protests and demonstrations in the past, albeit with careful government intervention. However, Libya has not had a history of protests because of the lack of opportunity and fear spread by the old Qaddafi regime. Unlike Egypt, religious books that promote *Shiaism* are prohibited in Libya because Libyans predominantly adhere to the *Sunni* branch of Islam and consider any other sub branches of religion to conflict with their own. On the other hand, in Egypt, the demographic makeup of Cairo is very heterogeneous and its citizens follow several different faiths (Islam, Christianity and Judaism). Consequently, there is greater religious tolerance. Moreover, ctizens are heavily influenced by historical animosity and Israeli products are still boycotted.

Additionally, consumer boycotts (CBs) in the past were only found to distort Egyptian and Libyan consumptions in the short-term and for a prescribed period of time. However, the findings also indicate that CB and CA can also translate into opportunities. In Egypt's case, instances like the prophet Mohammed cartoon encouraged consumers to support local products and made them more ethnocentric. More often than not, CBs are sanctioned because of political actions and not because of actions taken on the part of the firm. For instance, in Egypt's case, when CBs are apparent, CE is likely to be higher as citizens are pulled towards local products. The same cannot be said for Libyans, because of a non-existent boycotting history in the country. Unlike in Tripoli, a new trend of boycotts has emerged in Cairo. Some Egyptian citizens are boycotting products affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and their businesses. The findings suggest that segregated consumption districts have become common because of political polarisation. On the contrary, in Tripoli, the polarised communities are not as widespread as they are in Cairo. Nevertheless, there are still growing tensions between citizens in Tripoli, rural citizens and tribal communities but a comparison of the differences between them is not possible because only Libyan citizens in Tripoli were examined in detail. By bringing together the preceding themes, it is possible to acknowledge the linkages between them. Two streams of consumption, conservative and conspicuous, were identified through the findings.

Thus, in the next section, these two streams are compared and contrasted against Cairo and Tripoli.

8.8 Conservative vs. conspicuous consumption

In the past, consumption practices were also guided by social class and levels of income across Cairo and Tripoli. Conspicuous consumption is not new in Cairo and Tripoli. The social class hierarchy and authoritarian structure of the Mubarak and Qaddafi regime suggested that conspicuous consumption practices were advocated in the form of praising the regime's hegemonic status and power. Moreover, a key difference between Cairo and Tripoli is that the Libyan capital was subject to an embargo until 2003. Therefore, the marketplace in Tripoli has had less opportunity to develop. As a result, if Libyans wanted authentic products, they had to travel abroad and bring back suitcases of foreign goods. However, a major concern was felt by Libyan citizens because excessive consumption triggered the attention of the regime who would impose surplus taxes or questions consumers' wealth. Without extensive consumption choices, Libyan citizens pursued products rather than choose them. On the other hand, their Egyptian counterparts could choose their own consumption but the availability and accessibility of products in the marketplace was frequently questioned. Hence, Libyan citizens were conservative in their consumption practices, whereas the consumption practices in Cairo depended on the social class and level of disposable income. Poorer Egyptian consumers mirrored Libyan consumers and often leaned towards informal marketplaces, while the middle class longed for formal marketplaces and the upper class could afford to consume conspicuously like the rich elite and affiliated members of the Qaddafi regime in Libya. Similarly, in Tripoli, the rich elite could afford to consume but had to go abroad to demonstrate conspicuous consumption practices. While both sets of citizens exercised forms of hedonism in terms of getting noticed by the masses in the events that led to regime change, the present epoch has resulted in two different consumption fortunes. Egyptian citizens have been subdued to date by the lack of changes and have resorted to conservative consumption, while in Tripoli, Libyans have turned to conspicuous consumption to reflect new social statuses.

The exposure to globalisation abroad triggered Libyans aspirations for a global consumer culture to one day reach the country, whereas in Egypt, the exposure to globalisation gave Egyptians a chance to expand their sense of *Egyptianism*, which blended tradition with

modernity. The influences of globalisation in Egypt are also witnessed in a well-established Egyptian cinema and popular culture industry (Ghareeb, 1997). Although the effects of globalisation were not felt as much in Tripoli, there was a state of stability and citizens felt safe in the marketplace. Similarly, Egyptians did not worry about insecurity or have to put restrictions on time spend in the marketplace. In hindsight, the implications of a growing global consumer culture have had a negative impact on Egyptian citizens' consumption practices in the present epoch because citizens have a shared appetite for foreign products and services but are constrained from engaging in excessive consumption because of the flux. On the other hand, citizens in Tripoli are relishing the prospects of new consumption practices despite the current flux.

The opening of the markets in Tripoli and the state's openness to foreignness has resulted in a growing number of foreign companies setting up in the marketplace such as Marks and Spencer, Pronovias, Next, Mango and Debenhams (Libya Herald, 2013a). On the other hand, the marketplace in Cairo has become slightly saturated, perhaps because local and foreign companies are sceptical about taking risks and setting up under the present conditions. An important point to note is that consumption in Tripoli has not just become a sign of following a global consumer culture but a statement of freedom. Conversely, Egyptian citizens have found solace in spending more time indoors and consuming to satisfy basic needs. Thus, Egyptians are more conscious of their spending, ethically conscious towards the poor and are driven to a position where only basic necessities are longed for. Consuming for pleasure no longer excites citizens until the present state of flux improves. Whereas in the past Libyans were practicing conservative consumption, the opposite is now the case. Additionally, the rise in Libyan salaries assists in explaining why citizens can afford brands in the marketplace. On the contrary, in Cairo even upper class citizens are saving rather than spending. Another important point is that Libyan citizens have less motivation for concealing their finances as they used to under the old Qaddafi regime and so citizens' consumption practices have become more transparent. However, the act of conspicuous consumption may be threatening the family unit that has been traditionally built around collectivistic ties as Libyan citizens have become more individualistic and want to sample foreign consumption.

To an extent, consumption can be criticised as bringing about greed because Egyptians desired more modes of consumption, whereas in Tripoli, a lack of exposure to foreignness only exacerbated aspirations for new consumption in Libya. There is still the perception in the two societies of western hegemony and superiority, meaning that the west is seen

as the forerunner of marketing activity and economic development. This view appears grounded in citizens' present experiences and is unlikely to change. An antithesis also proposes that the state of flux in Tripoli has accelerated the emergences of a new consumer culture and configured new consumption practices. In Cairo, the opposite is the case. Moreover, the two consumption streams (conservative and conspicuous) can also be seen as therapeutic mechanisms. At one extreme end, conservative consumption protects citizens from putting themselves at harm and enables them to become ethically conscious in the marketplace. At the other extreme end, conspicuous consumption drives citizens to consume for status and pleasure. To an extent, the latter stream is exercised at the expense of the wider society because there is still a lot of suffering and poverty in Egypt and Libya, but citizens at present seem less concerned with the consequences of consumption. Additionally, a further difference between the consumer cultures in Cairo and Tripoli is that while Egyptians are making sense of the future by prioritising their consumption, Libyans view excessive consumption as a way of making sense of the future. Both perspectives are valid in so far as citizens understand that in the long-term, change must take place and consumption is a key driver to future reforms. In an attempt to address objective two and three and building on from Tables 6.1, 6.2, 7.1 and 7.2, a conceptual framework of the themes that affects Egyptian and Libyans' consumption practices is shown in Figure 20.
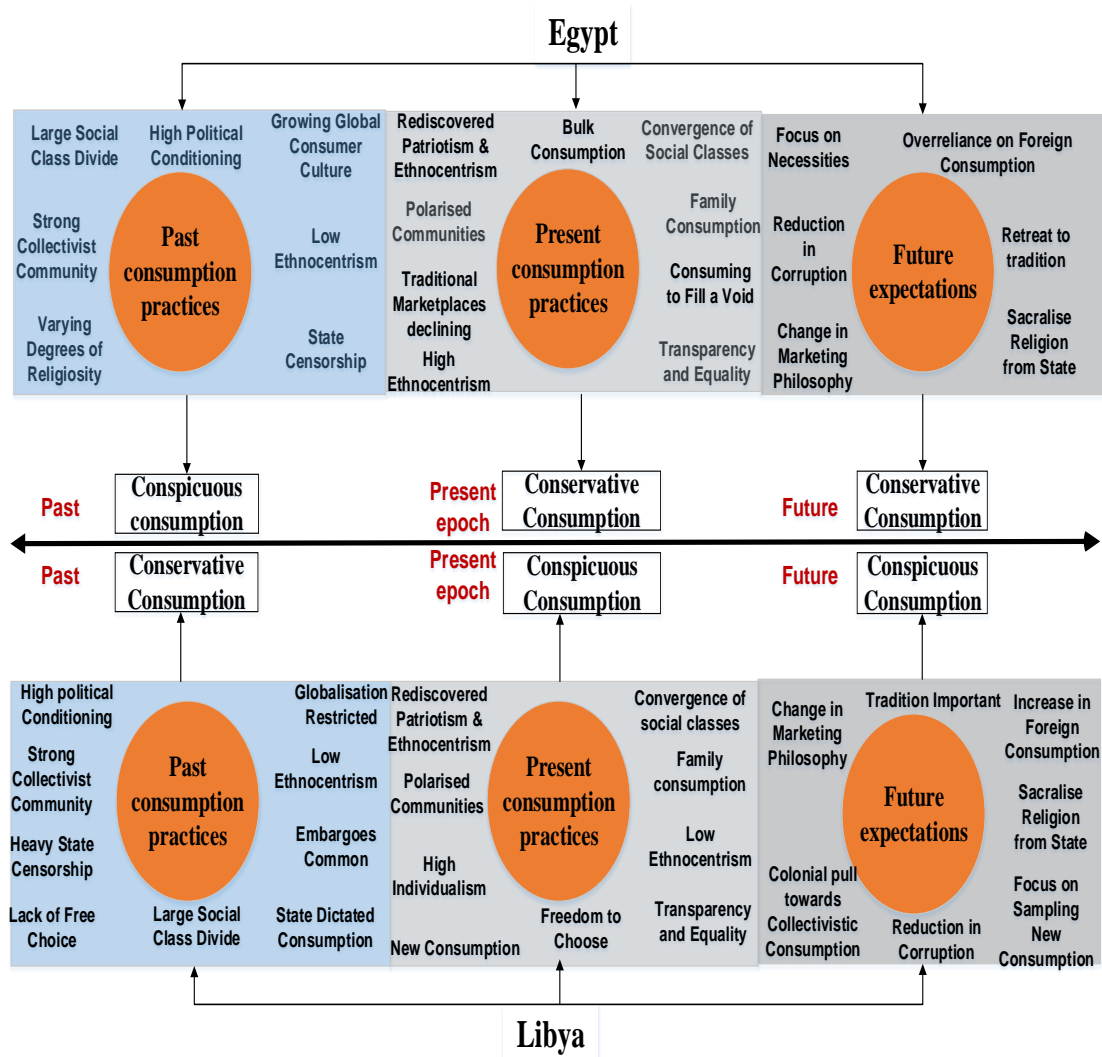
Figure 20: Cross-case comparison of the pertinent themes affecting consumption practices- Source: Author.

In Figure 20 above the most pertinent themes affecting consumption practices are compared and contrasted according to the past, present epoch and expectations for the future. The conceptual framework has useful relevance because the two cases (Egypt and Libya) are also compared against each other. The changing state of the two identified streams of consumption (conspicuous and conservative consumption) are illustrated.

In summary, interpretations of the data and comparisons have been made against Cairo and Tripoli. By comparing and contrasting the data across the two capital cities, theorisations have been produced. While citizens in Cairo appear to have retracted to conservative consumption, citizens in Tripoli have resorted to conspicuous consumption. This finding is important because there are two extreme streams of consumption taking place. The new wave of consumption in Tripoli has exposed Libyans to a newly emerging consumer culture. While Egyptians are keen to support the local cause, their consumption

practices still very much revolve around foreign consumption. Until the state of flux reduces, Egyptians are not prepared to support the local cause. Regardless of the direction of change, consumption practices have been reproduced, giving rise to new consumption which is underpinned by the two identified streams of consumption. The themes identified add to a growing marketing literature and the methods used to compare Cairo and Tripoli may be applied to other flux contexts in the world such as the current crises in Ukraine, Iraq and Syria. The empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding of how consumption practices have changed since the past, how they are in the present and what citizens expect for the future. The usefulness of the findings contest that citizens in a state of flux use consumption as a positively influencing mechanism for driving change, such as in Libya's case. On the other hand, consumption can also be used as a form of consumer escapism as in Egypt's case. The stream/s of consumption undertaken by citizens determine the consumption choices made and are explicitly influential in defining the consumer culture.

A set of emergent themes were inductively constructed in an attempt to explain changing consumption practices. These were consumption and flux, corruption and consumption, social classes and consumption, polarisations in society and conservative consumption. The remaining identified themes (cultural values, religious values, desired vs. desirable effects, consumer ethnocentrism, country of origin effects, consumer animosity and conspicuous consumption) were existing themes derived from the literature. However, there are emergent findings for each existing theme, which have been discussed until this point. Conservative consumption developed as an emergent theme for discussing how citizens retreat to tradition in a state of flux and consume basic necessities. In order to address objective 4, a conceptual model was developed to illustrate how the set of emergent themes are transferable to other Middle East contexts and beyond. This model is presented next in Chapter 9, followed by conclusions, contributions, recommendations and limitations.

Chapter 9 Conclusions, contributions, limitations and recommendations
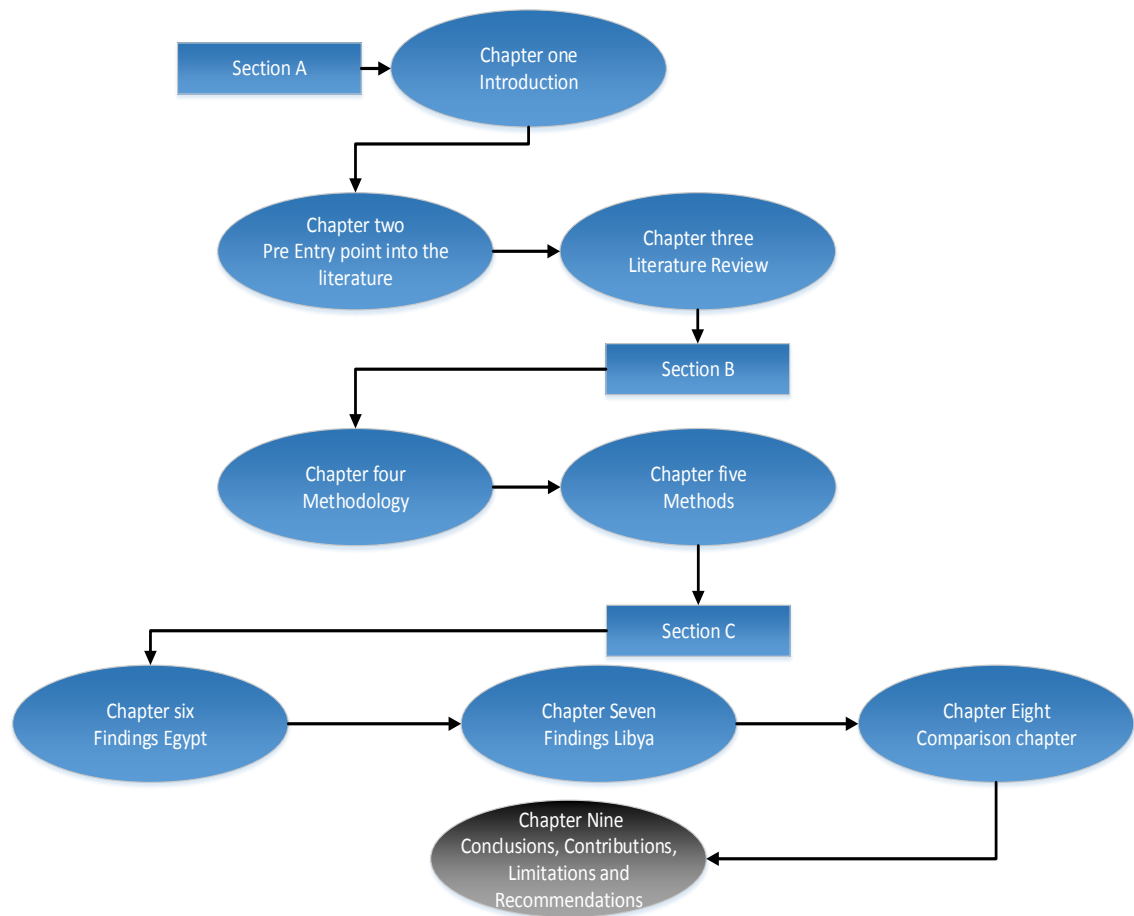
Figure 21: Route Map- The position of the current chapter in the thesis- Source: Author.

<u>9.1 Conclusions</u>

The preceding three chapters comprised the findings and discussion for Egypt and Libya. In chapters six and seven, the findings were also positioned within the current literature. In chapter eight, the two cases were compared and summarised. In this chapter, the conclusions, contributions, limitations and future research/recommendations are discussed at length. To begin with, the conclusions of this thesis are presented in relation to the research objectives and the research question. Following the conclusions, the contributions of this thesis are discussed within three streams; theoretical, practical and methodological. The penultimate section comprises the limitations of the research and in the final section, the directions for future research as well as recommendations are proposed.

The aim of this research study was to determine the impact of the Arab Spring on consumption practices in Egypt (Cairo) and Libya (Tripoli). Based on this aim, the following research question was constructed:

1) In the context of recent events in Egypt and Libya, how are consumption practices 'interwoven' within the contemporary state of flux?

To answer the research question, four research objectives were developed:

1. To develop a conceptual framework for examining *practice* in a period of environmental flux.

Through the deployment of the framework:

2. To provide an account of how Egyptian and Libyan consumption practices have been *affected* by the Arab Spring phenomenon.

3. To provide an account of how Egyptians and Libyans' consumption hopes/expectations and histories have in turn *influenced* the Arab Spring phenomenon.

…Thus, by gaining insight into the degree that consumption and flux are interwoven, the fourth objective is:

4. To provide an analysis of the extent that the consumption practices identified can provide insight into other ME countries or other regions in a high state of flux.

… Thus, helping consumers and practitioners make sense of flux.

For the first objective, it was necessary to develop a conceptual framework for examining *practices* in a period of flux (figure 2). Through the conceptual framework (figure 20) an attempt is made to apply the framework to *consumption practices* and illustrate the pertinent themes affecting practices in Egypt and Libya.

The second research objective of this study was to provide an account of how Egyptian and Libyan consumption practices have been *affected* by the Arab Spring phenomenon. The findings suggest that in a past and the present epoch, there was a growing consumer

culture in Cairo and many citizens were acculturated with foreignness. The marketplace was identified as containing formal and informal marketplaces. The formal marketplace extended to foreign brands in retail stores,   shopping malls and retail parks. By contrast, the informal marketplace referred to traditional style markets such as bazaars and souks. Egyptians had always viewed the informal marketplace as a venue where traditional values could be preserved, because many citizens grew up around it. Conversely, the formal marketplace in Tripoli was very underdeveloped, whereas informal marketplaces were available in abundance. In the present epoch, the consumer culture in Cairo has been severely affected by the flux as citizens have tried to navigate around security and stability concerns by restricting their consumption to certain times of the day and by spending on only the necessities. This finding demonstrates the present conservative stream of consumption in Cairo. By contrast in Tripoli, the flux has not deterred citizens from signposting the future with consumption. The emergence of a newly developing consumer culture is indicative of pressures to exercise global consumption in a way that was not possible in the past. Consequently, Libyan citizens have become more conspicuous in their consumption practices and have seen consumption as a therapeutic mechanism for counteracting the flux. Nevertheless, the ability to choose independently has accelerated citizens' desires for consumption. The state of the consumer culture in Cairo appears to be having a negative impact on citizens, because Egyptians have the desire to consume but are restricted by the flux. Some Egyptians have lost faith in in the direction of change, which is why enthusiasm towards supporting the local cause has declined. The opposite is the case in Libya as citizens seem oblivious to supporting the local cause and the consumer culture is expected to be built around foreign consumption as opposed to the interblend of local and foreign consumption that make up the consumer culture in Cairo.

In addressing objective three, one of the prevalent findings from this study is that the Arab Spring was not only a call for greater consumption but also a cause of it. Consequently, citizens in Egypt and Libya demanded new modes of consumption by calling for change. In figure 23, an attempt is made to illustrate how varying degrees of flux affect consumption practices and the state of stability.

In terms of objective four, a conceptual model was devised (figure 22) to show the transferability of the five emergent themes (consumption and flux, corruption and consumption, social classes and consumption, polarised communities and conservative consumption) across other Middle East contexts and beyond and is illustrated below. The five emergent themes manifested frequently across the round of interviews and previous

literature has not thoroughly addressed these themes in relation to matters of consumption. A distinction needs to be made here because the existing themes have proposed emergent findings. However, the existing themes cannot be claimed as emergent themes because they already exist in the current literature. On the other hand, the five emergent themes deduced from the findings can be classified as emergent themes and help expand on what is currently known in the marketing literature. These five emergent themes are: consumption and flux, corruption and consumption, social classes and consumption, polarised communities and conservative consumption.
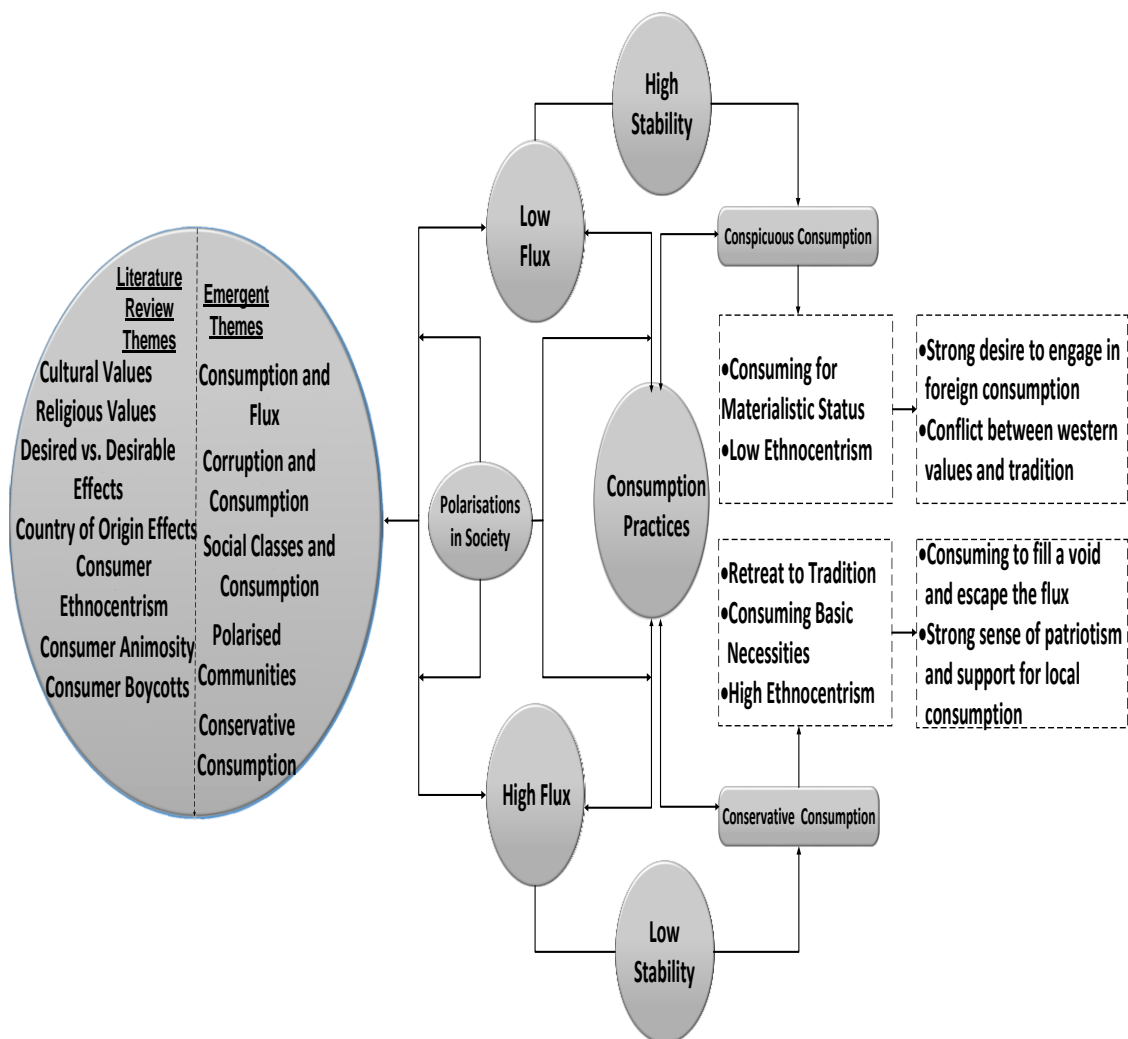
Figure 22: A conceptual model of flux and consumption practices- Source: Author.

The type of consumption stream followed (conservative or conspicuous consumption) depends on the state of flux and state of stability. In a state of low flux and high stability, there are few polarisations in society and citizens' consumption practices advocate materialistic status and lesser ethnocentric tendencies. Conversely, in a state of high flux and low stability, citizens are encouraged to retreat to tradition to rekindle family ties, cultural as well as religious values, particularly since there are frequent polarisations in

society. Moreover, consumption practices hedge towards conservative consumption and ethnocentric tendencies are higher because citizens have a strong sense of patriotism and want to support local consumption.

To further elaborate on the state of flux and issues of stability, a conceptual *consumption in flux and stability matrix* was developed (figure 23 below). The basic premise of the matrix argues that in periods of high stability, consumption is constant and a global consumer culture is prevalent and relatively unaffected by sparks of a revolution. Contrariwise, in a period of low stability, consumption and a global consumer culture are weakened by compromised safety and security. At the opposite end, in a state of low flux, consumption is distorted and attention is geared at mass protests and demonstrations, whereas in a period of high flux, protest movements target consumption reforms. Any changes in stability give rise to marketplace transformations.

	Low Stability	**High Stability**
High Flux	**1** In a state of high flux but low stability, consumption is subject to safety and security and/or during specific times of the day/working week.	**3** In a state of high flux but high stability, protest movements/civil war change to calls for marketplace reforms. Consumption opportunities are presented.
Revolution		
	2 In a state of low flux but low stability, consumption is distorted. There are calls for changes and marketing protest activities	**4** In a state of high stability and low flux, consumption remains calm in line with social, political and economic factors.
Low Flux	**Low Stability** **Consumption**	**High Stability**

Figure 23: A conceptual consumption in flux and stability matrix - Source: Author.

The value of the conceptual matrix is underpinned by the various environmental phases that citizens go through in times of flux. In the past, Egyptians could be positioned in box four because of the high stability and stable consumption practices. However, in the build up to the revolutions, the position changed to box two as demands were made for changes and citizens progressed to box three as mass protests and demonstrations are expected to spark further change. In the present epoch, Egyptians can be considered within box one

as there is a high state of flux and citizens are restricted in their consumption practices to specific times of the day. On the other hand, having not had a history of consumption, Libyan citizens skipped box four and began from box two as there was low flux and low stability. The Libyan revolution was achieved by a civil war and visions/aspirations expect the marketplace to gradually develop. New consumption has emerged as a means of demonstrating the desirable and a way to escape the flux. Alike Egyptians, Libyan citizens are also stationed with box one but by contrast, are experiencing a new wave of consumption while citizens in Cairo are cutting back on unnecessary consumption. The ongoing epiphenomenal state of the revolutions means that further regime changes and mass protests and demonstrations are possible and therefore, the matrix remains an iterative process and can be used to predict the placing's of other countries.

With reference to matters of transferability to other contexts and settings, the conceptual model of flux and consumption practices (figure 22) and consumption in flux and stability matrix (figure 23) advance an understanding of how flux affects consumption practices and how citizens cope following a revolutionary episode.

In the next section, the contributions for this study are discussed in detail. The contributions are divided into three main subsections; theoretical, practical and methodological. Epistemic reflexivity was used throughout this research to allow the researcher to reflect and disseminate axiological values, thus revealing a trail of the whole research. This is precisely why three subsections of contributions are discussed next because it would be inadequate to simply label the contribution in a single section and also because a more detailed overview of the contribution can be better represented.

9.2 Contributions

9.2.1 Theoretical

This research makes several important theoretical contributions. To the author's best knowledge, the study is the first to examine the impact of the Arab Spring on Middle Eastern societies from a marketing perspective. To date, the literature on the Arab Spring has been tackled from a political and sociological lens with many studies referencing commentary articles rather than empirical data. A set of five emergent themes have been proposed (objective four) which may be transferred to other geo-political contexts. The five emergent themes serve as typologies for consumption practices. Combined together,

the themes enhance an understanding of the life processes that consumers go through in the act of consumption and how consumption practices change following a revolutionary episode and punctuations in society. An explication of changing consumption practices as a result of the revolutions was achieved by using the three stage processes to appreciate how citizens felt in the past, present epoch and also their expectations for the future. Third, to augment the theoretical contribution further, a conceptual framework was developed for practices in flux and then applied to consumption practices (objective one). A cross case comparison of practices in flux across Egypt and Libya was conducted in order to advance theorisations and understand first, how Egyptians and Libyans' consumption have been *affected* by the Arab Spring phenomenon (objective two) and second, how Egyptians and Libyans' consumption hopes/expectations and history have in turn been *influenced* by the Arab Spring phenomenon (objective 3).

For objective four, a conceptual model of flux and consumption practices (figure 22) and consumption in flux and stability matrix (figure 23) was developed. The value behind the conceptual model advances knowledge by depicting the impact of the existing and emergent themes on consumption practices and how citizens use different streams of consumption (conservative and conspicuous) depending on the state of flux and state of stability. The streams of consumption act as markers for consumption practices and indicate the progression of a consumer culture. The consumption in flux and stability matrix can be transferred to other contexts and settings to illustrate how consumers cope in periods of environmental flux.

Marketing scholarship appears to have benefitted from a depth of research focussing on contexts in a state of stability. However, there is currently a dearth of marketing studies conducted in a state of instability. Consequently, the novelty of contextualising and carrying out this research within countries (Egypt and Libya) in a state of flux would seem to be of revelatory value. Consumers in the ME have needs, wants and consumption desires to be fulfilled. Therefore, marketing operations must continue and cannot afford to step back from understanding this very important global segment (El-Bassiouny, 2014). At the heart of change are the citizens, who are considered as agents of change.

The findings have revealed that freedom of expression achieved via the revolution has provided hope for the future. The neglect in the current marketing literature for citizens as agents of change strengthens the revelatory theoretical contribution of this research.

To claim prior research has heavily focussed on western societies would seem quite naive. Rather, the revelatory theoretical contribution should be viewed through the perspective of the participants who live in the ME and have lived through the revolutions and who now, have an opportunity to choose their own futures and make informed consumption choices. It is also very important to recognise that countries such as Egypt and Libya have made strides in overthrowing authoritarian regimes. The significance of regime overthrow could become even more widespread as at the time of writing, countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia have witnessed the threat of militia groups. Consequently, parts of the ME continue to remain in flux and will do so as long as there are untapped opportunities to be gained.

At this stage, it is necessary to reintroduce the four box matrix Corely and Gioia (2011) from the introduction in order to position the type of contribution made in this thesis (blue shaded areas).

Revelatory	4 -Findings transferrable to other contexts and settings -Findings useful for existing and new marketing firms strategies in the region	-Novel and unusual methodology to study practices in flux - Theory blending from mother discipline (social sciences) to study practices in flux which are then applied to consumption practices (marketing- sister discipline) 1
Originality	3	2
Incremental		
	Practically Useful	Scientifically Useful

Utility

Figure 24: Positions the thesis contribution within the matrix produced by Corley and Gioia (2011).

As Corely and Gioia (2001) stated, a contribution is assessed by the research's originality and the capacity to shed light into a phenomena by producing knowledge that has some form of utility or usefulness. The revelatory contribution made in this thesis has utility because it is non-formulaic (Alvesson and Gabriel, 2013) and uses an unusual methodology combining an SLR and GTM to study practices in flux. Moreover, the contribution made is a bold attempt to meet the *interestingness* criteria (Bartunek et al.,

2006) because it is unusual for studies to be conducted in a state of instability and amidst flux. Similarly, cause and effect relationships are common perspectives taken in studies conducted in a state of stability. On the contrary, this thesis has taken a sense-making approach (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2014) and is underpinned by retrospective accounts which are used to reproduce strategy data. Further interestingness is grounded in the application of studying practices in flux and then transferring them to consumption practices, particularly at an important point in time where the Arab Spring is still unfolding. Furthermore, the findings are defended as revelatory because the emergent themes support current marketing theory by understanding how the revolutions have altered consumption practices in Egypt and in Libya. In this regard, firms can devise innovative marketing strategies to appeal to citizens. Moreover, the revelatory nature of the theoretical contribution has transpired because the findings have revealed insights that had not previously been spotted.

Original theorising on the ME is still in its infant stages (Huang and Balakrishnan, 2013). Marketing scholarship remains largely neglected and contributes to less than one percent of all articles published in top ranked management and marketing journals between 1990-2010 (Balakrishnan, 2013; Robertson et al., 2001). The lack of emphasis on the region calls for the need to develop theories that offer insight and explanations of ongoing phenomena such as the Arab Spring. Consequently, this thesis makes a bold attempt at contextualising the Arab Spring phenomenon within marketing scholarship and answers the call for greater theoretical knowledge in the ME region. The empirical findings of this thesis are especially important because established western developed theories are not necessarily appropriate to emerging markets such as the ME. In contrast, this research assists the advancement of theoretical knowledge by proposing emergent themes and a conceptual model that can be transferred to both emerging and developed markets.

Research which fits into more than one discipline is commonly understood as interdisciplinary. However, collaborations, more often than not do not explicitly underpin the contributions of studies. To assist with the merging of interdisciplinary work, Okhuysen and Bonardi (2011) argued that there are two dimensions of relevance for the combination of what they label as *theoretical lenses*. These dimensions are *proximity* and the degree of *compatibility* between the underlying assumptions of the lenses being combined. Proximity is defined as the conceptual distance that exists between the phenomena that the lenses address in their original conception. For example the combination of microeconomics and psychology in research studies may be concerned

with determining how and why individuals behave in particular ways. The collaboration of multiple theoretical lenses is considered to lead to a better understanding of individual behaviour and enrich the theoretical contribution by drawing together theories from different disciplines.

According to Okhuysen and Bonardi (2011), if two theoretical lenses have common overlapping assumptions, then they are considered as compatible. On the other hand, if the theoretical assumptions are distinctively dissimilar then they are seen as incompatible. In the case of this thesis, the combination of marketing, politics and sociological thought allows for a greater understanding of the Arab Spring phenomenon. In the absence of other disciplines, the theoretical contribution is likely to be weaker. In addition, the combination of multiple theoretical lenses reduces the proximity between the disciplines and the phenomena, making the degree of compatibility between the findings stronger. Relating back to the example given about microeconomics and psychology, the collaboration of these disciplines are critiqued by Okhuysen and Bonardi (2011) as microeconomics building on beliefs of rationality and psychology stressing the role of behavioural and cognitive explanations. In relation to this study, the emergent themes are embedded within more than one discipline and outside the marketing school of knowledge. Moreover, the application of documented ideas of the Arab Spring also merge into the fields of politics and sociology. Therefore, following on from the article discussed by Okhuysen and Bonardi (2011), the *theoretical lenses* that they specify assist in aiding the theoretical contribution of this study. By fostering together multiple disciplines from outside the marketing arena, the theoretical contribution is augmented. Thus, the proximity between the phenomena discovered is reduced and the degree of compatibility between the findings is increased. The implications of the theoretical contribution is not confined to marketing scholarship and spans across the political and sociology disciplines. As is the case with this thesis, when the impact of the revelatory contribution moves up from sister (i.e. marketing) to mother disciplines (social sciences), this would seem to be the most significant (Zahra and Newey, 2009) and of utility and interestingness. Consequently, the degree of compatibility is increased since academics in other disciplines can use the study as a reference point when conducting future studies.

Revelatory contributions made in this thesis are also consistent with Alvesson and Sandberg's (2014) notion of *box-breaking* research. Rather than remaining within what they termed *boxed-in,* the findings have transcended across interdisciplinary boundaries and have broken out of a tightly defined research paradigm and that of the sister discipline

(i.e. marketing) in order to intensify the theoretical contribution. Box-breaking research also echoes the view of Hunt (1994) who argued that researchers are often timid in claiming revelatory contributions for fear of being criticised by academics and journal reviewers. Thus, in line with Hunt's view, the revelatory contribution made in this thesis makes a broader non-marketing contribution which is greater than a confined boxed-in marketing contribution. To reiterate the words of Hunt (1994: p.15):

> "Marketing reviewers react quite negatively when a manuscript offers a genuinely original contribution to knowledge. Criticisms such as "where is the precedent?" and "where is the authority?" are, in my experience, disproportionately prominent in reviews by marketing referees. Indeed, marketing authors have been known to cite nonmarketing researchers for authority (using locations such as "drawn from…") even when, strictly speaking, the marketing author has made an original nonmarketing contribution. Marketers making genuinely original contributions to knowledge do so at their peril."

As an additional point, the use of the terms *flux* and *epoch* is consistent with theory development and the views of Cornelissen and Durand (2014) who suggested that the positioning of a radically novel theoretical perspective is supplemented by the use of new or existing vocabulary to advance an understanding of the phenomenon.

In summary to this section, the theoretical contribution began with an incremental focus and culminated in revelatory findings by offering insight into an ongoing phenomenon, proposing a set of emergent themes and a conceptual model of consumption practices based on past experiences, present experiences and future expectations. The importance of the contribution is underpinned by the paucity of studies that investigated the Arab Spring phenomenon and especially marketing studies. In the next subsection, the practical contributions of this study are brought forward.

9.2.2 Practical

As Corley and Gioia (2011) distinguished in their four box matrix, the practical contribution of this study can be considered as practically useful and of utility to marketing practitioners and academics alike. Foreign and local firms are likely to fail without the acknowledgement that citizens are the agents of change. Without the presence of such firms, it is unlikely that change will be able to progress. Therefore, the findings

offer an understanding of changing consumption practices, which is useful for firms in order to keep up to date with consumers and for purposes of devising new marketing strategies to appeal to new clientele. Moreover, given the nature of ongoing flux, firms must change their understanding of marketing in the ME and remain ethical, in being aware of the extent to which their operations effect and opportunistically respond to flux. In Libya's case for example, the explosion in new consumption may be seen as an opportunity for firms to penetrate this exciting new emerging market. However, entering the market poses potent risks. The argument is that firms have to undertake the risks in order to benefit in the long run. Furthermore, just because there is uncertainty and instability does not mean that firms should retreat. On the contrary, at the time of writing (February 2015) a window of opportunity is presented for firms to capitalise on citizens who are hungry to consume and equally receptive to marketing messages because they either want to consume to fill a void or want to experience new consumption. No matter the direction of change, marketing operations must continue and therefore, consumers have to consume.

The findings also offer utility and are suggestive that due to a mentality shift on the consumers' part and a new perspective towards marketing activities, the concept of marketing has taken a new direction in Egypt and Libya. Traditionally, marketing was viewed as a production orientated philosophy, whereas in the present epoch, this mentality has changed and is evidenced through the growing number of foreign firms in Cairo, Egypt and newly established ones in Tripoli, Libya. Consequently, value is added to current marketing theory as traditional western marketing philosophies were confined in the past. In the present, the philosophical underpinnings of marketing have been affected by reformed mind-sets. It is this transformation of the mind-set that has allowed citizens and firms to recognise marketing as a core activity of change.

Academics can benefit from the findings by using the emergent themes and conceptual model to add new frames of reference by conducting further studies to examine the ongoing phenomena. The idea is that this study may serve as a platform, onto which, academics from various disciplines can build and combine multiple theoretical lenses to establish further contributions that go much further than the parameters of marketing. In summary, the practical benefits of this study to both marketing practitioners and academics have been highlighted. In the next subsection, the methodological contributions for this study are presented.

9.2.3 Methodological

Several methodological contributions are made in this thesis. First, a novel and unusual approach was taken to study flux and changing consumption practices by combining a systematic literature review (SLR) as an entry point into the literature alongside grounded theory methods (GTM). This approach has been previously replicated by several authors (e.g. Denyer and Tranfield, 2006; Greenhalgh and Peacock, 2005; Pittaway et al., 2004; Rashman et al., 2009; Thorpe et al., 2005; Tranfield et al., 2003) but each SLR, such as this one, is tailored to suit and inform the research question. Thus, the methodical steps from this SLR can be transferred to other contexts and settings. The acceptance of the social constructionist stance taken in this thesis alongside grounded theory methods would seem to add an additional contribution to the methodological literature.

Additionally, the semi-structured convergent depth interviewing (CDI) approach undertaken is rarely used as a methodical technique in the ME because as Tessler and Jamal (2006) suggested, participants viewed quantitative surveys in a more positive light because of the ease in filling out a survey or questionnaire and because of political restrictions on candidness and freedom of expression. The contributory value of the methodical interviewing technique contradicts such claims, as participants were eager to take part and voice their own opinions voluntarily. Greater receptiveness towards being interviewed would seem to agree with the findings that freedom of expression is a by-product of the revolutions. Parallel to the participants' candid disperse of axiological values was that of the researcher. The use of epistemic reflexivity is a further methodological contribution as a strong rapport was established with the participants, which was to an extent down to the researcher's hybridised cultural origins (British-Iraqi). Therefore, the researcher's own background allowed him to experience two juxtaposed cultures and their traditions.

In an attempt to leave a reflexive trail and to maintain research integrity, Guba and Lincoln's (1994) trustworthiness criteria were covered in significant depth (tables 5.1 and 5.2). This also echoed Maton's (2003) view that more often than not, researchers hide their own values and assumptions or do not reflexively explain them. The extensive detail of the trustworthiness criteria is fundamental to readers who may wish to contest the credibility of the findings of this thesis. Furthermore, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the study is also the first to discuss issues of trustworthiness in significant detail. The depth to which each stage of the methodological process is documented in the

methods chapter (5) is indicative of an attempt to strongly articulate epistemic reflexivity. For instance, a detailed account is given of the main ethical issues faced on access and rapport, interviewing and also data transcription. In the next section, the limitations of the study are discussed.

9.3 Limitations

To begin with, it must be noted that this study was conducted during a period of flux and ongoing civil unrest which had a direct impact on the data collection. Thus, a number of unavoidable limitations are present. At the start of the research, the intention was to use grounded theory following Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory approach. However, a grounded theory in its purist form was not possible due to time constraints, difficulties and lengthy procedures involved in gaining access to Egyptian and Libyan participants. From a list of 10 universities in Egypt, only one gave acceptance and from a list of five universities in Libya (Libya has less universities than Egypt) only one responded and granted access. Having contemplated venturing to Libya to commence the interviewing process, safety and security concerns obscured the researcher's decision. As a result of the flux, the research sites could not be diachronically revisited. Thus, a decision was taken to reject a grounded theory methodology and instead, adopt the use of grounded theory methods (GTM). The applicability of GTM was very relevant in the search for emergent themes and served as a conducive means of data analysis. Furthermore, the use of GTM complements the SLR used. A pure grounded theory methodology may conflict with an SLR because the former advises to go straight into the field with little or no previous literature review and the latter, suggests that establishing a literature review as an entry point is useful to reviewing the backdrop of current literature.

In terms of the methodical limitations, interviewing Libyan participants via Skype posed various obstacles. Distortions in the webcam and temporary disconnections meant that upon reconnecting, the recorder had to be rewound and restarted from the last recorded point. Another drawback was that some participants felt more comfortable being interviewed virtually rather than facing the interviewer directly. Facial expressions and gestures were sometimes difficult to interpret due to connectivity issues and unavoidable temporary internet disconnections on the participants' side. Moreover, the target sample has its limitations as participants interviewed were mostly from middle class backgrounds. Given Egypt and Libya's social class system, it would have been interesting to interview

participants from a more diverse mix of social classes. However, this was not possible due to the ongoing flux.

The trustworthiness criteria were covered at length in the methods chapter (5) in line with an epistemic reflexive approach. This thesis accepts that the findings are not generalisable to the wider population. Generalisability equates to transferability in qualitative research. Since this is a qualitative study, the methodological techniques can be transferred to other contexts and settings. In addition, a different target sample from other places outside Egypt and Libya's capital cities may have produced somewhat dissimilar results. The dependability of the findings can be critiqued on the basis that the Arab Spring phenomenon is ongoing and therefore, there is a lower level of replicability. On the contrary, these revelatory findings may not be possible to obtain in a state of stability. Due to the nature of qualitative inquiry, interpretations made may differ depending on the researcher. However, the procedural steps for carrying out the qualitative data, data collection, techniques and coding methods may be replicated. On the other hand, while the same process may be followed, the qualitative data collected is open to interpretation because of many factors such as the researcher's axiological values, epistemology and ontology.

To a certain extent, bias is ingrained within all research methods. Qualitative research suffers from the angle of authenticity. However, the researcher addressed steps (such as sending the transcripts back to participants for confirmability) in the methodology and methods chapters to reduce the level of bias. The use of epistemic reflexivity helped to disseminate the researcher's own axiological values (i.e. personal background). Despite sharing many common values with the participants such as a common theological school of thought, spoken language as well as cultural traditions, the researcher acknowledges that these commonalities also posed some constraints. On the one hand, having a similar personal background to the researched may have helped to establish a better rapport. On the other, the hybridised social upbringing of this researcher may have denoted a slight unconscious bias when interviewing the participants. To illustrate some examples, there was a tendency during the first interview phases to try and spot a marketing problem. In addition, cultural closeness with the participants created a sense of hegemony. In other words, the assumption is that being of *Arab origin* gives rise to *Arab nationalism*. The bracketing of one's own assumptions was achieved during the designing of the interview protocols where a decision was made to construct questions that did not directly convey marketing terms to the participants.

From a different perspective, had a researcher of Egyptian and/or Libyan origin undertaken this study, there may have been an encouraged personal bias. In contrast, as a British-Iraqi, the hybridised identity of this researcher may have given a sense of impartiality to the research. Consequently, greater subjectivity and empathy could be offered to the participants, something that may not have been the case had an Egyptian or Libyan national conducted the study. Conversely, had a researcher of non-Arab origin conducted this study, some dissimilar results may have been presented. To an extent, a non-Arab researcher may face issues gaining access into the target population, which was not the case with this study as the researcher has a similar cultural background to the researched. From an alternative point of view, a non-Arab researcher could also be considered completely impartial to the research if he/she had no prior contact with the researched/or with their country.

A further limitation is the application of qualitative approaches to establish emerging theory. The emergent themes presented are deep rooted in qualitative and inductive approaches. Due to the lacuna in the current marketing literature on the ME, hypotheses could not have been set from the beginning of the study. However, the findings from this study can now be pursued by a deductive investigation or longitudinal study. As an example, the emergent themes could be tested against how influential they are in consumption practices across different contexts and settings. Caution must be taken though as the nature of the ongoing Arab Spring phenomenon lends itself to cross-sectional lenses. Moreover if quantitative testing is required, a large representative sample must be extracted from multiple locations in Arab Spring countries in order to address different demographics. On the contrary, as the participants demonstrated, the generation of candid responses was made possible via qualitative interviewing, which gathered narrative accounts of past, present and future. Such an approach may not be feasible with quantitative methods and may contradict and constrain the participants' desires to provide unconditional responses. In the next subsection, the recommendations and directions for future research are discussed.

9.4 Recommendations and directions for future research

The findings of this thesis have configured an interesting pathway for future research. Given the combination of multiple theoretical lenses, this research may be followed up by scholars and practitioners in other disciplines such as politics and sociology who may wish to conduct follow up studies or input their own theoretical lenses. The combination

of different lenses has the potential to enrich interdisciplinary contributions to knowledge. Furthermore, this research may be seen as a platform from which marketing academics and practitioners can build and extend the emergent themes and use the conceptual model within other contexts and settings. In addition, managers can use the study as guidelines for understanding the consumption practices of Egyptians and Libyans, the implications of which, will allow firms to strategise accordingly.

Additional research is required to understand how the Arab Spring has affected consumers from different social classes and cities. It would also be useful to undertake a business to business (B2B) study to understand in detail how firms currently operating in the region and those who are contemplating entering ME markets, cope with acknowledging consumption practices. Future research may also benefit from examining how the progress of a consumer culture impacts consumers' consumption practices and also their perceptions towards foreignness. A cross-country comparison study between developed and developing countries may be carried out to explore the state of consumption practices between different countries. Likewise, an ongoing longitudinal or grounded theory study could investigate changes in consumption practices over a prolonged period of time. In a longitudinal study, particular events can be observed such as Ramadan (holy month for all Muslims) to determine how consumption practices are affected and the extent to which flux impacts on consumption. From a marketing perspective, Ramadan is a haven for excessive consumption and is often seen as a month of shopping (Kurt and Ozgen, 2013; Sandikci and Jafari, 2013). Furthermore, it would be beneficial for future studies to assess the organisational perceptions towards marketing practices in Arab Spring countries. As the findings suggest, under previously planned economies, markets such as Egypt and Libya suffered from a lack of comprehension towards marketing activities. However, the revolutions have reconfigured mind-sets and now there is a greater inclination to moving towards a market based economy and one that acknowledges marketing as a discipline and a core business function. The move in the direction of a market based economy is reminiscent of post-communist economies in Eastern Europe. In a similar vein, firms in Arab Spring countries can alter their focus of a production orientated philosophy to a market and customer orientated philosophy, especially since consumers in countries such as Egypt and Libya have proven to be agents of change. There is still much to be learned from the Arab Spring, knowledge to be acquired and further phenomena to come. If the current events at the time of writing (February 2015) and acts of civil war and militant insurgency in Syria and Iraq are

anything to go by, then it is likely that the region will continue to be in a state of flux in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the furthering of marketing scholarship on the ME is more important than ever before. With the notion of a constantly changing region in mind, the author of this study would welcome exchanges with other researchers who may be interested in any areas of this study, particularly with regards to the ongoing examination of the Arab Spring phenomenon and consumption practices.

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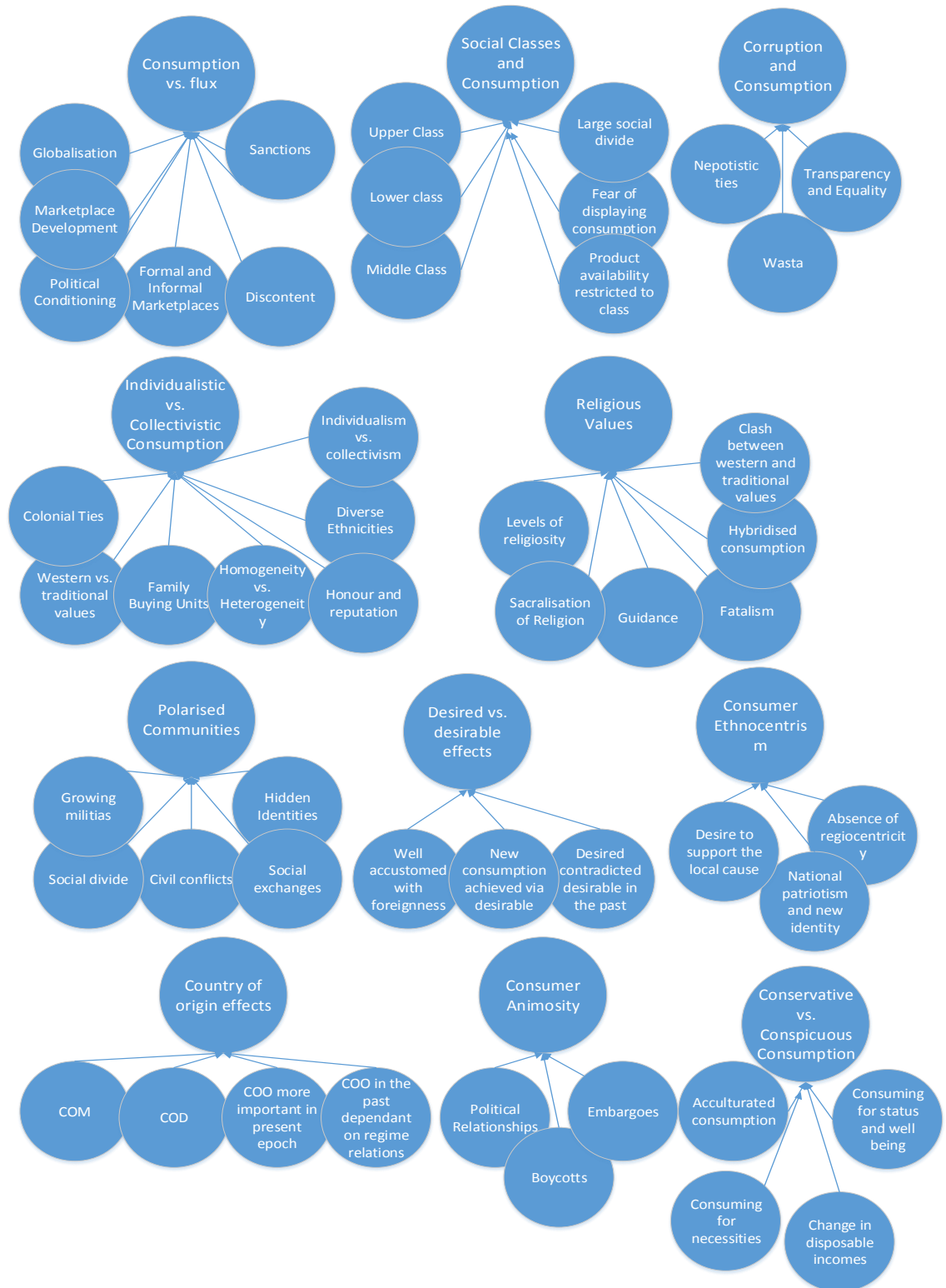
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11.0 Appendices

Appendix A- Egypt

b